

The Reader



People, Words & Change

June 2026

Adult literacy,
one-on-one.



The Reader is the quarterly newsletter of People, Words & Change. We welcome stories and articles by our learners.

People, Words & Change
Heartwood House
202-404 McArthur Ave.
Ottawa, ON K1K 1G8
Tel: 613-234-2494

www.pwc-ottawa.ca

Feedback on the manner in which PWC provides its services to people with disabilities, and any other services, is encouraged and appreciated.

PWC Summer Schedule

We're closed from July 6th to 17th and will be back on July 20th.

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Volunteer Appreciation

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

April 19-25, 2026

People, Words & Change is proud of its long journey in supporting individuals in our community. Our learners come to us to improve their lives by advancing their reading, writing, numeracy, and computer skills. PWC does what it does because of the invaluable time our volunteers donate to tutoring learners, month after month until the learners feel they're ready to move on.

To show our gratefulness, PWC held a Volunteer Appreciation event on April 23, 2026. This fun evening featured a performance by BELT Musical Improv, a highly talented Ottawa-based improv group.



Volunteer Appreciation

Fourteen tutors received Certificates of Appreciation for milestone years of service:

- **10 years:** Marcia, Norma Lynn, Marianne, Eilleen, Susan, Valerie, and Nadia
- **15 years:** Inta, Leith, Rebecca, Hilda, and Sandra
- **20 years:** Carol
- **30 years:** Liisa



Gifts of appreciation were donated by local Ottawa businesses. Thank you for making this event possible through your generous donations!



PWC Summer Schedule

The PWC office and Computer Lab will be **closed** from **July 6, 2026 to July 17, 2026**. The classes will **start** again on Monday, **July 20, 2026**.

The computer classes held at the Merivale YMCA location will be **closed** on **July 9 and 16, 2026** and will **start** again on Thursday, **July 23, 2026**.



Save the Date!

PWC's 17th Annual Power of Words Breakfast 8 September 2026

Wonderful PWC Community and literacy supporters, we're looking forward to seeing you on September 8th to celebrate International Literacy day and learner successes. Several PWC learners will share their inspiring stories.

There will be a hot breakfast and a guest keynote speaker.

Our annual book draw will launch that morning.

Keep an eye out for the invitations and more details in August.





Save the Date!

Join THE HEARTWOOD HOUSE COMMUNITY for special events on Saturday
June 27th from 9:30AM - 12:30PM

SPECIAL WEEKEND OPENING OF THE HEARTWOOD HOUSE COMMUNITY THRIFT SHOP!

Discover your next best find at Heartwood house thrift shop featuring unclaimed items from the OC Transpo Lost and Found.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING DROP-OFF AT HEARTWOOD HOUSE

Bring in your electronic equipment of any age: laptops, microwaves, desktop computers, mobile devices, and batteries to ensure the proper processing of your electronic waste. A full list of accepted items can be found on the Heartwood House website at

<https://www.heartwoodhouse.ca/electronics-recycling>

ECOEQUITABLE GARMENT REPAIR FAIR- IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF OTTAWA

Bring in clothes needing light, moderate repairs or your sewing machine in need of a tune-up.

ECOEQUITABLE'S FABRIC SALE:

Browse through a wide selection of kindly donated fabric, notions, and other materials at accessible prices.

📍 Heartwood House - 404 McArthur Avenue, Ottawa, ON

🕒 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM



Summer Reading Challenge

July 1 – August 31

This summer, take small steps to build your reading skills. You can read anything: signs, messages, books, or recipes.

Every week, try one activity. Even 5–10 minutes is great!

How It Works

- Do 1 activity each week
- Try different types of reading
- Go at your own pace

Reading Ideas

- Book (short or with pictures)
 - You can borrow books from the PWC library
- News article
 - You can find news online or use the Ottawa Citizen: (<https://www.newsinlevels.com/>).
- Website or blog
- Flyer or menu
- Message or email
- Recipe or instructions
- Video with subtitles

Extra Ideas (Optional)

- Read outside
- Read with someone
- Say words out loud
- Share what you read



See the 9-week plan on the next page.

