



Reading at home:  
A guide for parents

One of the most common questions I'm asked by parents is "what can I be doing at home to help my child with their learning?"

If I could only offer one piece of advice, it would be to read regularly with them at home.

Research has consistently shown that children who read regularly are more successful at school, and enjoy their time at school more, than children who don't.

There are so many varied benefits to reading. It will help add new and interesting words to their vocabulary. It will extend their concentration and focus levels. It will improve their creativity and imagination. It will help them to empathise and understand different viewpoints and perspectives. It will equip them with critical skills to help them spot and question misinformation shared online.

Reading is a powerful tool to help children transcend disadvantaged backgrounds too. Studies have found that how often a child reads is a stronger indicator of future educational success than their family's socio-economic status. Children from deprived homes that read regularly do better than children from wealthy families that don't.

So how can we encourage children to do it?

Never underestimate your own influence as a parent. Research found that children's attitude to reading is strongly linked to the 'reading role models' they have at home. If they see books valued and used, and that reading isn't just something done by children at school but a skill used by adults as well, they are more likely to become readers themselves. However, a recent survey found that three in ten households in the UK don't contain a single book. Even once your children are old enough to read independently on their own, you could help set a really powerful example to them by finding the time to enjoy a book of your own while they're reading too.

Reading at home is perhaps the single most powerful thing you can do to help your child's educational development. We have put together this booklet to help parents understand how best to help. As always, we want to work in partnership with you for the benefit of your children – please get in contact with us if you need any further guidance, assistance or support. We're here for you.

**Mr Donald Vass**

**Literacy Lead, Jessie Younghusband School**

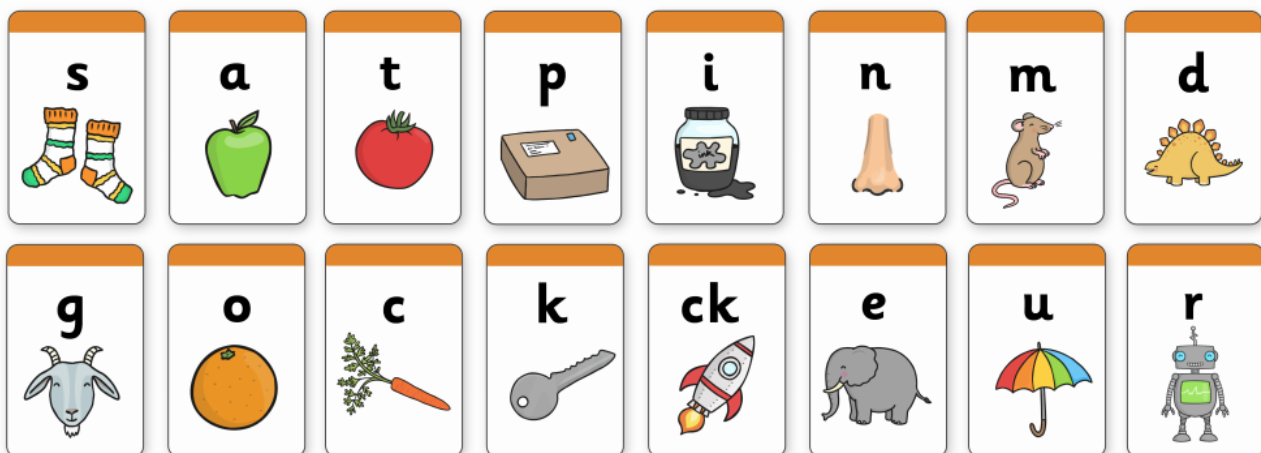
## Early reading: Using phonics to decode

The system used to teach children to read in school is called phonics. Although the English alphabet contains only 26 letters, spoken English uses about 44 sounds (**phonemes**). These phonemes are represented by letters (**graphemes**). In words, a sound can be represented by a single letter (such as "s" or "a") or a group of letters (such as "sh" or "ch").

What differs now from how letters and sounds were previously taught is the very short sounds that letters make. You may remember being taught "l" as a "luh" sound. Now, we give it a short "l" sound, pronounced as you would at the end of "Hull". Similarly, with "N", don't be tempted to say "nuh" - it's very much a "n" on its own, like in "London". When you say a letter, think how it sounds in a word. For example, "F" makes a very short "f" sound in "fluff", rather than a "fuh" sound.

