Make it a Classroom Event!

In-Person Read-Aloud Tips

1. Get comfy
   Get students into a comfortable listening position. Carpet squares or a similar setting can be a fun way to do this.

2. Help students see
   Hold the book wide open and facing students. If students aren’t all directly in front of you, rotate the book periodically so all students can see the pictures. Project a digital version of the book if possible.

3. Read slowly
   Take your time!

4. Get animated!
   Use voices for characters, hand motions, facial expressions, and volume changes to help kids get engaged.

5. Involve students in the story
   Are there things students can act out or contribute to the story? Are there pictures you can refer to? Quick “yes or no” questions can also help students connect to the story and stay engaged.

6. Prepare for questions
   Young students can get sidetracked easily. Be ready to redirect students who have stories or lots of questions.

7. End with discussion
   Help your students fully grasp the story by talking about it afterward! Ask questions like: What is the big idea of the story? What is something new you learned? What surprised you?

8. Follow up with an activity
   Solidify the students’ learning with an educational activity.

9. Challenge students to select a book and read independently
   Students may be motivated to find a book that is of interest to them and continue reading.
Extend the Reading Experience

Use these activities to connect the books to science, social studies:

- **My Family’s Corn Farm**
  - [Iowa Corn Activity Booklet (K-5)](http://iowaagliteracy.org): This activity booklet helps students learn all about corn while connecting to science and social studies.
  - [Liquids and Solids (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2)](http://iowaagliteracy.org): Students will explore, through hands-on experiments, the concepts of liquid and solid.
  - [How Corn Is Used (iowaagliteracy.org) (3-5)](http://iowaagliteracy.org): Students will practice math skills while becoming familiar with the uses of Iowa corn.
  - Connect with the [Iowa Corn Mobile Education Trailer](http://iowaagliteracy.org) or [Biofuels Mobile Education Center](http://iowaagliteracy.org) (3-12)

- **The Good Garden: How One Family Went From Hunger to Having Enough**
  - [Soil Comparison (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2)](http://iowaagliteracy.org): Students determine similarities and differences between two types of soil and observe, question, and form a hypothesis on why the two soil types are different.
  - [Growing Plants in Science and Literature, More Than an Empty Pot (Grades K-2) (agclassroom.org)](http://agclassroom.org): Explore literature and science, practicing story mapping and examining the needs of plants and the importance of soil and water. Like the characters in the story, students’ plant and observe the growth of seeds.
  - [Keeping Soil in Its Place (agclassroom.org) (3-5)](http://agclassroom.org): Students demonstrate rain drop splash (splash erosion) and determine its impact on bare soil by visually identifying types of erosion.
  - [Retaining Water in Soil (iowaagliteracy.org) (3-5)](http://iowaagliteracy.org): Students will learn that different types of soil have various water-holding capacities and that it influences how well crops grow in that soil. Soil texture and structure is important for sustaining productive plant life.

- **Riparia’s River**
  - [Water Pollution (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2)](http://iowaagliteracy.org): Learn about the ways in which water can become polluted, ways to conserve it, and why it is important to conserve water.
  - [Water Use (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2)](http://iowaagliteracy.org): Students will explore humans’ demands on the world’s water supply and discuss ways to conserve it.
  - [Caring for the Land (agclassroom.org) (3-5)](http://agclassroom.org): Students explain why people have different opinions regarding soil management and identify cause and effect relationships relating to agriculture and the environment.
  - [Wad-a-Watershed (agclassroom.org) (3-5)](http://agclassroom.org): Students examine the basic geography of a watershed, how water flows through the system, and how people can impact the quality of our water.
Celebration and Engagement Ideas

- How’d That Get Into My Lunchbox
  - From Pig to Bacon (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2): help students understand pigs and their products, producers, and consumers by using various nonfiction books, and activities.
  - Creating Healthy Meals (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2): students will be able to identify food groups and healthy food options.
  - Dairy: Careers from Farm to Fridge (iowaagliteracy.org) (3-5): Students will identify the human resources needed to produce, process, transport and market dairy products and realize there are many different types of jobs in agriculture.
  - From Farm to Lunch Tray (iowaagliteracy.org) (3-5): Students will develop an understanding of where the food they eat for lunch originated.

- Our School Garden
  - A Day as a Farmer (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2): understand learn about a farmer’s responsibilities and skills. They have an opportunity to collaborate with their team to make decisions for their farm.
  - Plant Parts We Eat (iowaagliteracy.org) (K-2): Students will strengthen their sorting skills by learning about which part of food crops they eat.
  - Backpack Garden (agclassroom.org) (3-5): Through project-based learning, students use school resources to construct and grow a school garden to supplement the school Backpack Program with fresh fruits and vegetables.
  - How Does Your Garden Grow? (3-5): Students synthesize what they know about soils, plants, and the environment to plan a garden, present their plans, and explain why they made the decisions that they did.

Digital versions of the My Family’s Farm books and additional lesson plans to go with each are available at: https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Tools-Resources/Publications/My-Familys-Farm.

- My Family’s Dairy Farm
  - It’s a Moo-stery!: help students make observations of the varying historical tools used in dairy production. Then encourage students to engineer their own tool to make butter!
  - Dairy: Careers from Farm to Fridge: who’s involved in dairy production? What do those people do? Explore these questions and more in this activity!