Summer Reading Challenge

Your 9-Week Plan

Week 1

Read for 5 minutes

I did it! What did you read? _____

Week 2

Read 2 times this week

I did it! What did you read? _____

Week 3

Try something new

I did it! What did you try? _____

Week 4

Read a menu, flyer, or sign

I did it! What did you learn? _____

Week 5

Read a message (text, email, or letter)

I did it!

Did you reply? Yes No

Week 6

Read a recipe or instructions

I did it! What did you make or do? _____

Week 7

Read a news story

I did it! Main idea: _____

Week 8

Read something in your community

I did it! What did you read? _____

Week 9

Think about what you read. Answer the following questions:

- Which topic did you like the most?
- What was the main idea?
- Why did you like this reading the most?
- Can you apply what you learned from this reading to your life? If yes, how does it help you?

Use your answers and write a short text about your summer challenge experience. When you're done, tell or email your Education Counsellor (Karen, Mahtab, or Shaniece) to receive a Summer Reading Challenge Certificate.

Great Job! Remember that every time you read, you are learning.

Keep going!



PWC Learners Write...



The views expressed in the learners' sections are those of individual learners. Their work is a demonstration of the progress they have made. PWC does not endorse any of the views that may be expressed.

A Book Review

The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis tells the story of a young girl, Parvana, and her family living in Afghanistan during the rule of the Taliban.

After her father was taken by the Taliban, Parvana helps to support her family. Disguised as a young boy, Parvana can go out to the market to buy food for her family. Additionally, this helped her try to find her father to bring the family back together.

For Parvana, everyday is a struggle, but she refuses to give up hope. This reminds me of my life which is also full of pain and suffering, but like Parvana, I have strength and faith in the future.

I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in Afghan customs and traditions and a family struggling to survive under the harsh rules of the Taliban. It's also a story about hope and defeating fear.

-Rita

You can borrow
this book from the
PWC library!





PWC Learners Write...

A Typical Day at Work

I work at the Ottawa Hospital, helping patients with their mobility. A typical day at work consists of communicating with the patients and registered staff. It also includes listening to what patients' needs are at that given time and day. This varies as time goes. As soon as the patients develop a good rapport with me, they know that I am there to help them get better.

When I get into work, I start with printing out my patient list that is approved by my coordinator. She is the one who reviews the charts to see if a patient is appropriate to mobilize on a daily basis.

Some patients love to work together. Some, not so much. I like to chat with the families to understand the patients better, for example, to learn how they are at home. This helps me know how the patient moves around at home. We can try to get back to their baseline, together.

After I print out the patient list, I have to check in with a Registered Nurse or a Practical Registered Nurse. I also have to read the patients' charts and see what the needs are and how far they can walk. I get my information from the patients' charts which are on the computer. There, the nurses and doctors input their notes for the rest of the team, including myself.

When I enter a new patient's room, I introduce myself and explain what I do along with the name of our "mobility" team. I tell the patient I'm here to walk with them on a regular basis. I write my name and mobility team on the white board. I see the patients two or three times a day depending on how many patients I have on my approved list. My patient list can fluctuate day to day because some patients get discharged. When I know the patients are being discharged, I like to have a small visit. I wish them well on their recovery at home and ask them to keep up their mobility at home, too.

As the patients walk more and more, it becomes easier for them to mobilize. Sometimes physio sees the patient before I get into work. If the patient does not want to walk at that point, it's OK. I try my best to see patients twice a day. Some patients refuse to walk or get up and that's OK. The patients are not always feeling 100 percent every day.