It's really important though that you keep the sounds really short, because this will help children to blend sounds to pronounce full words. Blending sounds smoothly helps to improve fluency when reading. Blending is more difficult to do with longer words, so learning how to blend accurately at an early age is important. Model how to 'sound talk' sounds and blend them smoothly together when children encounter words they are finding hard to read. Help them to sound it out, then blend it together. For example, reading "p-l-a-n-t, plant".

Some sounds (**digraphs**) are represented by two letters, such as the "sh" in "f-i-sh" or the "ck" in "k-i-ck". Children should sound out the digraph and not the individual letters (such as "r-i-ch" and not "r-i-c-h"). Some words (**trigraphs**) may also have three letters to represent one sound (such as the "ear" in "h-ear" or the "air" in "p-air"). There are also **split digraphs**, which are letters separated by a consonant. These make a long vowel sound (such as the "o-e" in "bone").



<b>h</b> 	<b>b</b> 	<b>f</b> 	<b>ff</b> 	<b>l</b> 	<b>ll</b> 	<b>ss</b> 	
<b>j</b> 	<b>v</b> 	<b>w</b> 	<b>x</b> 	<b>y</b> 	<b>z</b> 	<b>zz</b> 	<b>qu</b> 
<b>ch</b> 	<b>sh</b> 	<b>th</b> 	<b>ng</b> 	<b>ai</b> 	<b>ee</b> 	<b>igh</b> 	<b>oa</b> 
<b>oo</b> 	<b>oo</b> 	<b>ar</b> 	<b>or</b> 	<b>ur</b> 	<b>ow</b> 	<b>oi</b> 	<b>ear</b> 
<b>air</b> 	<b>ure</b> 	<b>er</b> 					
<b>ay</b> 	<b>ou</b> 	<b>ie</b> 	<b>ea</b> 	<b>oy</b> 	<b>ir</b> 	<b>ue</b> 	<b>ue</b> 
<b>aw</b> 	<b>wh</b> 	<b>ph</b> 	<b>ew</b> 	<b>ew</b> 	<b>oe</b> 	<b>au</b> 	<b>ey</b> 
<b>a-e</b> 	<b>e-e</b> 	<b>i-e</b> 	<b>o-e</b> 	<b>u-e</b> 	<b>u-e</b> 		

You can watch our Year R teacher, Mrs. Appleby, present a video workshop on Phonics by scanning this QR code or following the link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQK\\_sSUDba0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQK_sSUDba0)

## Moving on: Developing wider reading skills

Once a child starts developing fluency as a reader, the focus of teaching and learning shifts to comprehension and understanding of texts. We develop these skills through group and individual reading, as well as during teaching inputs in lessons. In class, the teaching will focus on the next steps which will enable the children to continue to make progress in their reading.

There are many skills that we work on when developing the children's reading.

### Decoding

This is the skill that parents are generally most familiar with, and deals with the varying strategies used by children to make sense of the words on the page. Even fluent readers can be stumped by an unfamiliar word, and it is useful at these times to discuss the range of strategies used to make a sensible guess. These include using picture clues, reading on and back for context and using their knowledge of phonics and the sounds different letters make.

### Retrieval and recall

Children need to develop this skill in order to locate important information and to retell stories and describe events. It might involve finding specific information from a page or chapter, or it could mean remembering or summarising longer sections of the text.

### Inference

This is the skill of 'reading between the lines' – understanding what is implied or hinted by the text even when it's not explicit. Encouraging children to make inferences based on clues in the text using their understanding of the context will help them to develop this important skill.



## Structure and organisation:

As children read a wider range of text types, they need to be able to comment on the features they encounter and how different writing is structured and organised. This is particularly true in non-fiction writing, where books and pages are carefully laid out to help the reader find the information they need. Discussing the presentation of the text, for example noticing that a list is laid out in bullet points, and the author's reason for organising the text in this way, will support children's development in this area.

## Language and vocabulary

It's important for children to think specifically about the language choices made by writers, including their possible reasons for making those choices and the effect the choices have on the reader. Discussing alternative choices and their effects can be a good way to begin discussion about the author's language and an opportunity to develop vocabulary generally.

## Purpose and viewpoint

Who is the narrator of this story? What does the writer of this biography feel about his/her subject? Children need to understand that writers write for a purpose, and to be able to recognise that this will have an impact on the way a text is written. Newspapers and advertisements are perfect examples of this and can lead to lots of lively discussions.