- My Family’s Turkey Farm
  - Turkey Marketing!: explore what it takes to raise turkey’s and market them in this farm-to-fork activity.
  - Turkeys: Farm to Fork: help students gain a better understanding of a turkey, the turkey farmer, and life cycles while strengthening LA and sequencing skills.
Celebration and Engagement Ideas

- My Family’s Pig Farm
  - **Pigs and Pork Resources**: Learn about all the natural, physical, and human resources needed to produce pork.

- My Family’s Egg Farm
  - **Eggs: From Hen to Home**: trace where eggs come from and how they make it to you.
Make it a Virtual Event!

Virtual Tips and Ideas

1. **Organize a Facebook Live event with your local library**
   
   Broadcast directly from Facebook. Viewers can interact and ask questions live or view the recording later at their convenience. Be sure to practice and set up a good camera angle. Ensure that the internet connection is strong. Make sure the audio on the video is clear. Be sure to get the author’s and/or publisher’s permission to do a read-aloud.

2. **Host a meeting of a book club**
   
   Challenge students to read the same book independently, and then come together virtually to discuss it. Challenge students to each read different books independently and then come together virtually to give a book talk about what they read.

3. **Invite the author to do a reading.**
   
   New faces and guest readers are always great.

4. **Offer a supplemental virtual guest speaker or activity**
   
   After students read a book, a guest speaker could provide an activity. Supplies could be sent to the classroom to be distributed or you can work with the school to create kits to send home for each student. Request a guest speaker here: [https://app.etaperestry.com/onlineforms/IowaAgricultureLiteracyFounda/guestspeaker.html](https://app.etaperestry.com/onlineforms/IowaAgricultureLiteracyFounda/guestspeaker.html)

5. **Slide Party**
   
   Ask students to prepare a slide presentation (Google Slides; PowerPoint) on a topic of their choice related to a book and share it with others on a videochat platform. Slides can be about a lot of things—students can create slides to introduce themselves, share interests, make a comic, teach others about something they are passionate about, or talk about a favorite book, series, or character in detail.

6. **Grab and Go Kits**
   
   Create packets of books and activities (see suggested activities) and let families pick them up. Invite families to share pictures or stories about reading together on your county or city’s social media page.

7. **Mystery Readers**
   
   Traditionally, Mystery Readers are special guests who come—after a mysterious build up—to read aloud to youth. Mystery Readers can be parents, grandparents, older siblings, or other members of the community (someone associated with agriculture?). Schedule virtual Mystery Readers! Build up suspense by asking Mystery Readers for clues about themselves and share these with youth throughout the week so they can unravel who will be reading with them next. Try using polling or forms to share clues and get children engaged in the guesswork.
Celebration and Engagement Ideas

8. FarmChat® Scavenger Hunt
   Read an agriculture book with students. Together make a list of items to look for on a farm. Then request or show a FarmChat®. During the chat, can children find something at the farm that is pictured in the book?

9. Breakout EDU or Virtual Escape Room
   A Breakout Edu (edu stands for education) and virtual escape rooms are puzzle games where youth answer questions about the book and figure out clues to unlock something. When they have the right answer, they get a code that “unlocks” a door or lock. To do a digital breakout, make clues based on a book and create your locks through Google form questions with data validation. You can also create the room using Google Slides. Get more information:
   - Digital escape room ideas
   - Video on how to create with Google forms
   - Video on how to create with Google Slides
   - Digital book on the Life Cycle of Soybeans
Make it a Community Event!

Ideas

1. **Reading Drive In**
   Invite families to an evening out of reading fun! As members of your community read aloud a variety of agricultural books, live stream their read alouds on a large screen set up in the school or community center parking lot for families to enjoy from their vehicles. Have readers use props, costumes, music, or interesting virtual backdrops to make the stories come alive for your audience.

2. **StoryWalk**
   StoryWalk is a fun, physically-distanced activity that places a children’s story—a deconstructed book, page by page—along a walking route in your community. Developed by Anne Ferguson in Montpelier, Vermont, a StoryWalk combines reading a children’s book aloud while taking a walk. To make a StoryWalk, you’ll need two copies of a book. Mount each page spread on cardstock and laminate with a heavy weight lamination. You should also create a “Welcome” page that explains how the StoryWalk works and includes the front cover of the book. Depending on where you set up your Read Across Iowa StoryWalk (library or school grounds, park, trails, or storefront windows along main street), you’ll also need wooden stakes for each laminated page spread and heavy-duty adhesive-backed Velcro to attach them. Window installations can be secured using suction cups, clips, or removable tape. Your StoryWalk could also feature student writing, photography, and artwork rather than published works.

3. **Reading Obstacle Course**
   Book fun, physical activity, and physical distancing all in one! Take advantage of empty parking lots or sidewalks and chalk up (or paint, duct tape) a path that gets kids hopping, jumping, spinning, balancing, marching, dancing, and zigzagging. Your chalk walk could include a variety of steps and directions based on literary references from the agricultural books. Focus around books that really move, such as *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* and mimic shoveling to plant potatoes and dribbling a basketball. Or act out Sylvia’s emotions in *Sylvia’s Spinach*. Encourage an inspired interpretation of a title like *The Kid Who Changed the World* and have students imagine an invention they could create. New faces and guest readers are always great.

4. **Little Free Library**
   Work with youth, parents, and community groups to create a free community book sharing box. Develop an action plan to open or revitalize a Little Free Library in your community. This book exchange, where neighbors, friends, and students can share their favorite books and stories, is a great way to learn through and with others. Celebrate with story time at the opening of your own Little Free Library! See the Little Free Library website for information, [https://littlefreelibrary.org/](https://littlefreelibrary.org/).