I float between two units: 8 West and 6 West. 8 West has more elderly patients from the nursing homes. 6 West has oncology patients who are doing chemotherapy. These patients go through a lot of pain and fatigue. When patients are in this condition, it's OK to let them rest. Tomorrow will be a better day for these patients. With all of these conversations and walks between both units, I usually put in 15,000 to 20,000 steps a day!

These steps, I do on a regular basis, week in, week out. It's part of a typical day at work. The conversations and all the steps can be socially and physically exhausting. But it's all worth it ... helping others get better.

- Carlos

PWC Learners Write...



My Favourite Childhood Memories

My childhood was one of the most special and memorable times of my life. My childhood memories are unforgettable, valuable and meaningful to me. For example, I enjoyed going to school with my cousins on the same bus because we had a lot of fun with other kids and made jokes. When we reached school, we played outside before classes started. After school, we sometimes hid from the bus driver and he looked everywhere for us. We laughed all the way home.

Another reason my childhood is so valuable to me is that we lived together as a big family in one home. We supported each other with homework, chores and cleaning the house. We spent a lot of time together playing hide-and-seek and many other games. We shared food, clothes and everything that we needed.

My childhood is also very meaningful to me because of the experiences that we shared with my family and cousins. Ramadan was a special time for us. When Ramadan ended and the first day of Eid arrived, we would all get together and wear Eid clothes and bangles and apply henna to our hands. Then we would go from one neighbour's home to the next, collecting chocolate, dried fruits and boiled eggs. These are some of the reasons that my childhood is so special and memorable for me.

-T. A.





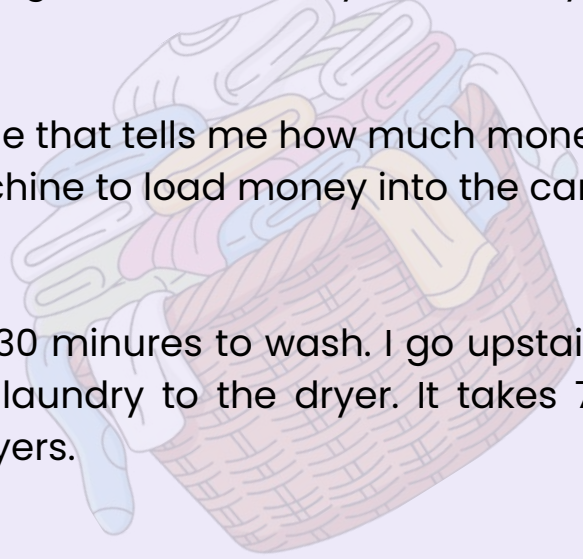
PWC Learners Write...

Laundry Day

I do my laundry on Monday or Friday. I go to the laundry room early. I have to clean out the washers.

I use a card to pay. They have a machine that tells me how much money is left on the card. There is a bigger machine to load money into the card with usually a \$20 bill.

I put my clothes in the washer. It takes 30 minutes to wash. I go upstairs and then go back down to move the laundry to the dryer. It takes 72 minutes to dry. I use 3 washers and 2 dryers.



- **Mary**

My Canadian Citizenship Ceremony

Last week was one of the happiest weeks of my life. On April 23rd, I had my Canadian citizenship ceremony. In my family, I was the first person to become a Canadian citizen. I had waited for this moment for many years, and finally it happened.

The ceremony was at 9 a.m., and I went there with my brother. Everyone there was very happy because their dreams were coming true. When the judge said, "You are now Canadian citizens," everyone celebrated and felt emotional.

After the ceremony, I received my citizenship certificate. It was a proud and unforgettable moment for me. Becoming a Canadian citizen was a dream come true, and it is a day that I will always remember. This was one of the most special days of my life.

- **Waheda**

PWC Learners Write...



The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho is one of my favorite novels. I read it many years ago; it is unforgettable and still stays with me. It is the story of a young shepherd, Santiago, in Spain, who always grazes his sheep close to an old abandoned church, and takes a nap under a fig tree there. He dreams several times about a treasure that is buried near the Egyptian pyramids, and he decides to follow his dream. He sells his sheep to have enough money to go to Egypt.