## Making links

As adults, we are constantly making links between ideas and experiences. Confident readers connect the book they are reading with other books, films, real life experiences and more. A child may notice similar themes in different books written by the same author for example, or that two books of the same genre have similar plot lines or structures.



## Questions to ask while reading with your child

A great way to help develop some of these important reading skills is to talk with your child about their book. Don't be afraid to occasionally stop the flow of reading to do so - asking some of these targeted questions at an opportune time may help grow, deepen or challenge your child's understanding and engagement with the text in front of them.



### **Retrieval and recall**

- Where is this story set?
- What did the character say/do...?
- What happened at the start of the story?
- What happened on the last page?
- What happened after...?
- How did...?
- How often...?
- Who did....?
- What happened to...?
- Find three adjectives which describe the character.
- Find an adverb which says how the character...
- The story is told from whose perspective?
- Can you summarise in a sentence the opening/middle/end of the story?

### **Inference**

- How do you think the character feels?
- How do you know the character is...?
- What do you think will happen next? Why?
- How do the descriptions of ... show that they are ...?
- How can you tell that...?
- What impression of the character do you get from this paragraph?
- What voice might these characters use?
- What do you think this character was thinking when...?
- Why do you think the character behaved in that way?
- Based on the cover, what kind of genre do you think this book is?

### **Structure and organisation:**

- How did the author make this information easier to read?
- What would be a good caption for that picture?
- What could the subtitle for that paragraph be?
- Why is the text arranged in this way?
- What structure has the author used?
- How did you know what that section would be about?
- Why has the author used a subtitle there?
- Is the use of ... effective?
- How are these sections linked?
- How does the writer link their conclusion to their introduction?
- How could I find the information I needed from this non-fiction book?
- Why is this word in bold/italic/underlined?
- How do you know this is a letter/diary/speech?

### **Purpose and viewpoint**

- What's the purpose of this writing?
- What group of people is this writing aimed at? How do you know?
- Which part of the text is most persuasive? Why?
- How does the writer feel about ...? How do you know?
- Why does this section begin with a question? What effect does this have on you?
- Where would you expect to see writing like this?
- What effect does ... have on the audience?

### **Language and vocabulary**

- What does the word ... suggest about the character/setting/mood?
- Which word means the same as...?
- Why do you think the author selected that word rather than ...?
- What's your favourite adjective on this page?
- What's the best piece of vocabulary on this page?
- Which word shows that the character is...?
- Which pieces of speech show you that the character is...?
- Why is this an effective simile/metaphor? Why do you think the author compared those two things? What do they have in common?
- Is this formal or informal writing? How do you know?

### **Making links**

- How was this book similar/different to the author's other books?
- How was this book similar/different to others in this genre?
- How was this book similar/different to the film?
- Did this characters in this book remind you of any others in different stories?
- Have you ever been in a similar situation to the characters in this book?
- Was the villain in this book like the 'baddies' in other books you've read? How are they similar or different?



## The School Reading Scheme

JYS has hundreds of books which children can take home to read. To help children select books of an appropriate level and challenge, these are banded into colours. Each pupil is assigned a book band, which is based on their teacher's current assessment of their reading. They will be able to select any text from this colour band and will be moved to a different colour when their teacher assesses them as ready.

Progress through the bands will happen at different rates for different children and it is important to ensure that children working in the early bands have a really secure understanding of a variety of texts (including poetry and non-fiction books as well as narrative stories) before they move up, so that they remain well-motivated as they encounter more challenging texts. This is particularly important for children at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

It's worth remembering that the ability to decode words is just one aspect of reading. It may be that children are reading fluently off the page, but are not yet able to recall what they have read, for example. We aim to ensure children have developed a wide range of reading skills before moving them 'up' to the next book band.

Children will bring home their reading book every day. We recognise and appreciate that life sometimes gets in the way, but finding a routine where your child can read at home with an adult almost every day would be hugely beneficial.

