

READING 4 PLEASURE



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Switch the next generation on to reading

The active encouragement of reading for pleasure should be a core part of every child's educational entitlement, whatever their background or attainment, as extensive reading and exposure to a wide range of texts make a huge contribution to students' educational achievement.

However, as NUT members at Annual Conference in 2010 discussed, while schools focus on teaching to the test, the curriculum will continue to narrow and the widespread use of extracts in the teaching of English and literacy will persist, to the exclusion of reading whole texts including those chosen by students themselves. The Government's insistence on using systematic synthetic phonics as the only means of teaching reading further diminishes opportunities for young readers to engage with a wide range of texts which interest them.

Not only are these practices counterproductive in raising achievement but they risk switching off a generation to the pleasure of reading. The decline of school libraries and cuts to public library provision only exacerbate this situation.

This document celebrates the importance of reading as a pleasurable activity in its own right, not just as a means to learning, and aims to make reading fun again, by empowering teachers to inspire children and young people through books and other forms of text. It also provides practical support for the NUT's campaign for whole book reading within schools and individual classes and the protection of school and public libraries. I commend Reading for Pleasure to you.



CHRISTINE BLOWER
NUT General Secretary

WHY READING FOR PLEASURE MATTERS

by Alan Gibbons

I am delighted to welcome the NUT's guide for teachers. Ask any good classroom practitioner what makes a child ready and eager to learn and reading for pleasure comes high on the list. A reading child is, quite simply, a successful child. This is not just a matter of anecdotal evidence. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has concluded that reading for pleasure is even more important than social class in determining academic success.

When you read often and with enthusiasm, usually just for the sheer fun of it, you lay foundations that last for life. You empathise. You access information more easily. Almost by osmosis you internalise the essential skills of spelling, grammar and vocabulary. You learn to express yourself verbally and in writing. You learn to interpret and potentially change your world.

You would think, wouldn't you, that reading would feature at the heart of the government's education policy? Sadly, it doesn't. The current environment in schools is largely determined by league tables and SATs. These pressures often lead to the marginalisation of reading whole books and the dominance of excerpts. Good teachers are pressed to see English as a functional construct and not a creative one. That isn't the only problem facing supporters of a coherent and imaginative approach to reading. Up to 800 public libraries face closure as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review. With budgets being eroded, school libraries are facing a spending squeeze and some are even closing.

On Radio 4's *Today* programme recently Michael Gove was asked why the UK's reading score had fallen from 7th to 25th in comparative tables. He could have pointed out that standards have risen, but less quickly than some other countries. He could have announced a change of policy and

said the UK was going to learn from more progressive systems such as Finland or Alberta, Canada where learning, not testing, is at the heart of educational policy. He could have announced extra spending on libraries or more visits by authors and poets to stimulate the students' interest. He did none of these. Instead, he pointed to phonics, reading schemes and academy status as the Holy Trinity of educational achievement!

There have been many attempts to argue in favour of a change of direction, learning from the best practice at home and abroad. Former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen published 20 points to create a reading school. Authors Philip Pullman, Jamila Gavin, Bernard Ashley, Anne Fine and Chris Pownall had several meetings with Secretaries of State for Education under the last government. There was the report of the School Libraries Commission. The organisation for which I am spokesman, the Campaign for the Book, presses the case for better libraries and for a more rigorous, consistent and creative approach to the teaching of reading.

When the NUT supported a landmark resolution advocating a serious campaign to promote reading for pleasure, it represented a major step forward. The Reading for Pleasure conference and this publication are part of that campaign. We face great challenges but, if we can begin to shift the intellectual climate, there may be great rewards for our children.

To paraphrase Bill Shankly, reading is not a matter of life and death. It is much more important than that.

Alan Gibbons is an award winning author, NUT member and organiser of the Campaign for the Book www.alangibbons.net

Introduction

This booklet, together with the accompanying on-line resources guide, is to inform, inspire and guide its readers to explore the approach taken to reading for pleasure within their own schools and individual classrooms.

