

# Keeping Sharp – Practical Ideas to Help you Work with your Children at Home

The fact is back-to-school isn't starting on time this year, and right now our start time is unknown. This leaves many parents wondering whether their kids will fall behind in their studies and how they can help them stay sharp and beat the boredom during the ongoing strike. So at GME, we came up with a list of fun and educational activities to do with your kids, and great websites to visit, during the strike. Please remember that one of the best things you can be doing right now with your children is to start building in routines (bed times, and study times) to help them strengthen their focusing and self-discipline skills, two very important attributes in achieving success at learning!

1. **Go for a nature hike** – This is a fun way for kids of all ages to keep up with both physical education and natural science. It is important for children to get at least an hour a day of physical activity to stay healthy and ready to learn. For younger kids, point out different kinds of plants and wildlife you spy along the way. Older kids can learn scientific identification skills with the assistance of plant and animal identification guides. Keep a look out for different insects, nests, life stages, etc. You can also try a Scavenger Hunt, visit <http://www.pinterest.com/pin/306526318360775497/>
2. **Practice Practical Math Skills** – When out shopping with your kids, get them to pay attention to the prices of the items being purchased and try to determine how much money you will need to buy them. Teach children how to tell time with their own watch. Practice counting, addition, subtraction and multiplication skills using real money at home – what kid doesn't love money!
3. **Read, read, read!** - Set special time aside each day to read as a family, whether out loud with younger kids or for quiet time with older kids.
4. **Paint a picture** – Kids learn much more than just painting with this simple skill – young kids develop fine motor skills, while older kids can express themselves through a positive outlet.
5. **Write a story together** – take turns writing each sentence of the story and see what adventures you can go on together! This fun activity encourages team building skills, but the kids will have so much fun they won't even notice.
6. **Watch a Movie in French** – If in French Immersion, watch your favorite movie in French!

## Great French Web Sites:

- **Bonjour.com** – practice speaking French

Babbel is the new way to learn a foreign language. The comprehensive learning system combines effective educational methods with state-of-the-art technology. Interactive online courses will improve your grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation skills in no time. You'll make fast progress and have fun doing it.

[http://lp.babbel.com/d/ENG\\_index.html?l1=ENG&l2=FRA&ch=SEM](http://lp.babbel.com/d/ENG_index.html?l1=ENG&l2=FRA&ch=SEM)

- **La Souris**

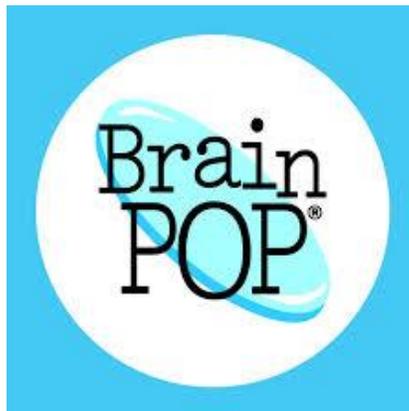
French language activities for K-12

<http://www.lasouris-web.org/index.html>

- **BrainPop**

Learning modules for Math, History, Science, and many others in French. BrainPOP creates animated, curricular content that engages students, supports educators, and bolsters achievement.

<http://www.brainpop.fr/>



- **radio-canada**

An amazing site! This site offers great videos, educational games, project ideas and much more...ALL in French!

<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/jeunesse/>



- **Read Aloud Books** – for all grade levels (English and French)

**This site is JUST books read aloud by normal (but enthusiastic) readers.**

There are no advertisements or other revenue generating opportunities on the site.

- Children can't navigate away to follow other youtube leads.
- There are only children's books on the site.
- While reading the videos generally only show the books versus seeing the reader, which I think distracts from the book.
- Animation on the site is limited to nice editing jobs that zoom to parts of the page.
- The books are frequently reordered to encourage listening to new books.
- Books have also been added in Other Languages. The tab with the globe icon labeled "Other Languages" ("Otras idiomas", "Altre Lingue", "Autres Langues", "Anderen Sprachen") acts as a portal between the site in different languages. Following the links will take you to a new site entirely in the target language. To change languages, go to the Other Languages tab and select desired language.

