

## Language Arts and Literature

### Literacy Make. Alphabet Sticks

Literacy begins well before reading and this activity will reinforce early letter recognition.

To make an Alphabet Stick you will need:

Empty paper towel tube, dot stickers, and marker.  
What to do:

1. Write each letter of the alphabet on one of the dot stickers.
2. Write the same letters on the tube. Don't worry about order just spread them around.
3. Let the child put the sticker on the matching letter.
4. Variations: For further practice put uppercase letters on sticker and lowercase letters on tube.

### Retelling Bracelet

Have children create a bracelet using a green bead for the beginning, a red bead for the ending and three or more other beads for the middle. As children retell a story have them slide a bead from left to right for the beginning and then another bead for each story component. With younger children I would use three detail (middle beads). However, you may wish to increase the number with older students.

[tinyurl.com/rRetellingBracelet](http://tinyurl.com/rRetellingBracelet)



## Poetry and Literature for Teens

### Fiction

**Belzhar**  
by Meg Wolitzer  
WOLI

**Chains**  
by Laurie Halse Anderson  
ANDE

**The Crossover**  
by Kwame Alexander  
ALEX

**Death Cloud**  
by Andy Lane  
LANE

**Splintered**  
by A.G. Howard  
HOWA

### Nonfiction

**Essential Shakespeare Handbook**  
by Alan Riding  
822.33 DD927E

**How I Discovered Poetry**  
by Marilyn Nelson  
811.54 N428H

**Time You Let Me In**  
by Naomi Shihab Nye  
811.608 T583

**What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew**  
by Daniel Pool  
820.9008 P821W and ebook

**William Shakespeare's Star Wars**  
By Ian Doescher  
812.6 D653E

### Teen Craft: Book Planters

1. Find an old hardcover book that you don't want to read, and is not in good enough shape to be donated elsewhere.
2. Open the book, and use an X-Acto knife to cut a rectangle in the center of the pages. Keep cutting in the same rectangular shape until you have almost reached the end of the book.
3. Line the hole with parchment paper. This should keep the surrounding pages from getting wet.
4. Plant the plant in the book!



## Chapters and Verse for Kids

### J-Easy (picture books)

ENGL  
**Orangutanka:**  
A Story in Poems  
by Margarita Engle

FRAN  
**A Dazzling Display of Dogs: Concrete Poetry**  
by Betsy Franco

MCNA  
**A Poem in Your Pocket**  
by Margaret McNamara

MUTH  
**Hi, Kool: A Year of Seasons**  
by Jon J. Muth

### J-Fiction

HESS  
**Out of the Dust**  
by Karen Hesse

HOLT  
**Rhyme Schemer**  
by K. A. Holt

LOWR  
**Gooney Bird is so Absurd**  
by Lois Lowry  
WISS

**Gone Fishing: A Novel in Verse**  
by Tamera Will Wissinger

### J-Nonfiction

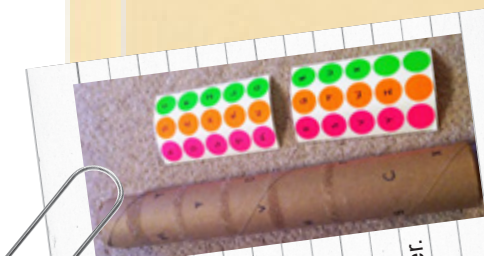
808.81 DEAT  
**The Death of the Hat: A Brief History of Poetry in 50 Objects**

