

Skill-Building Book Tips

7 Essential Life Skills

Have a great time reading *Alphabet City* in a way that highlights Making Connections, a Life Skill that promotes Executive Functions. This Life Skill is at the heart of learning—**figuring out what’s the same and what’s different, and sorting these things into categories. Making unusual connections is at the core of creativity.** In a world where people can Google for information, it’s the people who can see connections who are able to go beyond knowing information to **using this information well.**

Tip

As you look at the pictures in *Alphabet City*, ask your child:

- “What are all of the things you see in this painting?”

Skill

When you ask your child to respond first and name all of the things he sees, you’re helping him pay attention to details, as well as promoting creativity. This back-and-forth interaction is what researchers call “**Take-Turns Talk.**” Like a game of ball, one of you says or does something and the other responds. The importance of these everyday interactions to brain building is a key finding from child development research.

Tip

Share all of the things you see in the paintings.

Skill

When you share what you see and then compare what your child saw with your observations, you are **increasing the connections** between each of your views.

Tip

If your child hasn’t included a letter of the alphabet in his or her list, ask:

- “Do you see a letter here?”

Enjoy finding the letter together and talking about all of the words you can think of that begin with that letter. Next, look for letters in the landscapes around you—in your home and outside.

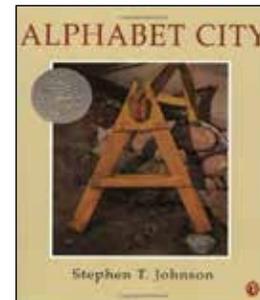
Skill

Making Connections between letters, landscapes, sounds and words helps your child understand more about his language. In fact, researchers have recently found that the world’s written languages are all based on the same patterns of lines and angles, and these patterns occur in landscapes. This is fascinating because, on the surface, it seems so implausible—for instance, written languages in different parts of the world look so different—but it is true. When you ask your child to **see things in different ways**, you are promoting **Executive Function** skills.

Alphabet City

By **Stephen T. Johnson**

Alphabet City is a stunning series of paintings from city landscapes. The artist has captured each letter of the alphabet as it naturally occurs in city surroundings.



These tips sheets were developed by *Mind in the Making*, in collaboration with First Book. Find more books and materials on the First Book Marketplace, a resource available exclusively to educators and programs serving children in need. **Visit: www.fbmarketplace.org**