The National Curriculum and its statutory assessment system, Ofsted inspections and the accountability regime, target setting, school improvement and action plans all exert a significant influence on what teachers do in the classroom. In such a context, reading for pleasure can be viewed as a luxury. Increasingly, this has led to concerns about how to justify and explain its inclusion, if not to question how worthwhile reading for pleasure is, its value and purpose. It is intended that the research evidence contained in this booklet will support teachers' inclusion of reading for pleasure as a valid part of their teaching.

The trend towards using extracts from books rather than whole texts for test practice and preparation, the attractiveness and immediacy of a range of digital media, the shrinkage of school and public libraries and the sheer time demands of ensuring full curriculum coverage have all mitigated against schools encouraging pupils to read for pleasure. After reading this document, the NUT hopes that you will agree with its view that reading for pleasure is not only an intrinsic good in its own right, but can foster and enhance children's learning across the curriculum and into adult life.

"Eldon is a five form entry infant school in one of the most deprived wards in the country. The intake of pupils is diverse and senior management felt that it was important that the school had a library which could be visited by whole classes and used by children and parents.

The building in which the library is now housed is a prefabricated hut which used to be the nursery prior to a new early years unit being built. It had then been used for group work and in 2009 was converted into a library.

The library features an interactive whiteboard, storybags, a listening station, six computers, a table for group work and a 'snug' for quiet reading in the corridor.

Each class, including the nursery classes, now has a timetabled session in the library every week. In addition to this, computer skills lessons for parents take place on two mornings per week. There is a 'Share' class for English and Turkish parents which takes place once a week and helps parents to 'share' reading experiences with their children. An 'Easy' group, which focuses on reading skills, also takes place every week for pupils with special educational needs."

**Carolyn Bathija, Assistant Head – Curriculum,
Eldon Infant School, Enfield**

Why is reading for pleasure important?

Research has shown how developing a love of reading is important for children's life chances. According to the OECD, *"Finding ways to engage pupils in reading may be one of the most effective ways to leverage social change"*¹. Analysis showed that students whose parents had the lowest occupational status but who were highly engaged in reading obtained higher average reading scores than students whose parents had high or medium occupational status but who were poorly engaged in reading.

There is a substantial body of research which supports this view. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), for example, which focuses on 10 year olds, reported that *"there is a strong association between the amount of reading for pleasure children reported and their reading achievement."* Similarly, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is concerned with 15 year olds, reported in 2010 that *"in almost all countries, students who enjoy reading are significantly more likely to be good readers."*

Researchers in England² have noted that *"as students become engaged readers, they provide themselves with self-generated learning opportunities that are equivalent to several years of education."* They also reported that children with a positive attitude to reading are more likely to practice the reading skills they are learning at school.

Children who are read to every day at age three have a vocabulary at age five which is nearly two months more advanced than those who are not. A child taken to the library on a monthly basis from ages three to five is two and a half months ahead of an equivalent child at age five who did not visit the library so regularly.³

There is also evidence that reading for pleasure can benefit children and young people beyond the classroom and into their adult life, in turn enriching the world around us. According to the International Reading Association⁴:

Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read can be crucial.

Poor reading skills correlate heavily with lack of employment, lower wages, and fewer opportunities for advancement. Significantly worse reading skills are found among prisoners than in the general adult population⁵.

Research also indicates that reading and taking part in social reading activities such as reading groups help people relax, support learning, combat isolation and build social capital, help develop confidence and self-esteem and promote enjoyment and well-being⁶. Reading can provide an escape from day-to-day concerns and can be a wonderful way of relaxing and relieving stress.

There is a developing evidence base for the health and well-being benefits of reading, with evidence suggesting a correlation between reading and a variety of physical and mental health outcomes⁷. For example, the NHS has introduced a 'Reading and You' scheme, which encourages mental health patients to read more as part of their therapy for reducing stress and overcoming anxiety, depression and social isolation.

¹ *Reading for Change*, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2002.

² Guthrie J.T. and Wigfield A., *Engagement and Motivation in Reading*, 2000.