811.54 G739P

**The Poem That Will Not End: Fun with Poetic Forms and Voices**  
by Joan Bransfield Graham

811.54 LEWI  
**Bigfoot is Missing!**  
by Patrick J. Lewis

811.54 S568SW  
**Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature**  
by Joyce Sidman

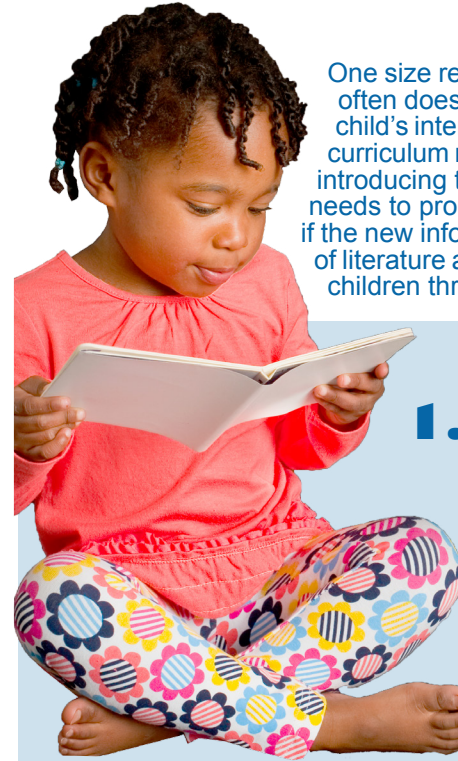


## Language Arts and Literature

One size really does not fit all. Homeschoolers are well aware of the fact that what works for one child often does not work for another. The ability to tailor language arts programs to focus on an individual child's interests is one of the privileges and challenges of homeschooling. Integrating literature into the curriculum requires some thought, but it helps students practice the important skill of comprehension by introducing them to a wide variety of cultures, beliefs, customs, and ideas. Anyone, regardless of age, needs to process new information in order to fit it into the context of what is already known, especially if the new information seems incompatible or contradictory to existing knowledge. By choosing a variety of literature and discussing it with their children, homeschool parents have the opportunity to guide their children through the process of learning to discern what they read and to assimilate what they learn.

### Awesome Ideas to Enhance Your Language Arts Programs

1. **Take your child to storytime at the library.** Afterward, ask open-ended questions about the books shared during storytime and encourage your child to retell the stories to you. (Preschool and kindergarten)



2. **Make your own books as a family** and encourage your children to use them to record their thoughts, create their own stories, or retell the stories they have read.

See **Make it! Write it! Read it!** by Wendy M. L. Libby for ideas. (All ages)

3. **Engage with the written word all around you** by discussing text on signs, cereal boxes, advertisements, newspaper articles, and magazines. For younger children, this promotes literacy by helping them form connections between the symbols they see around them and meaning. For older children, discussing newspaper articles and magazines helps them understand the broader world around them. **Everyday Literacy: Environmental Print Activities for Children 3 to 8** by Stephanie Mueller has several suggestions. (All ages)

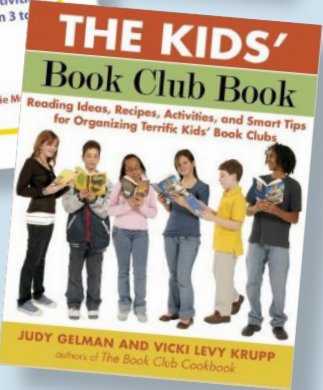
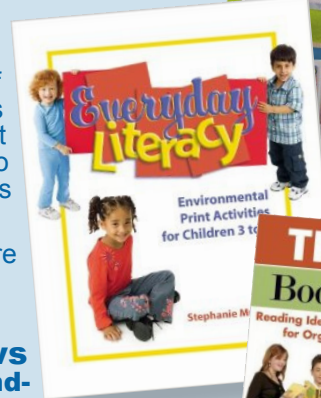
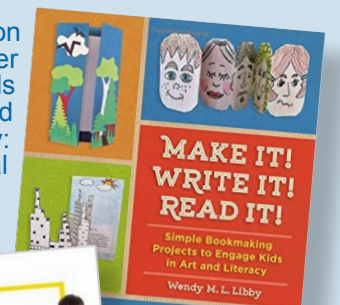
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4. **Start a book discussion group**, either at home with all of your students or with other homeschooling families. This encourages reading comprehension as your child will have to understand what they have read in order to verbalize their thoughts and opinions. It also gives children the opportunity to broaden their ideas about the books by discussing them with others.

Check out the **Kids Book Club Book** by Judy Gelman for more information. (Elementary age and older)

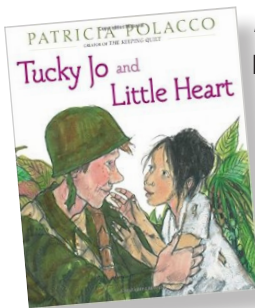
5. **Have your children read books and write reviews** for Pikes Peak Library District's book review page. See [ppld.org/find-good-book/book-reviews/review-book](http://ppld.org/find-good-book/book-reviews/review-book) to submit book reviews for both children and teens. (Elementary age and older, although younger kids can dictate their review to their parent.)

Enjoy finding the method that fits your family perfectly and keep reading together! Do not worry about running out of books to read—there is always something new waiting to be discovered at Pikes Peak Library District!



# The <sup>new</sup> BookShelf

great new books for homeschoolers



## Tucky Jo and Little Heart

by Patricia Polacco (2015)

Patricia Polacco has written all kinds of picture books. Many are family stories, or true stories about someone she has met. This newest book is about a WWII veteran, his experiences in the war in the South Pacific, and the results of his kindness expressed in a surprising way, many years later.

**Historical fiction – ages 5 - 10**

## P. Zonka Lays an Egg

by Julie Paschkis (2015)



This beautifully illustrated book is lovely for preschoolers, and the author gives us information at the end of the book about “Pysanka” (Ukrainian decorated eggs) which could lead to some hands-on, messy activities. The story is a simple one, about being different, and perhaps not doing or being what others expect.

