

How to help your child with reading



St. Martin's Primary School

Guernsey



How to help your child with reading

Research shows that reading with your child is the single most important thing you can do to help your child's education.



Phonics

The words that we speak and read are made up of separate sounds (phonemes). Your child will learn these sounds in Reception and Key Stage One and be taught how to blend the separate sounds together to read a word.



You can help your child to blend sounds by making sure that they recognise the sound that the letter/s make and say the sounds correctly. The separate sounds in words are very short and crisp.

Help your child to recognise when two or more letters are representing one sound (digraphs and trigraphs) such as *oa* in *boat* and *igh* in *light*.

Phonics games and activities:

- Play **oral blending games** at home and when out and about, e.g. 'Please bring me your c-u-p. Let's go to the sh-o-p-s'
- Use **phoneme (Freddie) fingers** – say each sound crisply and point to the tip of each finger; thumb first. Fold down any unused fingers. Run your finger across the tips and blend the sounds to read the word.
- Play '**I Spy**', using letter sounds as well as letter names.
- **Point out words all around you.** Help your child to read the words around them: on food packets in the supermarket, on buses, in newspapers, in recipes.
- **Magnetic letters** – use to make words with two and three letter sounds, e.g. coat, rain, fight.
- **Make up captions and phrases** for your child to read and write – eg. bread and cheese, please!, shut the door, light switch.
- **Remember to give praise** for trying to read new words.





What to do when phonics isn't enough

Sometimes 'sounding out' is not enough. Some words don't fit the rules so other strategies are needed.

- If your child cannot read a word suggest that they miss it out and read on to the end of the sentence. What word would make sense?
- What sound does it begin with?
- Does it sound right? Ran not runned; gave not gived.
- Does it look a bit like other words you know? e.g. if your child knows 'could' they might be able to read 'should' and 'would'.
- What word would make sense in this story or subject?
- Does the picture give you a clue?



Understanding and responding to text

Being able to read the words, does not necessarily mean that your child understands what they have read. They need to engage with and make sense of what they are reading through activities such as:

- Visualising the character and setting.
- Making links with other stories they have read.
- Linking the text with personal experience.
- Distinguishing between fact and opinion.
- Evaluating the text.
- Identifying meanings and the author's intentions.



Talking about books – questions to ask

The only way to judge how much your child understands is to talk about the book and ask questions that make him/her think.

- What do you think this story/book will be about?
- I wonder what will happen next. What do you think?
- Does this remind you of anything/a place that you have been to/a feeling?
- How do you think this character feels?
- What do you think s/he should do? - What would you do?
- Why do you think the character has done/said that?
- Where might we find information about . . . ?
- What do you already know about. . . ?
- What were the main events in this story?
- Does this remind you of any other stories that you have read?
- What does this word mean? How can we find out?
- Do you like these words? Why? How do they make you feel? Why do you think the author has used them?
- How do you think the author feel about this character/situation/subject?
- Which five words would you choose to describe this character and why?
- If you could ask the character three questions what would they be?
- Do you think this character is good or bad? Why?
- What was the best bit?



When, Where and How often?

- Choose a quiet place that suits you both – Turn the T.V. off!
- Sit close to your child when you read.
- Choose a time when neither of you feel tired or rushed.



- Establish a routine – try to read at a regular time each day.
- Keep the sessions short; 10 – 15 mins every day is better than a long session once a week.
- Make it an enjoyable time for both of you – read together or take turns, if necessary.
- Give plenty of praise and encouragement.

The reluctant reader

It is important not to worry if your child shows no inclination to read at home; the important thing is to keep on sharing books and talking together. There is no need to insist that your child does some reading – more often than not they will choose to do so when they have a real reason to.

- Make sure your child sees you reading.
- Read to your child. Show you like the book - bring stories to life by using loud/soft/scary voices – let yourself go!
- Spread books around your house for your child to 'dip into'.
- Let your child choose what s/he would like to read – books, comics, catalogues, internet access, magazines, non – fiction etc...

