

BEYOND WORDS

How to
support your
child's literacy
development
at home



THE DEAN
ACADEMY

WHY IS READING IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILD?

Reading really is the key to success. The most recent National Literacy Trust research highlights the link between enjoyment of reading and attainment. The longer children are able to keep an enjoyment of reading going, the greater the benefits in the classroom. 12 year olds who enjoy reading have a reading age of 2.1 years higher than their peers who don't enjoy reading and this rises to a gap of 3.3 years for 14 year olds.

Evidence shows that by Age 3, a gap of 30 million words can exist between children based on their early years experiences ([Hart & Risley, 1995](#)) and that while language variation in children is difficult to attribute to a single cause, low levels of vocabulary set limits on literacy, understanding, learning the curriculum and can create a downward spiral of poor language which affects all aspects of life ([Nation, 2018](#))

Young people and adults with literacy difficulties:

- Are at risk of being unemployed for longer periods of time than their peers
- Will have lower life expectancy, including increased chances of poor mental health and wellbeing, than those without literacy difficulties



HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD AT HOME WITH READING?



MAKE TIME

- Set a regular time to read together
- Little and often works best
- 30 minutes a day can make a huge difference

THE LOCAL LIBRARY

- Let your child choose what to read
- Join the local library for free and your child can pick from a wide selection based on their interests
- Need help? Ask the librarian. Many children think they don't like reading but, in many cases, it's just because they haven't found the right book

NOT JUST BOOKS

- Some children are reluctant readers of fiction
- Encourage reading through different materials and formats
- Comics, magazines, e-books and audio books are all suitable alternatives
- Introduce them to non-fiction



HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD AT HOME WITH READING?

Talk to your child about what they are reading so reading becomes a social and shared experience for them. Ask questions before they read, whilst they are reading and after they have read the book. This will bring the book to life and make reading more enjoyable. It will also support your child in reading well because questions will encourage them to reflect and evaluate what they read and make inferences. This will encourage your child to read for pleasure which increases their chance of becoming a lifelong reader.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE THEY START READING

- Why have you chosen this book?
- Have you read any books by this author before?
- Will this book challenge you? Why do you think this? *

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILST THEY ARE READING

- What has happened so far?
- What do you predict will happen?
- Who is your favourite character so far? Why?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER THEY HAVE READ THE BOOK

- What happened in the book? Did it surprise you? Why?
- Who is your favourite character and why?
- Would you recommend this book to others? Why?
- What did you think about the author's style of writing? Did it interest you as a reader? Why?

* It is important to ask this question as a lot of children read books from the same series e.g. Diary of a Wimpy Kid and books by Jacqueline Wilson. It is important to encourage them to read challenging books e.g. books by different authors or books written before 1960. This will help develop their reading skills so they read well.



ARE THEY STRUGGLING WITH ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS?

Use this simple three step strategy to help them develop their ability to make inferences and answer your questions ...

1. TEXT CLUES

What have they noticed about the character in the text? Look for text clues.

2. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Combine the text clues with what they already know about the character or the story so far.

3. INFERENCE

Ask them to now state an idea based on the text clues and their background knowledge.

TEXT
CLUES

It says ...

+

BACKGROUND
KNOWLEDGE

I know ...

=

INFERENCE

So I think ...



WHAT IF MY CHILD IS STRUGGLING TO READ AT HOME?

HOW TO HELP A STRUGGLING READER

- Watch this Oxford Owl guide to how to support your child if they are struggling: <https://youtu.be/0ga5KldBXMg>
- Ask their tutor for their most recent reading age so you can help guide them with selecting challenging but accessible reading material

BE POSITIVE

Praise them for trying hard at their reading and let them know it is okay to make mistakes. This will encourage them to show determination and continue reading for pleasure

SPEAK TO THEIR ENGLISH TEACHER

Your child's English teacher will be able to give you advice on how to develop the reading process. This may include:

- 1) Looking for clues in the chapter titles
- 2) Breaking down the words or sentences to work out the meaning
- 3) Re-reading



It is important to not give up. You could model reading to your child so they see you reading for pleasure. This helps them understand reading is important. You could do this by talking to them about a book you are enjoying or a news article you've found interesting.

If you feel there are significant challenges for your child with reading, please contact our Learning Hub team at: sen@thedeacademy.org



BEYOND WORDS BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS YEAR 7 AND 8

Swallows and Amazons
Arthur Ransome

Brown Girl Dreaming
Jacqueline Woodson

A Long Walk to Water
Linda Sue Park

The Inquisitor's Tale
Adam Gidwitz

A Monster Calls
Patrick Ness

Face
Benjamin Zephaniah

Framed
Frank Cottrell Boyce

Goodnight Mr Tom
Michelle Magorian

Lord Loss
Darren Shan

Maze Runner
James Dashner

Mortal Engines
Phillip Reeve

**Percy Jackson and the
Lightning Thief**
Rick Riordan

Private Peaceful
Michael Morpurgo

Sword in the Stone
T.H. White

The Graveyard Book
Neil Gaiman

The Tulip Touch
Michelle Anne Fine



BEYOND WORDS BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS YEAR 9 AND 10

1984

George Orwell

To Kill a Mockingbird

Harper Lee

Bog Child

Siobhan Dowd

Rani and Sukh

Bali Rai

The Woman in White

Wilkie Collins

Just in Case

Meg Rosoff

Saving Daisy

Phil Earle

Straight Outta Crongton

Alex Wheatle

Boys Don't Cry

Malorie Blackman

Never Let Me Go

Kazuo Ishiguro

Pigeon English

Stephen Kelman

The Enemy

Charlie Higson

A Thousand Splendid Suns

Khaled Hosseini

The Knife of Never Letting Go

Patrick Ness

Unwind

Neil Shusterman

Cuckoo Song

Frances Hardinge



USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FURTHER SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

- **Reading Rockets:** <https://www.readingrockets.org>
- **Words for Life:** <https://wordsforlife.org.uk>
- **School Reading List:**
<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/category/secondary-ks3-ks4-reading-lists/>
- **Pearson 'Enjoy Reading' parents guide:**
https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/uk/documents/Learner/Primary/Primary%20parents/Pearson_EnjoyReading_03.pdf
- **Love Reading:** <https://www.lovereadng.co.uk>
- **The Book Trust:** <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/>