**Art, other cultures – ages 3 - 10**



## A Handful of Stars

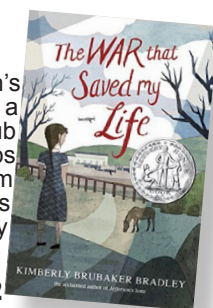
by Cynthia Lord (2015)

This children’s novel was a delight to read, and with the easy access of the Internet, I could quickly do a Google search about harvesting blueberries in Maine, which is completely different from picking blueberries in other states. There are even YouTube videos showing how the blueberry rakes work, and it is backbreaking labor. The story is about a girl in Maine who meets a migrant worker, whose family is there to harvest blueberries. They become friends, despite their differences, by starting with the things that they share – a love of dogs. There are still issues of prejudice, as well as the joys of art and creativity.

**American agriculture, other cultures – ages 8 - 12**

## The War that Saved My Life

by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley (2015)



Here is another of my favorites for the year, a children’s novel set in WWII England. This is so much more than a WWII story, as the protagonist has a physical disability (club foot) that her mother believes is a sign of shame, and keeps her hidden, inside a London slum, until she escapes from London with her younger brother to the countryside. Ada is courageous, creative, and loves her brother; she eventually comes to see herself as a person of value, too.

**Historical fiction, disabilities – ages 8 - 12**



## Creating a Beautiful Mess: Ten Essential Play Experiences for a Joyous Childhood

by Ann Gadzikowski (2015)

This is a book for parents only, and is a slim book with great information about the importance of play. Homeschoolers are fortunate kids, in that they often have more playtime, and more playtime often includes many of the “ten essential” items in the book. Just to whet your appetite, I’ll list the first five: Building with blocks, pretending and make-believe, running around like crazy, cuddling something soft and small, laughing, joking and other general silliness. Number six is “creating a beautiful mess,” which is what many homeschool days looked like at our house.

**Historical fiction, disabilities – ages 8 - 12**

Pikes Peak Library District

# brainfuse

Live Online Homework Help

Little-Known Secrets

Tucked away in the KidsWeb and TeenZone sections of ppld.org is a great tutoring resource. **Brainfuse** is designed to assist students in all grades as they learn a variety of subjects. Every day from 2 to 11 p.m., students with library cards can log on to **Brainfuse** to get free live tutoring. Subjects include reading and math for younger students and calculus, physics, and world history for high school students. In addition to live tutoring, students also have access to a writing lab where they can submit papers and receive timely feedback on their papers and creative writing projects. All tutors have to show mastery of content and have been thoroughly background checked.

In addition to expert tutors, **Brainfuse** also offers online content, flashcards, and testing resources for students who would like to improve their knowledge without the assistance of a tutor. Quick reference guides, flashcards, and practice tests are available any time the student would like to work on a specific subject. Students preparing for life beyond high school will find SAT and ACT test prep information, a resume lab, and interview assistance.

If your family is searching for additional resources to assist struggling learners or augment the education of high achievers, check out Brainfuse HelpNow! To find Brainfuse, go to [ppld.org/teens/homework](http://ppld.org/teens/homework) or [ppld.org/kids](http://ppld.org/kids) and click on Homework.

### Brain freeze...

also known as ice-cream headache, cold-stimulus headache, trigeminal headache or its given scientific name sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia, is a form of brief pain or headache commonly associated with consumption (particularly quick consumption) of cold beverages or foods such as ice cream and ice pops. It is caused by having something cold touch the roof of the mouth (palate), and is believed to result from a nerve response causing rapid constriction and swelling of blood vessels or a “referring” of pain from the roof of the mouth to the head.



### To relieve pain...

some doctors suggest pressing the tongue against the roof of the mouth to warm the area or tilting the head back for about 20 seconds. Another method to relieve ice-cream headaches is to drink a liquid that has a higher temperature than the substance that caused the ice-cream headache. Some people report relief by breathing in through the mouth and out through the nose, thus passing warm air through the nasal passages.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

## Homeschool Events

### 9th Annual Art Show!

April 1 - 30, 2016

Homeschooled students of all ages can submit one drawing, painting, photo, sculpture, etc. to the Children’s Department at East Library.

**Drop off item from March 21 - 31, 2016.**

All artwork will be on display during the entire month of April and we’ll end with a reception for friends and family.

Contact Gail at [gsohns@ppld.org](mailto:gsohns@ppld.org) for more information.

### Science Lab Programs

A special program is planned each month.

3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month • 1 - 3 p.m.  
East Library • Community Room

Contact Gail at [gsohns@ppld.org](mailto:gsohns@ppld.org) for more information or visit [ppld.org/homeschool-hub](http://ppld.org/homeschool-hub).

