



Suggested Proactive Reading for Families - Ada Twist, Scientist.

Good literacy begins with good oracy: if a child can speak well, that is a step on the way towards being able to read and write well.
Talking about books is just as valuable as reading them.

Before reading, look at and talk about the book's cover.

- ✓ What is the title of the story? Who is the author?
- ✓ Is this book fiction or non-fiction? How do you know?
- ✓ Who are the people on the front cover?
- ✓ What are they doing?
- ✓ Can you predict what the story might be about?

While reading there are plenty of opportunities to move away from the story and talk about other things. Here are some suggestions, but you and your child will doubtless think of other things to discuss.

- ✓ There are plenty of pictures showing letter blocks or numbers. Ask your child if they can identify some of the letters or numbers.
- ✓ Where there are several items in a picture, ask your child to count them. For example, how many eggs did Ada break on the page she's holding a tortoise? How many eggs are left in the box?
- ✓ There are so many toys and unusual items in the pictures: on one page alone I can spot palm trees, an Egyptian-style model of a head, a tennis racquet, a clock, a drum, a gong, a radio, a swanee whistle, an electric whisk, two 'phones and many more items besides. The 'phones which are quite old-fashioned: this in itself could prompt a discussion of what things used to be like "in the olden days". On this same page, personally I'm wondering why Ada's brother is carrying and not wearing his shoes?!
- ✓ There are several pictures to do with time: clocks, calendars, clockwork items, and even a musical metronome. If you have some clockwork toys at home, you could investigate how they work together.
- ✓ The artist has given the characters very expressive faces. Before reading a page's text, you could ask your child to look at the faces and try to read the emotions: is the character looking happy, sad, angry, confused, worried and so on.
- ✓ How do the pictures show us that the story takes place across a long time – years probably? (Clue – look at her brother!)
- ✓ Ada asks lots of questions. What questions about the world intrigues your child (and you!). It doesn't matter if you can't answer those questions but it can be fun trying to find out together.
- ✓ Questions need a "?" at the end. In speech we show this by ending question sentences with an upwards inflections. Can you think of things you can say as a statement, but turn into a question by the way you say them? For example, "This is your pen," and "This is your pen?"

- ✓ The pictures show lots of examples of scientific inquiry. For example Ada is clearly interested in the idea, “What came first, the chicken or the egg?” and she is up-to-date with astronomy as she includes Haumea (discovered in 2004) and Eris (discovered in 2005) as well as the better known planets of our solar system. Why not explore these topics with your child?
- ✓ There might be some unfamiliar vocabulary, such as “cologne” and “gawk.” Can you work out what unfamiliar words might mean, using the context of the story and looking at the pictures?
- ✓ When Ada tries to put the cat in the washing machine, this could prompt a discussion about safety at home: what is and isn’t appropriate to do?
- ✓ Then when her family are angry with her, are they angry with her as a person, or annoyed by her behaviour on this one occasion? This is a useful prompt to talking about handling emotions: we all have them, have to manage them and aren’t always successful in this!
- ✓ When Ada makes her first drawing on the wall, can we tell what she’s thinking about?
- ✓ At this point, how do you think the story is going to end? What might happen next?
- ✓ You’ll both think of plenty more questions like this, we’re sure!

After reading.

- ✓ Read the book again! If you read the book several times you will find your child knows what words are coming next, especially a word at the end of a line that rhymes with the previous line is coming up. You could point to this word and pause when it ought to occur to give your child the opportunity to complete the sentence: this is a step on the road to their reading!
- ✓ Read the book again and again! You, the adult, may have to pretend not to be fed up with it!
- ✓ Did the story end as you predicted?
- ✓ Can you summarise the story for someone who hasn’t read it before?
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? What do you think the author was trying to tell you?
- ✓ What has the book made you think about?
- ✓ Can you make up another adventure for Ada and tell the story? You can illustrate it if you like.
- ✓ You’ll both think of plenty more questions like this, we’re sure!

We hope you’ve enjoyed this approach to reading. There is significant evidence that links reading for pleasure to later exam. attainment and general success in life. You may feel like you’re “just having fun reading a story,” but you are giving your child a huge educational boost by doing so.

If you would like to know more about proactive reading, this free booklet has some great ideas.
<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/globalassets/resources/bookstart/reading-with-your-child-3-4-years/bookstart-reading-with-your-child-3-4-english.pdf>