

**TESL 507 Apps for ELLs Resource List**  
Grade-Level: 6-8, WIDA Level: Developing/Expanding

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The following list is a series of well-selected applications for use by teachers serving English language learners (ELLs) and emergent bilingual students. This particular resource list is designed to entice struggling middle school readers at the Developing/Expanding stages. The selected apps below provide resources for students reading at the 3-8<sup>th</sup> grade level however they target middle school interests. The reading materials available through these apps are both culturally and linguistically responsive. Each application recommendation is accompanied by a brief review.



App: Toontastic

Price: Free

Geared toward: Students ages 5-10

Website: <http://launchpadtoys.com/toontastic/#in-action>

Toontastic is a great app for middle school students to use that guides them through the creation of a story. This app allows students to build stories by creating characters and settings for each scene and when they have created the story, they can record their voice while moving characters on the screen. After each scene, they may then select music to go with their story. When students have addressed the five components of a story arc (setup, conflict, challenge, climax, and resolution) the app threads their scenes together to create one continuous story. It also allows students to share their stories and view other people's stories around the world. This is a great app to accompany a unit on story elements or a fiction-writing unit. While this app is not directly a reading app, it promotes literacy because students are learning the components of a good story, creating their own stories, and they may listen to the stories of others' being told.

Launchpad Toys. (n.d.) Toontastic [Review]. Retrieved from <http://launchpadtoys.com/toontastic/>

Launchpad Toys. (2013). Toontastic (Version 2.5.0) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>



App: Raz-Kids

Price: Free

Geared toward: Reading Levels K-5

Website: <http://www.raz-kids.com/>

Raz-Kids is a website with an app companion that allows students to read a variety of leveled books, as well as keep running records. Raz-Kids is a spin off of the Reading A to Z website. It is free to download the Raz-Kids app, but in order to use Raz-Kids for free you must already have a subscription to Raz-Kids online or Reading A to Z. If you already use Raz-Kids, this app lets you access eBooks and eQuizzes for the 300+ titles on Raz-Kids, all on your tablet or iPad. Raz-Kids provides hundreds of interactive, leveled books spanning 27 levels of difficulty, covering a wide range of subjects. In addition to engaging kids at their reading level and in their area of interest, this award-winning website and app allows kids to practice reading to become better, more confident readers. At the same time, teachers can customize assignments, view reports, and track student progress every step of the way. All student activity in the app is captured and reported to teachers at Raz-Kids.com, thus helping teachers monitor student progress and determine the instruction needed for each student. Teachers will want to create an account and then students will have their own accounts that are reported to the teacher.

Lazel, Inc. (2013). Raz-Kids (Version 1.7.0) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>

Learning A-Z. (n.d.). Raz-Kids is Mobile! [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.raz-kids.com/main/ViewPage/name/tc-mobile/context/teachercorner>



App: Middle School Confidential 1: Be Confident in Who You Are  
Price: \$2.99/ book  
Geared toward: Students ages 9-11, struggling readers  
Website: <http://www.middle-school-confidential.com/>

This is the first book in a series of graphic novels called the Middle School Confidential. With this app, students will be able to read the entire first book in the series, with no additional in-app spending. Graphic novels are very popular amongst middle schoolers and so even though this not a free app, it will most likely be well received by middle school students. The stories are creative and colorful, making them fun to read. This app is geared towards middle school students, both in its delivery method and its topic. Middle School Confidential: Be Confident In Who You Are is an app that promotes reading but also addresses important middle school issues such as bullying, body changes and friendships. The books are geared towards struggling readers, but the graphics and accessible topics in the app make it a fun and easy read. Additionally, it's appropriate for this unique age group. There are multiple books in the series available for purchase on both the iPhone and iPad. The website has a teacher's guide available for download as well.

