



## Keep the Learning Going During Winter Break

For students, winter break means a reprieve from homework and daily obligations. But before too long, the holidays will be over and students will be heading back to school. To prepare for a successful second semester, help your child practice his or her reading, writing, and math skills during winter vacation. Try these family-friendly activities to keep skills sharp.

- **Read for pleasure.** Whether your child is in the mood for holiday stories like *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* or the newest installment from his or her favorite series, winter break provides the perfect opportunity to stash schoolbooks and read for fun. Encourage relatives to give books as holiday gifts or bring the family together and take turns reading from classic tales.
- **Cook up an easy lesson.** Invite your child into the kitchen to help you whip up a special dish — from holiday cookies to potato pancakes. All of those half-tablespoon and quarter-cup measurements are great practice with fractions.
- **Write thank-you notes.** Writing notes of appreciation to gift-givers teaches children gratitude and helps polish writing and spelling skills.
- **Make the most of car rides.** Turn the drive to or from a holiday gathering into an opportunity to practice letters and numbers. Look for license plates from different states, try to find the alphabet on the license plates, or count the number of red (or white or green) cars.
- **Maintain reasonable bedtimes.** With no school, it can be tempting to let children become night owls. A few days before school starts again, ease back into the regular bedtime schedule so your child can start the year bright-eyed.
- **Ask for grocery list assistance.** Have your child help choose what to buy, decide how much you need, check your supplies to see what you already have, write or draw pictures on the list, and sort coupons.
- **Let kids help with online shopping.** Need a last-minute gift for Grandma or Uncle Joe? Log onto your favorite shopping sites, and let your child help you select presents. This helps children work on their computer and develop their research skills.
- **Have a family game night.** Chances are many of your family's favorite board and card games reinforce skills such as counting, reading, and drawing. Gather the group to play games you usually don't have time for on school nights.

Source: <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/parent-child/keep-skills-sharp-during-winter-break>