### Primary Source Workshop

This workshop is designed to teach students the basics of “reading” a variety of primary sources

♦ photographs ♦ letters ♦ videos

and to give students a familiarity with PPLD Special Collections

For grades 7 - 10.

Space is limited to 16 students and registration is required!

Contact Corrie at [cvanbemden@ppld.org](mailto:cvanbemden@ppld.org) for more information.

Thu., April 7 • 1 - 3 p.m.  
Penrose Library  
Carnegie Reading Room

### ERC at East Library

(Educational Resource Center)

Mon. and Wed. • 3 - 6 p.m.

Tue. and Thu. • 1 - 4 p.m.

Fri. and Sat. • noon - 4 p.m.

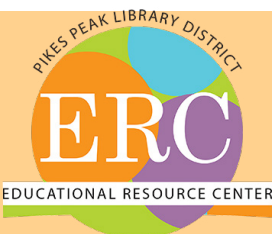
You can now reserve an hour in the ERC on Friday morning 10 - 11 a.m. or 11 a.m. - noon

Call the Children’s Desk at (719) 531-6333, x1403.

### Programs at High Prairie Library, Library 21c, Monument Library, Rockrimmon Library

Participate in a different family learning experience every time. Access the Homeschool Hub, “Events,” for details, dates, and times ([ppld.org/homeschool-hub](http://ppld.org/homeschool-hub)) or ask at one of the above libraries.

## Welcome to the Educational Resource Center!



The long-awaited Educational Resource Center (ERC) opened at East Library in October, with over 100 educational kits, many pieces of science equipment, and unique computer software to engage students of all ages!

The ERC provides hands-on materials for families wanting to enrich their children’s education or help them improve their skills. Math, Science, Language Arts, and Social Studies kits, art & music appreciation resources, educational games, and educational software attract families with children from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

In addition to microscopes, prepared slides, owl pellets, and simple chemistry supplies, we now also have materials for physics, biology, botany, and geology.

Early literacy toys are also available for younger siblings to play with during your visit to the ERC.

For older students, besides age-appropriate science kits, we also have some computer software just for them. Interactive virtual dissection software by Froguts.com will guide students through dissections of a frog, squid, starfish, cow eye, owl pellet, and fetal pig. Driver’s education software put out by AAA (Driver-ZED) takes teens through interactive experiences on 100 highway, city, country and work zone scenarios. Audio and video editing software is also available on the ERC computers, as well as standard Microsoft Office products for reports and research.

Most ERC materials are listed in the PPLD catalog! Just search “ERC” and the subject you are interested in and you’ll find kits and equipment listed with short descriptions of each.

If you haven’t had a chance to visit the ERC yet, please stop by. We’d love to give you a tour!

Other Events & Programs

### Spring Break Fun • March 21 - 25

Music, dancing, puppets, animals, magic and more! Check with your local library for locations and times.

### Family Fun

Enjoy performers, animals, crafts and much more at monthly programs. Fun for the whole family! Check online at [ppld.org](http://ppld.org), or at your local library, to find out what’s happening at that location.

### Make Art! (grades 1 - 5)

Create a unique work of art one Saturday afternoon a month at East Library! Call (719) 531-6333, x1403 or x1401 for dates and theme.

### Knitting Kninjas (ages 12 - 18)

Come join other teens and learn different stitches, patterns, and techniques! Feel free to bring your own supplies and knitting projects, but we will also have yarn and needles to use.

**The first and third Thursday of every month 4 - 5 p.m. • East Teen Center**

### East Library Teen Night Tuesday in the Makerspace!

Strap on your tool belt and grab your goggles as we amp up (sometimes quite literally) teen programs in the East Makerspace. It’ll be a blast!

**Third Tuesday of the month • 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.**

### Career Conversations: Legal and Criminal Justice

Professionals from the legal and criminal justice system will break it down for teens in a panel discussion that explores the ups and downs of occupations.

**East Library Makerspace**

### Impossible Astronaut Day

Join us in celebrating Impossible Astronaut Day with *Doctor Who* themed crafts, snacks, and much more! All teens are encouraged to dress up as their favorite Doctor.

**Sat., April 23 • 3 - 5 p.m. • Old Colorado City Library**

### Crazy Circuits

Play and learn about different types of circuits, writable circuits.

**Tue., May 10 • 4 - 5 p.m. • High Prairie Library**

### Study Buddies

Teen volunteers help students in kindergarten through fifth grade with homework or reading practice.

**High Prairie • Mondays • 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. • (719) 531-6333, x1884**

**East Library • Tuesdays • 6:30 - 8 p.m. • (719) 531-6333, x1407 or x1403**

**Library 21c • Thursday • 6:30 - 8 p.m. • (719) 884-9800, x6310**

Homeschool Connections ♦ Spring/2016