Appolicious. (2013). Middle School Confidential 1: Be Confident in Who You Are [Review]. Retrieved from [https://www.appolearning.com/app\\_reviews/320-middle-school-confidential-1-be-confident-in-who-you-are](https://www.appolearning.com/app_reviews/320-middle-school-confidential-1-be-confident-in-who-you-are)

Electric Eggplant. (2013). *Middle school confidential*. Retrieved from <http://www.middle-school-confidential.com/>

Electric Eggplant. (2013). Middle School Confidential 1: Be Confident in Who You Are (Version 1.4.1) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>



App: Scholastic Storia  
Price: Free  
Geared toward: Pre K- Middle School readers  
Website: <http://store.scholastic.com/microsite/storia/home>

This is an app for interactive eBooks. It is free to download and includes five free eBooks, however if you want more eBooks you will have to purchase them. This app is free through Scholastic and teachers who buy through Scholastic can use their bonus points to buy books. There is an abundance of books to choose from. Not all of them will read to students though, so make sure you look closely before you buy. Teachers can hook their iPad to a projector and use these stories as read-alouds or students can read/be read to independently. From award-winning classics to engaging nonfiction, Storia eBooks include thousands of titles for every age and reading level—from Pre K to young adult.

Scholastic, Inc. (2013). What is Storia? [Review]. Retrieved from <http://store.scholastic.com/microsite/storia/about>

Scholastic, Inc. (2013). Scholastic Storia (Version 2.5) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>



App: Aesop's Quest  
Price: \$0.99  
Geared toward: Readers grades 2-6

Aesop's Quest, based on Aesop's Fables, is a learning game where the player must remember elements of a story to complete a level. This app uses reading comprehension to develop cognitive reading skills attuned to a particular grade level. Students can read several of Aesop's stories, answer questions about the stories, and then play two games based on each story. After completing each level, students will be rewarded with puzzle pieces. After solving the puzzle the story is complete and students can continue to the next story. The five classic Aesop's stories included are "The Bear and the Bees," "The Wind and the Sun," "The Hare and the Tortoise," "The Town and Country Mouse," and "The Shepherd and the Wolf." The educational objective for this game is reading comprehension and the app is aligned to several Virginia Standards of Learning objectives for Reading. The game runs on the Apple iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch devices. This is a great app for independent readings for ELLs with culturally diverse stories.

New River Community College Games. (2011). Aesop's Quest (Version 1.0) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>



App: Bookboard  
Price: Free Trial  
Geared toward: Varying reading levels  
Website: <http://bookboard.com/>

Bookboard is an app that supports reading development and reading motivation. Bookboard also provides insight to parents or teachers into their students' reading progress. This app provides elements of gaming and competition to help create self-motivated readers through the use of eBooks. Bookboard's goal is to create motivated readers, and they do this by re-designing the traditional story time. There is no purchasing, downloading, or managing of books. A book is presented to the reader and as they finish one book, another is unlocked. Kids get the power to drive the experience of choosing what to read and instantly start reading. Finding the next book is easy because Bookboard suggests other stories based on what kids have been reading, right when they're most interested. As kids read, unlocking new books to add to their collections rewards them. As kids' interests and reading level changes, Bookboard changes with them.

Bookboard, Inc. (2013). About [Review]. Retrieved from <http://bookboard.com/about/>  
Bookboard, Inc. (2013). Bookboard (Version 1.75) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>



App: Mad Libs

Price: Free

Geared toward: Upper elementary and higher students

Website: <http://www.madlibs.com/>

Mad Libs is a game that allows students to choose nouns, verbs and adjectives to complete crazy stories. The app is free to download and includes an entire Mad Libs Collection book for free. There are twenty-one stories to play over and over. Additionally, there are now 30 more zany Mad Libs books each with 21 stories available for in-app purchase. This is a great app for ELLs because it allows them to complete stories (similar to a Cloze read) by filling in words and recognizing the necessary parts of speech. This app is great for reading and writing literacy, especially because middle schoolers can create silly stories to read with their friends. While this app does not create long texts, the stories are self-created and allow students to enjoy both reading and writing.

Pearson PLC. (2013). Mad Libs (Version 2.7.6) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>

Penguin Group USA. (2013) NEW Mad Libs iOS app is available now! [Press Release].

