

## **Dear Family Member,**

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Stories Have a Narrator.”

We are kicking off our fourth unit in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous units, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In this unit, we will read and compare selections featuring a range of different kinds of characters and settings, to understand how authors create stories. To help students recognize varying narrators’ points of view, the selections in this unit include a variety of genres, from fables and animal fantasy tales to poetry and realistic fiction.

This unit will inspire the storyteller in all of us, and will hopefully spark some lively discussions at home.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

# Stories Have a Narrator

In this unit, we read and compare selections with different types of narrators and think in depth about the question “How do people create stories?” Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about the art of storytelling and to build on the skills and concepts your child is learning in school. These thought-provoking activities aim to draw out the storyteller in both of you.

## Topic Connection

### Who’s Telling the Story

At home or your local library, explore a range of stories, poems, articles, and anything else that catches your eye. Remind your child that the narrator is the person who is telling the story, or reporting on something if it’s nonfiction. Looking at your collection, challenge your child to examine the front and back covers and titles and guess who the narrator might be. Then have him check his prediction by reading some or all of the story, poem, or article.

## Vocabulary Connection

### Act the Word

In school, your child is learning new, descriptive words that writers use in their storytelling to describe characters’ actions, including **crack, crunch, lumber, peer, scamper, sniff, startle, admire, feast, bask, perch, wriggle, squawk**. Write each word on a scrap of paper. Fold up the words and put them in a container. Take turns picking a word and acting it out for the other to guess. If it helps, you can make a list of the words as a reference for the person guessing.

## Comprehension Connection

### Tell Your Story

In one of the selections, the narrator is not a person or even an animal—it’s a ball being kicked around at recess. The “ball narrator” uses many descriptive words, including adjectives, action words, and sounds, to tell its story. Have your child look around your home for an inanimate object. Examples include a pencil, pillow, bike, or hat. Invite your child to tell a story from the point of view of that object, using rich descriptive language. Have fun coming up with onomatopoeias, or sound words! As an extra challenge, have your child write and illustrate the story.

## Phonics Connections

### I Spy a Digraph

In our phonics instruction, we are reading words with consonant digraphs. A digraph is the combination of two consonants in a word that create one sound, such as the /sh/ sound in *fish*. The digraphs featured in this unit include *th, sh, ng, ch, tch, wh*. Look for words with these digraphs as you go about your daily activities, point them out when you hear or see them. For example, you may walk on a *path* or see an advertisement for a *watch*. To make this a game, when you see a digraph, say “I spy a word with /ch/” (or whatever the digraph) and have the other guess what it is.