What to write in school reading records

Parents' comments in reading records help the class teacher to build up a picture of a child's reading habits. The following list offers some suggestions that may be appropriate. It is important to remember that the enjoyment factor is always worth commenting on.

- How enthusiastic is the child about the choice of book?
- Can the child remember the story so far?
- Can the child read words out of context e.g. when you point to a word without reading the whole sentence?
- Is the child confident to attempt new words?
- What reading strategies is your child using e.g. sounds, use of the picture, use of the context?
- Is there a pattern to the mistakes your child is making e.g. words ending in "ed" or starting in "sh
- Does the child recognise mistakes and self-correct?
- Is the child recognising many key words?
- Is the child aware of punctuation?
- Is the child reading with expression?
- How long is the child able to sustain reading?
- Read favourite books over and over again – enjoy!
- Try to avoid confrontation - don't make an issue out of it.
- Talk to your child's class teacher



What to read?



Try not to look at the structured school reading scheme as a ladder each child has to climb but as a structure to support their learning. Access to a wide range of reading materials will help your child to practise all the skills that s/he is developing. You do not just have to share the reading book from school but can read anything your child is interested in.

- A favourite book can be read as often as a child likes. Young children enjoy the security of a familiar story
- Join the public library and browse together.
- Encourage your child to swap books with their friends and other family members.
- Encourage listening to recordings of books on C.D.
- Read interactive books on the internet.

Remember, it doesn't have to be a story. Your child may be more interested in:

Non-Fiction

Poems



Cartoon Books

Picture Books

Magazines



Books about a special interest

Puzzle Books

Joke Books

Encourage children to make the most of opportunities to use their reading skills every day to read printed material which is all around us:

T.V. guides



Recipes

Newspapers

Junk mail



Word games

Letters and postcards

Dictionaries

Maps

Instructions

Websites

Adverts

Catalogues



Leaflets

Road signs

Street names

Notices and warnings

Shop signs

Posters

Choosing books

- Does the subject matter interest your child?
- Does the title sound interesting?
- Do the pictures add something to the text?
- Is the print clear?
- Read the "blurb"
- Read a page – does the language flow naturally?
- Is this an author your child has enjoyed before?
- If your child does not want to finish a book, use the opportunity to discuss the reasons why and then encourage them to make a new choice



Books for boys



Some boys don't enjoy reading stories but prefer:

- Reading for a purpose e.g. information books linked to hobbies, game instructions, sport magazines



- Humour, e.g. revolting rhymes, joke books
- Scary, shocking or revolting material, e.g. Horrible Histories
- Poetry, rap, riddles and any type of non-fiction texts

What if they choose books that are too easy or too difficult?

Sometimes children will want to use picture or books in which there is very little text or no text at all! These books are good for stimulating ideas and discussion and for extending expressive vocabulary. Encourage children to re-read familiar books to build up their confidence and reading stamina.

At other times they will want to read books that they have encountered, either at school or at home, even if the vocabulary is too difficult for them. Do encourage this as their knowledge of a story will help them to 'guess' some familiar words and join in with whole phrases or sentences. You can supply any words which they cannot manage. However, children most feel confident and competent when they read books that are "just right." Choosing the right book will help your child to feel a successful reader.



The Five Finger Rule

If a book appears too hard, remind the child of this rule:

If you cannot read five words on one page, the book is probably too hard.

Reading to children



Please continue to read aloud to your child even though he/she can read books alone: This demonstrates that you value and enjoy reading yourself.

- Read with drama and excitement! Use different voices for different characters in the story.
- Use your child's name instead of a character's name. Make puppets and use them to act out a story
- Read stories that have repetitive parts and encourage your child to join in.
- It is a way of introducing children to books which they may not otherwise tackle because they think they are too long or too difficult.
- Leave stories on a cliff hanger.



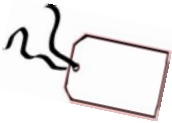
Reading games and activities

- **Map it Out** It's important to provide your child with a variety of fiction and non-fiction reading. A fun way to do this is to get a map and show them the way from your house to the local shop or another familiar destination. Have your child write out the directions, street by street, and then read them to you as you walk or drive to the store – like a living GPS!