1. Pink A	10. Gold
2. Pink B	11. White
3. Red	12. Lime
4. Yellow	13. Copper
5. Blue	14. Topaz
6. Green	15. Ruby
7. Orange	16. Emerald
8. Turquoise	17. Jet
9. Purple	18. 'Free Read'

*'Free read' indicates that a child has reached an outstanding level of reading and can select any books either from home or the school library.*

Recommended reads: Year R, 1 & 2		Loved this? Try these next!	
		Same author	Same genre/theme
	Gorilla (Anthony Browne)	Zoo (Anthony Browne)	Beegu (Alexis Deacon)
	Hair Love (Matthew Cherry)	Sulwe (Lupita Nyong'o) <i>Same illustrator - Vashti Harrison</i>	Last Stop on Market Street (Matt de la Pena)
	I Will Not Ever Never Eat a Tomato (Lauren Child)	The New Small Person (Lauren Child)	The Day the Crayons Quit (Drew Daywalt)
	Look Up! (Nathan Bryan)	Clean Up! (Nathan Bryan)	Goodnight Spaceman (Michelle Robinson)
	Room on the Broom (Julia Donaldson)	The Gruffalo (Julia Donaldson)	Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy (Lynley Dodd)
	The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters (Allan & Janet Ahlberg)	Each Peach Pear Plum (Allan & Janet Ahlberg)	Dragon Post (Emma Yarlett)
	The Tiger Who Came to Tea (Judith Kerr)	The Crocodile Under the Bed (Judith Kerr)	Elmer (David McKee)
	The True Story of the Three Little Pigs (Jon Scieszka)	The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (Jon Scieszka)	After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again (Dan Santat)
	We're Going on a Bear Hunt (Michael Rosen)	Mustard, Custard, Grumble Belly and Gravy (Michael Rosen)	Five Minutes' Peace (Jill Murphy)

Recommended reads: Year 3 & 4		Loved this? Try these next!	
		Same author	Same genre/theme
	A Planet Full of Plastic: and how you can help (Neal Leyton)	Poo: A Natural History of the Unmentionable (Nicola Davies, illustrated by Neal Leyton)	This Book is Not Rubbish: 50 Ways to Ditch Plastic, Reduce Rubbish and Save the World (Isabel Thomas)
	Billionaire Boy (David Walliams)	The Boy In The Dress (David Walliams)	You're a Bad Man, Mr. Gum! (Andy Stanton)
	Diary Of A Wimpy Kid (Jeff Kinney)	Rowley Jefferson's Awesome Friendly Adventure (Jeff Kinney)	The Brilliant World of Tom Gates (Liz Pichon)
	Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet (Zanib Mian)	Unexpected Spy (Zanib Mian)	Barry Loser: I am not a loser (Jim Smith)
	Shackleton's Journey (William Grill)	The Wolves of Currumpaw (William Grill)	Survivors (David Long)
	The Adventures of Captain Underpants (Dav Pilkey)	Dog Man (Dav Pilkey)	The World of Norm (Jonathan Meres)
	The BFG (Roald Dahl)	Charlie And The Chocolate Factory (Roald Dahl)	Charlotte's Web (E.B. White)
	The Hundred-Mile-An-Hour Dog (Jeremy Strong)	My Brother's Famous Bottom (Jeremy Strong)	Ellie and The Cat (Malorie Blackman)
	The Story Of Tracey Beaker (Jacqueline Wilson)	Cliffhanger (Jacqueline Wilson)	Bad Nana (Sophy Henn)

Recommended reads: Year 5 & 6		Loved this? Try these next!	
		Same author	Same genre/theme
	Alex Rider: Stormbreaker (Anthony Horowitz)	Groosham Grange (Anthony Horowitz)	Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief (Rick Riordan)
	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (JK Rowling)	The Ickabog (JK Rowling)	Artemis Fowl (Eoin Colfer)
	High Rise Mystery (Sharna Jackson)	Mic Drop (Sharna Jackson)	The London Eye Mystery (Siobhan Dowd)
	Kensuke's Kingdom (Michael Morpurgo)	Running Wild (Michael Morpurgo)	Journey to the River Sea (Eva Ibbotson)
	Millions (Frank Cottrell Boyce)	Cosmic (Frank Cottrell Boyce)	The Parent Agency (David Baddiel)
	My Secret War Diary, by Flossie Albright (Marcia Williams)	Archie's War (Marcia Williams)	Horrible Histories: Woeful Second World War (Terry Deary)
	Skellig (David Almond)	My Name Is Mina (David Almond)	Skulduggery Pleasant (Derek Landy)
	The Boy At the Back of the Class (Onjali Rauf)	The Star Outside My Window (Onjali Rauf)	Wonder (R. J. Palacio)
	The Girl of Ink & Stars (Kiran Millwood Hargrave)	The Way Past Winter (Kiran Millwood Hargrave)	The Invention of Hugo Cabret (Brian Selznick)

**Aspire ~ Respect ~ Enjoy**