One night, someone steals his money. But he doesn't give up. He finds a job to continue his adventure. After a year, he earns enough money to do it, but he falls in love and decides to stay and get married. Someone warns him that if he gets married before reaching his dream, he will always think about that dream and never feel satisfied in his life. Therefore, he decides to follow his dream first, so he starts his journey to Egypt.

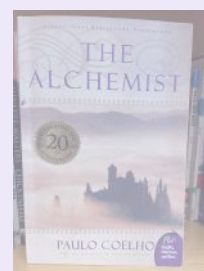
During his journey, a few robbers take his money and ask him the reason for his trip. He tells them his story. They hit him badly. One of them laughs at him and says, "You are silly. I had a dream many years ago that there is a treasure under a fig tree close to an abandoned old church in Spain. I wasn't silly like you to go there."

When Santiago hears this, he smiles because it is the place where he used to graze his sheep. He goes back, digs under the tree, and finds the treasure. After that, he plans to return and marry the person he loves.

I think the message of this story is that if someone is brave enough to follow their dream, they will eventually reach it. Sometimes, we search for things far away, while they are actually right beside us, but we don't pay attention to them. We just need to go through a journey to recognize them.

If we have a dream and keep looking for our goal without being disappointed in difficult situations, we will finally reach it.

-Elaheh



You can borrow this book from the PWC library.



PWC Learners Write...

The Canadian Festival Tulip

I was watching a TikTok video when the video creator asked: “Do you think that Ottawa is boring?” and I answered: “Yes, for sure!” Then she said: “I will give you all the activities that you can do in the next few days.” Guess what! Among the events, I noticed the Canadian Tulip Festival!

On the 18th of May, I went along Dow’s Lake to admire the tulips, with my family. This festival is an annual event in Ottawa, at the beginning of spring. I saw different colours of tulips: orange, purple, pink, red, white, yellow. It was amazing!

We took a break for lunch. We bought pizza from a food truck and rested under a tree. We felt the coolness of the grass. We took that moment to be grateful for coming here to Canada.

I also learned that Princess Margriet was a special guest this year for the Canadian Tulip Festival. Why is she so special for this festival? Let me share the story behind the Canadian Tulip Festival with you.

During the Second World War, Canada hosted the Dutch Royal Family. During their exile, Princess Margriet was born and the Canadian government declared the maternity ward of the Ottawa Civic Hospital extraterritorial, allowing the princess to have Dutch citizenship.

Moreover, Canada had a big contribution in the liberation of the Netherlands. Full of gratefulness, each year, Dutch Queen Juliana gives one hundred thousand tulips to Canada. In 1953, the photographer Malak suggested to create the festival, and since that year, we have celebrated the festival. One act of gratefulness created a wonderful event, where families and friends assemble.

Don’t miss this event next year and live a meaningful part of the Canadian story.

-Sarah

PWC Learners Write...



Food: an interesting Topic

We are in the 21st century and the foods we eat and buy at the stores and markets have changed. 15 years ago, I came across the story of a young man who changed his way of eating.

