



Rocks

Adventures in Reading:
Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets

Contents:

- Two books - one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey



for teachers and librarians

This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about rocks, appropriate for a first or second grade level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of suggested alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books are ***The Jade Stone***, a Chinese folktale adapted by Caryn Yacowitz and the nonfiction book ***Rocks in His Head*** by Carol Otis Hurst. ***Rocks in His Head*** tells a real life story, about actual events and real people. It's about one man's fascination with rocks and how his lifelong interest in rocks made him a very happy man. The story is also a delightful introduction to looking closely at rocks, while it shows the positive, life-changing power of pursuing a personal interest. ***The Jade Stone*** shows the relationship a sculptor has with stone. It also shows the honorable commitment the artist has to his craft.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
- >> Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> Get real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> Parent information sheet
- >> Three themed activity pages
- >> Bookmark
- >> Survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you.

Let Reading Rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact. Click on "Family Literacy Bags"

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about _____ was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> two books to share with your child
- >> three related activities
- >> bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by _____ .

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

Teacher signature

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Instructions

How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet

Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction — a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

Start the fun

3. When you know you’ll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in.

When you read ***Rocks in His Head***, talk about the cover of the book with your child. What does the picture on the cover suggest the story is about? Has your child read other books about rocks? Read the book to your child. Take time to ask and answer questions and explore the pictures. Can you spell the different names of the different rocks? Have you ever seen any of the rocks drawn in the book? Read it again, if your child asks you to or, read another book or try one of the activities.

4. When you read ***The Jade Stone*** ask what the picture on the cover suggests about the book. Ask your child if they know other folktales, where did they come from? Mention that this tale comes from across the world, from China.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child’s interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

When you’re done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child’s school.

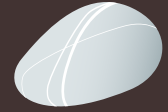
Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning – and reading – too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don’t be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don’t need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*



listening and looking

Chan Lo, the artist in ***The Jade Stone***, “listened” to the stone to hear what the stone wanted to be. He would say, “Here I stand, O Noble Stone, to carve a creature of your own. Whisper signs and sounds from the rock that I, your servant, may unlock.” And then, he’d be quiet. With each rock he carved, first, he had to quietly sit with the rock. Only if he was quiet could he begin to understand the art he could carve with that rock.

Try it. Take one of your rocks, and sit quietly with it. Close your eyes and try to “listen.” But also look at your rock, carefully. You might not be able to “hear” the rock like Chan Lo, but you will see shapes and designs on the rock.

One of the books on the bookmark, ***Everybody Needs a Rock*** lists 10 rules for finding a special rock — a rock that will be special to you, a rock you will understand just as Chan Lo understood the jade stone. Like Chan Lo, who had to be quiet to listen, Rule #2 asks you to be quiet, “When you are looking at rocks don’t let mothers or fathers or even best friends talk to you. You should choose a rock when everything is quiet. Don’t let dogs bark at you or bees buzz at you.”

What pictures are on your rocks?

Select a few rocks. Sit quietly. Look and “listen” to your rocks and see what pictures you see on the surface of the rocks. Paint them. Paint the art you see on your rock.

Supplies

- >> Rocks
- >> Acrylic or other water-based paint
- >> Fine paint brushes for detailed work
- >> Newspaper

Instructions

- >> Collect a few rocks
- >> Look closely at the surface of each rock
- >> Like the sculptor with in ***The Jade Stone***, What shapes do you see on the surface of the rock? Do you see an animal shape? If you turn the rock in your hands, do you see different shapes?
- >> Paint on the surface of the rock the shape you see
- >> Let dry on the newspaper

collecting and curating

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People collect all sorts of things: marbles, coins, dolls, bottles, stamps, cards — all sorts of people collect all sorts of stuff. Many people collect rocks. Once you have more than four, you have a collection. You can organize your collection in various ways to show the different relationships between the items in your collection. Sometimes you can organize your collection to show relationships that can be very tricky to figure out.