Retrieved from <http://www.madlibs.com/apps>



App: The Opposites

Price: Free

Geared toward: Grade levels 3-12

The Opposites is an exciting word game, which challenges students to match up antonyms or opposing words before they run out of screen space. The game starts with easy word pairs, but as players level up they are challenged with more complex and abstract pairings, until they are dealing with rare descriptive and technical words. Topics range from biology, to economics, to politics, to medicine, to poetry and to classical Greek prefixes. This is a great app for ELLs because it helps develop vocabulary and has a very age-appropriate interface for middle school students. The app aims to expand vocabulary, help students understand the importance of words in context, and develop reading, writing and oral literacy skills. There are ten levels that students can advance through with bonus rounds and high score medals. Every word is narrated by either a male or female voice and meanings and synonyms are provided for each new vocabulary word.

Mindshapes Limited. (2012) The Opposites (Version 1.0.1) [Mobile application software].

Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>



App: iF Poems  
Price: \$0.99  
Geared toward: All ages  
Website: <http://ifpoems.com/>

iF Poems is a highly acclaimed poetry app with numerous classic poems and audio readings. The app is available for the iPhone and iPad. Readers can search for poems in twelve different categories, including Tell Me A Tale, Humor & Nonsense, When You Need Help, and Bedtime. Readers can also search poems by the age groups 0-6, 7-12 and 13+. Many famous actors are recorded reading the poems, which adds to the awe of these beautiful poems. The app also comes with a series of helpful articles explaining different types of poetry with definitions and examples. This is a great app for ELLs to develop both listening and reading comprehension. The app is equipped with a dictionary to help ELLs learn new words as well. Often poetry is absent from the ELA curriculum in middle school and this app provides poetry as an alternative to reading books, while still engaging students in literacy development.

Clickworks Limited. (2012). iF Poems (Version 1.6.1) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>  
iF Poems. (2013). iF Poems [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://ifpoems.com/#iPhone>



App: Super Duper Idioms  
Price: Free  
Geared toward: English language learners, young readers

This is a new iPad app designed to help both kids and adults understand five hundred common English idioms. With the free download, you will receive 50 free idioms to try, however you must purchase additional packs of 50 for \$2.99 per pack. The app has a kid-friendly interface and features four different games for students to play: multiple choice, super-duper secret decoder, fill in the blank, and search and circle. The questions are written but there is also audio support for students who have difficulty reading. The level of difficulty can be adjusted by choosing to have 2, 3, or 4 choice answers. The app can be set to read the correct answer after incorrect and/or correct response, which is helpful to students who are learning the meanings. An unlimited number of players are permitted – making this app perfect for use in the classroom. Additionally, the app keeps track of data so teachers and parents can see student progress over time. The app uses graphs, which can be emailed, printed, and/or shared. This is an ideal app for ELLs because idioms are especially difficult to learn. This app promotes reading and listening skills.

Super Duper, Inc. (2103). Super Duper Idioms (Version 1.0) [Mobile application software]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>

*ePals Global Community* (<http://www.epals.com/#!/global-community/>)

This website is a place where teachers can connect to other classrooms in the world to initiate or join existing cross-cultural learning projects. I am currently pending approval to link to another class on a project designed for native speakers of English who are learning Spanish, and native-Spanish speakers who are learning English. This project is designed to provide opportunities to practice target languages with native speakers. In this project, students will be paired with a student in the other classroom and they will create a multimedia presentation or a collage about their partner from the other class. They will introduce their partner to their class through the presentation of their final project. Students will also post their project to the gallery to share with the partnering class. I have not been approved yet to start this project but I imagine it will help me to provide a meaningful and successful cross-cultural learning experience in my classroom. The learning activities designed to accompany this project will also help students to advance their reading and writing skill development. Students will be exchanging emails, engaging in discussions and writing about culture, identity, and personal values, as well as inventing and presenting a final project about their partner's identity.

ePals, Inc. (2013). Who Are We? A McGraw-Hill World Languages Project. Retrieved from <http://www.epals.com/project-detail.php?id=f6e2579f-bafc-4723-875b-94feda4df5db>