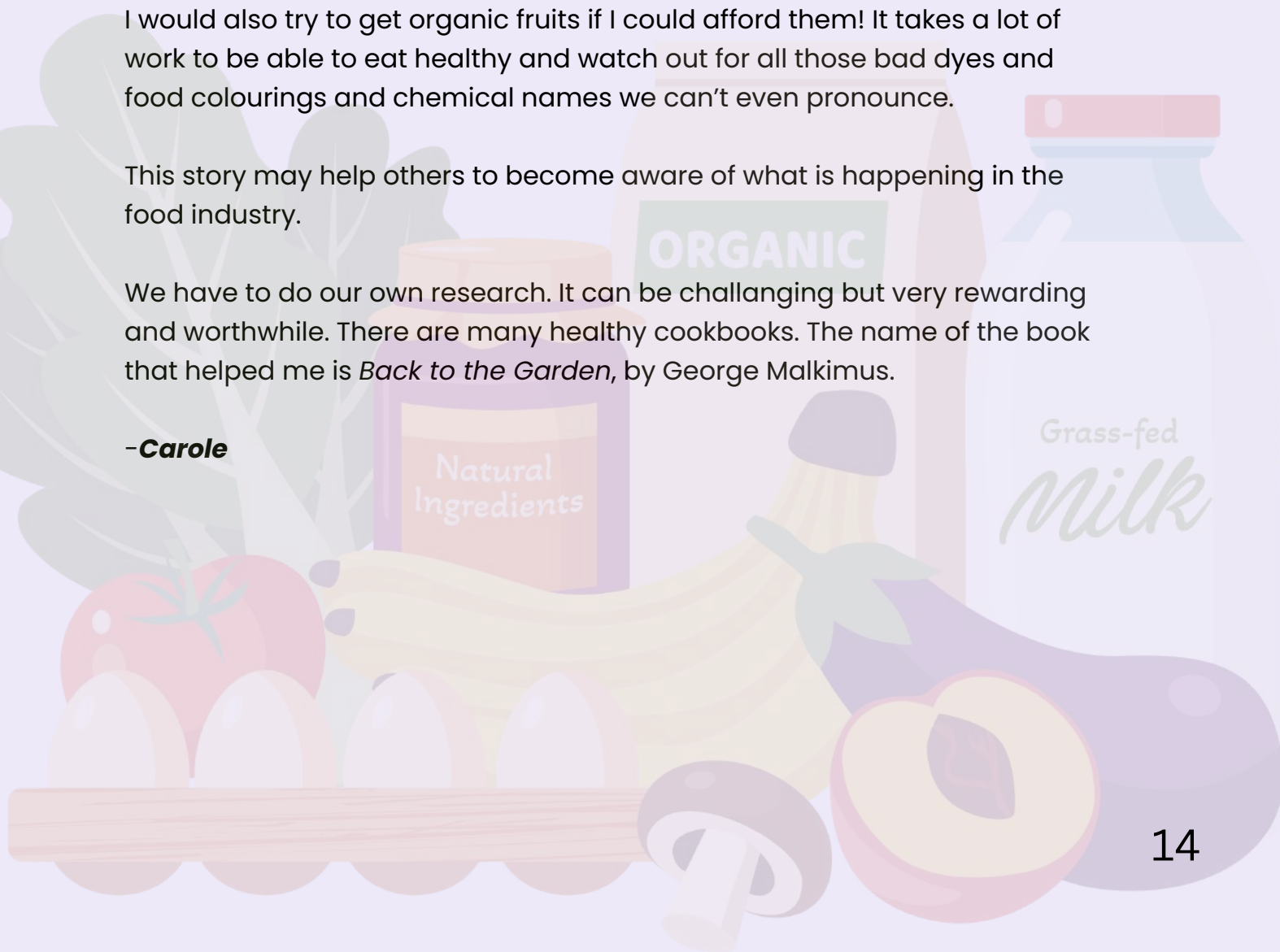
To make this story short and to keep to the purpose of writing on such a topic, I changed the way I would buy food. It made me aware of what we eat a lot of the time. I started reading labels on the boxes of cookies, candy, and vegetables.

I would also try to get organic fruits if I could afford them! It takes a lot of work to be able to eat healthy and watch out for all those bad dyes and food colourings and chemical names we can't even pronounce.

This story may help others to become aware of what is happening in the food industry.

We have to do our own research. It can be challenging but very rewarding and worthwhile. There are many healthy cookbooks. The name of the book that helped me is *Back to the Garden*, by George Malkimus.

-Carole





PWC Lab Learners Create...