For example, you can organize your rock collection according to the type of rock: is it igneous, sedimentary, or metamorphic? The non-fiction books listed on the bookmark can show you how to identify the type of rocks you have collected. Or, thinking more like the artist in *The Jade Stone*, you can organize your collection by the color of the rocks; pink, brown, blue, speckled. You can organize your rock collection by the size, keeping all the larger rocks separate from the smaller rocks and pebbles; or you could organize your collection by texture — flat and smooth or rough and bumpy.

Or, you can organize your collection by details very specific to you. For example, you can organize your rocks according to where you found them, putting all the rocks you collected on vacation in one bunch, all the rocks you collected in a neighborhood park in a different pile, and all the rocks you collected in your school yard in another pile.

As you begin to organize your rock collection in various ways, you are “curating.” When you go to museum, you see exhibits that have been curated — organized in an interesting manner. You can curate your rock collection to show different relationships between each of the rocks within your collection, like an exhibit in a museum.

And like the man in *Rocks in His Head*, be sure you carefully identify each rock, identifying the type of rocks you have in your collection. If you are unsure of the name of the rocks, you can find information on the Internet. Try the website Rockhounds (<http://www.rockhoundkids.com/>), a site created and maintained by kids who love rocks, or you can ask a geologist (<http://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/ask-a-geologist/>) at the National Geological Society's site. You can also learn more at the Idaho Public Television website, Investigating Rocks and Minerals in Your World (<http://idahoptv.org/dialogue4kids/season3/rocks/facts.cfm>).

Supplies

- >> Empty egg cartons
- >> Empty cardboard boxes
- >> Paper, pencil, tape
- >> One of the non-fiction books listed on the bookmark

Instructions

- >> Collect rocks from around your school, home, park, or wherever you go
- >> Wash the rocks
- >> Organize the rocks by their color: pink, black, white, gray, brown, and yellow
- >> Try to find the name of each rock in one of the non-fiction books listed on the bookmark
- >> Like the man with Rocks in His Head, make a label for each of the rocks you can name
- >> Put your rock collection on display

writing rocks!

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Write a haiku poem about rocks

Haiku is a very specific form of poetry from Japan. It is composed of 17 sounds, or syllables.

There is no title for a haiku poem. There is no punctuation. There are no capital letters. But here is the specific form you need to follow:

Line 1 has 5 syllables

Line 2 has 7 syllables

Line 3 has 5 syllables

Here's an example:

walking on rocks now
brings spring closer than before
the log burst mushrooms

Here's another example:

lava from below
cut through the air back in time
bringing pebbles for good luck

You can write a haiku based on what you know about rocks, what different rocks look like, what you do with rocks, and how and where you see rocks around you.

Word play

Try writing a story, a song, or longer poem using an idiom that includes rocks. An idiom is a phrase that means something different from the literal meaning of each of the words in the phrase.

You already know one idiom using the word "rocks" – the title of the book you read, ***Rocks in His Head*** is an idiom that can mean "crazy." We know the man didn't have real rocks in his head. He had ideas that many people didn't understand or appreciate. The woman who ran the museum appreciated his love and knowledge about rocks. But to the people who did not share his fascination with rocks, he had ***rocks in his head***.

Here are other idioms. Try writing a story, song or longer poem inspired by one of these idioms:

- >> You rock! ***You're cool***
- >> Rock on. ***Keep going***
- >> It's just a stone's throw away. ***It's very close by***
- >> You're a chip off the old rock. ***You resemble your parents***

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Featured titles

Fiction

The Jade Stone, adapted
by Caryn Yacowitz

Nonfiction

Rocks in His Head
by Carol Otis Hurst

Additional fiction titles

Everybody Needs a Rock
by Byrd Baylor

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble
by William Steig

I Love Rocks by Cari Meister

If You Find a Rock by Peggy
Christian and Barbara Hersh
Lember

Additional nonfiction titles

Let's Go Rock Collecting
by Roma Gans

*The Magic School Bus Inside the
Earth* by Joanna Cole

Rocks, Rocks, Rocks
by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace and
Marshall Cavendish

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