- **Card Tricks** Do you think effective reading only takes place at libraries and book shops? Think again! There are reading opportunities everywhere. Go to a greeting card shop with your child and read the greeting cards together. Later, vote for the ones whose words convey the best birthday wish or get-well message.

- **Picture This!** During your next outing or gathering, take action-packed photos. Then help your child create captions to go with each picture. Assemble the pictures and captions in a picture book or album, and add speech and thought bubbles to create a personalized – and probably hysterical -- graphic novel.
- **Become a Fan** Children soon develop a love for particular authors and illustrators. Nurture their fan-ship by helping them write a letter to their favourite author. Many authors have their own websites with contact information, but here's a great place to start your search (<http://www.scholastic.com/kids/stacks/authors/all.htm>). You can also contact the book's publisher, the mailing address for which can often be found on the back of the title page or on the publisher's Web site.



- **Labels of Love** Word recognition and vocabulary are important parts of reading. On a rainy day, get some paper and tape and start labelling everything in your home -- from furniture to small knick-knacks. Reading these labels repeatedly will build your child's mental word bank. If your family is bilingual, create labels in both languages.

- **Treasure Hunt** Organise a treasure hunt around the house on a rainy day. Give your child a list of things that they can find in the house and see how quickly they can collect all the items.
- **Scrapbooks** Make a scrap book with your child about their favourite celebrity, group or team. Let them cut pictures out of magazines and papers and write their own captions.
- **Crosswords & word-searches** - Buy a book of crosswords and word-searches and try to solve them together. Make up your own puzzles to try out on family and friends
- **Letters and mail** - Talk about the address, sort by name. Send letters/postcards to your child and read them together.



- **I Spy** – Links sounds to real life objects.
- **Cooking** – Follow a recipe, use icing to write letters or names.



- **Read and Draw** Find a short passage from a story that describes a person, place or event. Read it aloud and ask the children what they 'see'. They draw an illustration for the book

Useful websites

www.bookaboo.co.uk

Children's bookclub from CITV. Based on an award winning series of programmes where actors/celebrities work with Bookaboo, an animated puppet, to bring popular picture books to life.

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/jackanory

Actors/celebrities give dramatized readings of popular children's picture books with animations from the original illustrations. A selection of the programmes can be accessed from the website.

www.poetryarchive.org/childrensarchive/home.do

The Children's Poetry Archive is a satellite site attached to the main online Poetry Archive. It contains scores of audiofiles so that pupils can listen to poets reading their own poems. Children can also send in their own poems, the best of which appear in the regularly updated Poetry Gallery.

<http://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/hypnotiser.html>

The great poetry book The Hypnotiser is now out of print, so Michael Rosen has had the inspired idea of asking his son Joe to produce a video of him performing all the poems from the book. Michael is also adding YouTube videos of himself performing poems. A fabulous free resource!

<http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/>

This is a really helpful website for parents by the National Literacy Trust with sections for 3-5, 5-7 and 7-11 year olds. It has lots of practical advice for parents and book-related activities to download.

www.read-count.org/index.asp

This website will give you some ideas about reading with your child and has online games for young children to play with you and on their own. It also has ideas for games to play away from the computer.

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/earlyreadingconnects/toolkit.htm>

Downloadable story games based on popular children's picture books. These are ready to print out and play.

www.booktrust.org.uk

Free downloadable resources, including reading games, activities, quizzes, competitions and book lists.

<http://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk>

This website provides lists of recommended reading books for all year groups.

www.sillybooks.net

Animated children's books are available from this website. The text is high-lighted in time with the voice-over in both stories and songs so that children can see each word as spoken.

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

The free area of the PhonicsPlay website is filled with free interactive games and printable resources. There is lots of advice to support parents in helping their children learn to read.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/primary_support/

A useful section of the BBC website with information for parents about helping your child with reading.

<http://www.crickweb.co.uk/ks1literacy.html>

Free online educational games and activities to teach your child spelling, reading and grammar.

www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/interactive/onlinestory.htm

An amazing school website. Explore the Literacy zone for interactive reading books, phonics games, etc.