CANADA

THE REGIONS OF CANADA

Atlantic	Central	Prairie	West	North
Newfoundland and Labrador	Quebec	Manitoba	British Columbia	Yukon Territory
Prince Edward Island	Ontario	Saskatchewan		Northwest Territories
Nova Scotia		Alberta		Yukon
New Brunswick				



Created in PowerPoint by **Silvia**

PWC Lab Learners Create...



How to grow lettuce from seeds

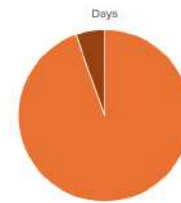


Select good quality seeds



- Select good quality seeds that can suitably grow in your area. Choose a variety that suits your taste

Pie Chart showing operations in Lettuce growing



Plant seeds in uniform rows

- Plant the seeds thinly along measured rows., cover them lightly with soil and water in the evening
- Apply fertiliser to the soil by mixing it in the irrigation water
- Care for the seedlings for 3 weeks in the open sun then prepare to transplant

Ground Nursery



Tray nursery



Transplant seedlings into garden



- Transplant the healthy Seedlings after 3 weeks to the garden
- Press a pointed stick into the soil at measured distances along rows and firming the soil around each seedling.
- Water the seedlings adequately and spray them with a pesticide to prevent damage

Care for the lettuce in the garden



- Spray with liquid fertiliser every two weeks
- Continue watering every evening on a dry day until the lettuce is mature for harvesting in one month



PWC Lab Learners Create...



Created in Word by **Khalied**

COMPUTER CORNER

EMAIL STORAGE

1. Delete old emails.
2. Empty trash bins.
3. Delete/Remove documents from your online storage.
 - Photos, videos, and music take up the most space in your digital storage.
4. Allow your email carrier to clear up space.
 - Your email provider will remove documents based on how recently you have opened the document as well as how much space the document is taking up in your storage.
5. Buy more storage space if needed or create a new account.



Did you know?

Computer trash bins are just like real ones. If you don't empty them (or take them out to the curb), they will sit in your trash bin for an extended period of time.



PWC Learner Success Stories

Y. had been working towards getting a job in Property Management when she saw PWC's poster at an Ottawa Public Library Branch and contacted us about improving her writing skills and overall confidence in writing. She had done some temporary work in assistant property management and had taken some property management courses, but felt her writing skills needed to be more polished, more professional and her writing style more refined if she was to communicate on the job.

When Y. first came to PWC, she was working as a cleaner and in-home caregiver. She worked with PWC and her tutor for about 7 months, focusing on specific types of emails and letters that may be encountered in a property management environment. One of the most important elements was improving overall confidence and fluency in her own writing skills.


When Y. left PWC, she was working 2 new part-time jobs that were more suitable than her previous ones, but still not in her area of choice. She continued to pursue her goal and a short while later was working part-time as an Assistant Property Manager and has just recently started working full-time.

So happy for you, Y!




Mental Health Corner

Summer in Ottawa is the perfect time for recharging. After the long Winter, we can finally go out and enjoy the nature. While listening to podcasts or music is fun, listening to the sound of nature can calm us down.

 **Try to walk** along the Rideau Canal, explore Gatineau Park, or relax in one of Ottawa's many city parks. Morning or evening walks help reduce stress, improve mood, and increase vitamin D.

Tips for Mindful Walking

1. **Slow Down:** notice each step and your connection to the ground.
2. **Use All Senses:** listen, look, touch leaves or water (safely), smell flowers or soil.
3. **Have Short Reflections:** silently notice your thoughts, then gently bring focus back to nature.
4. **Focus of Fresh Air and Your Breathing :** inhale for 4 steps, exhale for 4.

 **Try Gardening.** Gardening helps us reduce anxiety and improve overall health. If we don't have a garden where we live, we can use small container gardens on balconies to bring joy. Even better than that, Ottawa has several community gardens where we can grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers, meet new people, and make friends.