<http://www.justbooksreadaloud.com/index.php?t=Home&p1=&p2=>

## Top English Reading Web Sites:

- **Beginning Readers:**

Starfall.com opened in September of 2002 as a free public service to teach children to read with phonics. They offer a systematic phonics approach, in conjunction with phonemic awareness practice, is perfect for preschool, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, special education, homeschool, and English language development (ELD, ELL, ESL).

<http://www.starfall.com/>



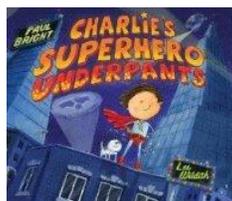
- **Read Aloud Books** – for all grade levels (English)

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- **English Reading Comprehension:**

Sign up for free and gain access to over 1,000 reading comprehension exercises. Our program teaches students to think critically, draw inferences, understand scope and global concepts, find or recall details, and infer the meanings of useful vocabulary words.

<http://readtheory.org/>

## Recommended Math Sites:



- **Khan Academy**

A world of skills to practice, with help along the way. Practice math at your own pace with our adaptive assessment environment. You can start at  $1 + 1$  and work your way into calculus or jump right into whatever topic needs some brushing up. Each problem is randomly generated, so you never run out of practice material. If you need a hint, every single problem can be broken down, step-by-step, with one click. If you need more help, you can always watch a related video.

<https://www.khanacademy.org>

- **Online & Mobile Learning Adventures Featuring DreamWorks Animation Franchises**

This web site has engaging math games to help students stay sharp with their math facts – an essential skill that is often reviewed in the first few weeks of school!

<http://www.jumpstart.com/HomePage/NonUserHomePage.aspx?pid=js&cid=mainmenu>

## High Interest Writing Sites:

- **Story writing**

Ready to get students excited about writing? [Scholastic's Story Starters](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters/) serves up hundreds of creative combinations that take the writer's block out of creative writing for students. Plus, it is now available for iPad!

Set young writers loose with prompts that explore the themes of Adventure, Fantasy, or Sci-Fi. Or choose Scrambler, for random word combinations. Story Starters gives ideas for character, plot, and setting. If you want to change your writing prompt, pull the lever and it will serve up a new prompt, either piece-by-piece or all at once.

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters/>

- **StoryJumper:**

A fun interactive site that allows students, to not only write their own stories, but also illustrate them with fun clip art.

<http://www.storyjumper.com/>

## ***“A Little Bit of Everything”:***

- **MrNussbaum.com**

This site was developed with the idea that crucial concepts, themes, ideas, and fact sets taught in the classroom can be enhanced over the internet through interactivity. MrNussbaum.com offers dozens of interactive games specifically designed to pinpoint one or several essential concepts taught in elementary years, and dozens of research themes designed to make the process of gathering information interactive and enjoyable. MrNussbaum.com, however, does not just present information, but in addition, provides numerous interactive activities to complement the presentation of interactive information.

<http://mrnussbaum.com/readingpassageindex/>

- **RoomRecess.com**

This site is dedicated to providing children with free educational games. These games reinforce important skills that are vital to elementary students and their learning process. RoomRecess.com was developed entirely by an elementary school teacher with the goal of reinforcing fundamental learning concepts in math, reading, spelling, language arts, and basic problem solving. All the educational games are free, so students do not have to sign up or hold an account. Children can simply load up an activity and have fun learning while they play

<http://www.roomrecess.com/>

- **BrainPop**

Learning modules for Math, History, Engineering, Health, Arts, English and Science. BrainPOP creates animated, curricular content that engages students, supports educators, and bolsters achievement.

<http://www.brainpop.com/>

- **BrainPop Jr.**

Provides educational movies for K-3 students. Homework Help, leveled quizzes, games and activities for kids.

<http://www.brainpopjr.com/>

