

write an equation. By multiplying the length and width of each one and adding the two results together, he'll discover how much carpet he will need for both rooms.

After reading...

● **Retell**

Have your child talk about what she read and learned. Let her lead the conversation by telling you the most interesting facts she discovered. Then, pose questions that will encourage her to give you details. For example, if she said, "Instrumental music was very popular during the Renaissance," you might ask her to name a few of the instruments. Discussing the information will help her remember more of what she learned.

● **Read it again**

Is there a section that confused her? Has she forgotten an explanation? Suggest that she reread. The extra practice will reinforce new vocabulary, provide an opportunity to find things she missed, and help her make sense of things she might not have understood the first time around.



WRITING TO LEARN

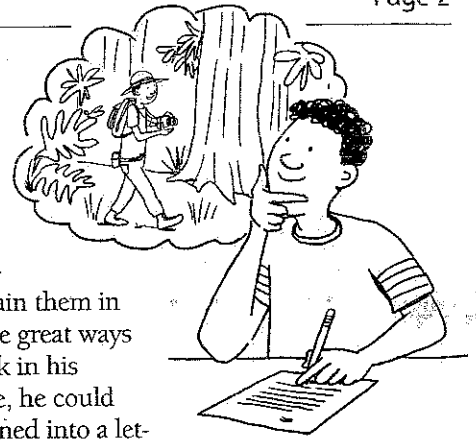
Writing is a hands-on way for your middle schooler to learn and remember information in every class. Try these creative ideas that make it fun to put ideas into writing.

● **Illustrated notes**

A picture might be worth a thousand words, especially if it's part of your child's notes. In science class, she might draw and label a flow chart to show how the water cycle works. In English, she could create comic strips and use vocabulary words in the dialogue bubbles. Adding an image to her words gives her one more way to connect with what she is learning.

● **Letter writing**

Putting information into a new format encourages your middle grader to think about main ideas, pull out important details, and explain them in his own words. All are great ways to make the facts stick in his memory. For example, he could turn what he has learned into a letter. Say he's studying Brazil in geography. He might imagine that he's a tourist visiting the country and write a letter to a grandparent about his trip. He could describe the monkeys, birds, and trees he saw when he walked through a rain forest, for example.



● **Study guides**

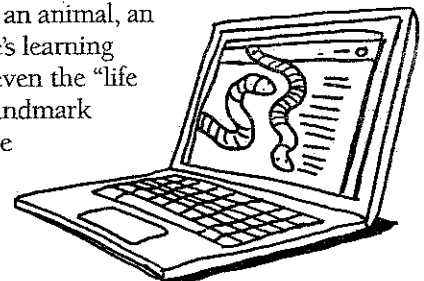
Making a study guide is a great way to prepare for a test. Suggest that your child create study guides as she reads textbook chapters. For instance, for a chapter on World War II, she can divide a sheet of paper into four sections ("causes," "major battles," "key people," and "outcomes"). Then, as she reads, she should hunt for details and write them in the correct section. Suggest that she use a different-colored pen for each topic and keep her notes brief (lists with three or four bullets work well).

● **Scrapbook of knowledge**

What did your middle grader learn this week? Have him make a scrapbook of the material, and he'll be more likely to understand—and enjoy—it. He could clip newspaper articles of current events his social studies class has discussed and write his own captions for them. If he's reading about nutritious foods in health class, he could create menus for healthy meals. He might also include step-by-step directions for his science fair project along with a photo of the finished project.

● **Unlikely biographies**

Your middle grader has probably read a biography of a historical figure—but anything can have a life story. Encourage her to write a short biography of a character from a novel she's reading in literature class (Jane Eyre). *Idea:* She could bring a 21st-century twist to her work by creating an imaginary Facebook page for Jane Eyre, with entries Jane might have written about her job as a governess or her wedding day and comments from other characters. Or your child could write a biography of an animal, an insect, or a plant she's learning about in science or even the "life story" of a famous landmark (Statue of Liberty, the Sphinx) that she's studying in social studies.



Middle Years