You can find a community garden near you in here:

<https://justfood.ca/community-gardening-network/community-gardening-network-guide/>



Ask PWC Staff or your tutor if you need help using the link.

Tips for Mindful Gardening

1. **Be Present:** focus on one task at a time (planting, watering, pruning).
2. **Enjoy the Progress:** observe how plants respond to your care. Mental health grows along with your plants!
3. **Connect with the Space and People:** take a moment to just sit in your garden and watch the life around you. Make small talk with people who love the nature like you.

Making Connections: A Simple Way for Learning Better

Like cooking, driving, or riding a bike, reading is a skill that grows over time. There are many strategies that can help us improve our reading skills. One of these strategies is called “making connections.”

We all know that reading is more than just sounding out the words on the page. Good readers can understand what they read, find the information they are looking for, and use that information. Making connections is all about connecting what we read to what we already know. This strategy helps us remember the information we read more easily and later, use the information more effectively.

There are three types of connections:

- **Personal Connection:** Sometimes when we read something, it reminds us of something we experienced in life. For example, we read about using the bus, and we think about our bus rides every morning.
- **Knowledge Connection:** We gain knowledge from different sources like schools, training, or what our parents taught us when we were kids. When we read something, we can connect the new information to what we have learned before.
- **Other Sources:** Watching TV, hearing news from friends, family, co-workers, and other people is another source of the information in our heads. We can connect the information we read to something similar that we saw or heard.

How to Practice

1. Pause in the middle of reading.
2. Ask simple questions. (e.g., “What does this remind me of?” “Did I learn something like this before?” “Has anyone told me about this topic before?”)
3. Talk about the connection or write it down.

Remember that using this strategy can take some time and may slow you down but it is worth the time because making connections helps you learn and process new information more deeply and makes the reading process more engaging.



- *What is one reading strategy mentioned in the text?*
- *What are the three types of connections a reader can make?*
- *Why does making connections help readers understand and remember information better?*

Free Fun Family Activities



Theatre Games with Chancz Perry at National Arts Centre

On Saturday, July 11, 2026, theatre artist Chancz Perry has a fun, active workshop focused on movement and improvisation. The workshop includes simple theatre games that help you be creative and connect with others.

This workshop is open to ages 8+ and is free. Learn more about the event: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/event/40951>

Date: Saturday, July 11, 2026

Time: 10:00–11:30 AM EDT

Location: Peter A. Herrndorf Place– 1 Elgin St, Ottawa, ON K1P 5W1



The Ottawa Chinatown Night Market 2026

Chinatown Night Market 2026 is a lively outdoor community festival on Somerset Street in Ottawa with street food, live performances, and local vendors. You can visit for free but need to pay for food and purchases. You can read more here:

<https://ottawachinatown.ca/nightmarket/>

Start Date: May 29, 2026

End Date: May 31, 2026

Location: Ottawa Chinatown, 717 Somerset St W, Ottawa



Italian Week Ottawa

This community festival, taking place over ten days in June in Ottawa's Little Italy, celebrates the Italian culture. You can enjoy food, music, and cultural activities. Attending this festival is free but you need to pay for food and other purchases. You can read more here:

<https://italianweekottawa.ca/>

Start Date: June 11, 2026

End Date: June 21, 2026

Address: Little Italy, Ottawa



Gaming Corner

Spy Game

Decode the story by replacing the letters:

Replace "z" with "a".

Replace "q" with "e".

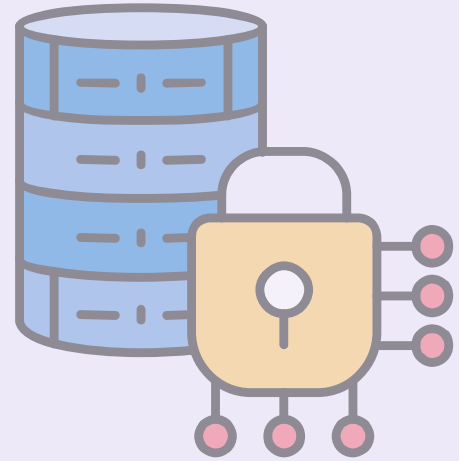
Replace "y" with "i".

Replace "x" with "o".

Replace "w" with "u".



Do not change the letters in **GREEN**.



Wyth thq swm shynng bryghtly, Lzrry wzlkqd tx thq pzk wyth hys dxg, Ryx.

Thqy szw bqzwtyfwl flxwqrs blxxmyng: yqllxw, pwrplq, znd rqd. Lzrry

dqcydqd tx bwyld z szndczstlq nqzr thq ryvqr whqrq Ryx splzshqd wztr.

“Thq swm fqqls grqzt,” Lzrry szyd. Hys fryqnd, Mzry, rzn tx hym. Thqy

dqcydqd tx hzvq z pycnyc, znd Lzrry brxwght txys tx rqlzx znd qnjxy. Thq

lzwghtqr znd chzttqr xf thq kyds mzdq thq pzk fqql mzgyczl.

Zftqr rqtwrnyng hxmq, Lzrry szt xn thq pxrch wyth z glzss xf lqmxnzdq, thq

smqll xf szlty brqqzq fyllyng hys sxwl znd hqzrt. “Swmmqr dzys lykq thys

mzkq mq zpqrqcyztq lyfq,” hq thxwght.



Gaming Corner- Reading Tip

Using Context and Word Shapes

When we read a lot, our brains start noticing the shape of words or the way they begin, end, and their overall pattern.

Another thing that helps us is the context. Context is all the words around a word that give clues about its meaning. Even if a word looks strange or is hard to read, the sentence or story helps us guess it correctly.

Remembering how words look and using the clues from the sentence can help us read faster and understand more easily.

Try It with Context!

- "The bfrd flew across the sky."
Word to guess: bfrd →
Think about what flies in the sky.
- "I saw a cah sleeping on the mat."
Word to guess: cah →
Think of a common pet.
- "I came back hmoe after school."
Word to guess: hmoe →



Why This Works:

The sentence gives clues, so even if the word is scrambled, we can figure it out using context.

We're training our brains to recognize sight words quickly and understand sentences faster.

It makes reading more fun and less stressful!

Can you read this?

The sun wqs brqght. Chyldrqn played near the bzxch. They rzlxzd and drqnk lemonade. The day wqs fun.

Gaming Corner– Writing Challenge

Pick Your Challenge!

Challenge 1:

Write 3–5 sentences about a day you spent outside. Write about:

- Where you went
- Who you were with
- One thing you saw or did

Challenge 2:

Write a paragraph (5–8 sentences) about a day you spent outside. Write about:

- The place you went
- Who you were with
- Things you did
- How you felt

Tip: Use descriptive words like colours, sounds, or feelings.

Challenge 3:

Write 2–3 paragraphs about a memorable day outside. Include:

- Where you went and why
- Who you were with and what you did together
- Sensory details (what you saw, heard, smelled, felt, etc.)
- Your thoughts or feelings about the day

Use sequencing words like “first,” “then,” “after that,” and “finally.”

Spy Game Decoded: With the sun shining brightly, Larry walked to the park with his dog, Rio. They saw beautiful flowers blooming yellow, purple, and red. Larry decided to build a sandcastle near the river where Rio splashed water. "The sun feels great," Larry said. His friend, Sam, ran to him. They decided to have a picnic, and Larry brought toys to relax and enjoy. The laughter and chatter of the kids made the park feel magical. After returning home, Larry sat on the porch with a glass of lemonade, the smell of salty breeze filling his soul and heart. "Summer days like this make me appreciate life," he thought.

Summer Break

July 6th to July 17th

We'll be back on July
20th!