³ Washbrook E. and Waldfogel J., *Cognitive Gaps in Early Years*, The Sutton Trust, 2010.

⁴ Moore, D.W., Bean, T.W., Birdyshaw, D. and Rycik, J. *Adolescent Literacy: A Position Statement*, International Reading Association, 1999.

⁵ Hargreaves Macintyre M., *Confidence all Round: The Impact on Emergent Adult Readers of Reading for Pleasure through Libraries*, 2005.

⁶ Book Marketing Ltd/The Reading Partnership, *Reading the Situation: Book Reading and Public Library Use*, BML/The Reading Partnership, 2000.

⁷ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Capturing the Impact of Libraries*, BOP Consulting, 2009.

Reading for pleasure changes lives for the better

Readers are active participants in the world around them and that engagement is critical to individual and social well-being. Research from the USA⁸ has indicated that people who read for pleasure are three times more likely than those who don't to visit museums and attend concerts and twice as likely to perform volunteer and charity work. They were also found to exercise more and play more sport, no matter what their educational level. These statistics confirm something that most teachers know but have been reluctant to declare as fact – reading changes lives for the better.

Just because someone is able to read does not mean that he or she will choose to do so⁹. This is especially true with students who are thought to be at risk of reading failure. Children who read very little do not have the benefits that come with reading and studies show that, when struggling readers are not motivated to read, their opportunities to learn decrease significantly. This can lead to strong negative feelings about reading and create a vicious circle in which poor readers remain poor readers.

According to international research, children in England do not enjoy reading as much as they might. The most recent comparative study of the reading attainment of ten year olds, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) was conducted in 2006. Key findings included:

- *“Children in England tended to report reading for pleasure less frequently than their peers in many other countries.”* England ranked 23rd out of 29 countries in terms of pupils' attitudes to reading;
- Just one third of children in England reported reading for fun on a daily basis outside school. England ranked 26th out of 29 countries. This was unchanged from 2001. In addition, 42 per cent of English children said they read for fun outside school every two months or less;

- 15 per cent of children in England gave the most negative response possible to the question on attitude to reading, one of the highest proportions in all of the participating countries;
- *“A child who approaches reading confidently is more likely to seek out opportunities to read, to read more frequently and more widely. On average, children in England expressed less confidence about their reading attainment than their peers in most other countries”.*

At the secondary phase, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) concluded that *“overall close to 40% of students report they do not read for enjoyment in the United Kingdom (OECD average 37%¹⁰)”*.

It could be argued that the Government's current approach to teaching reading and recognising reading achievement reinforces a sense of failure in children which, in turn, affects their achievement and widens the gap between the highest and lowest achievers. However, there is evidence¹¹ that children can be motivated to read for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. For example, to satisfy their own reading interests and to comply with school demands, pupils may show intrinsically as well as extrinsically motivated reading behaviour. Extrinsic motivation can be harnessed to bring about intrinsic motivation and vice versa.

There has never been a better time, therefore, to consider how to encourage reading for pleasure in schools.

⁸ National Endowment for the Arts, *To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence*, NEA #47, 2007.

⁹ Clark C. and Rumbold K., *Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview*, National Literacy Trust, 2006.

¹⁰ *PISA 2009 Results: What Makes a School Successful?* OECD, 2010.

¹¹ Clark C. and Rumbold K., *Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview*, National Literacy Trust, 2006.

Resources – practical activities and guidance

Introduction

This booklet and the accompanying on-line resources guide aim to give some practical suggestions about how activities to promote reading for pleasure can be introduced back into the classroom.

The ideas may be useful to nursery, primary, secondary and special schools. Some can be implemented by a teacher independently and would need little or no special resourcing, whilst others would be significant whole school commitments. The contents in this section are intended primarily to inspire you to think about how you could promote reading for pleasure in your own school context.

For lots more practical activities, see the online resources guide – further details are at the back of this booklet.

Classroom libraries

Research consistently shows that one of the most effective strategies for fostering a love of reading in schools is the creation of a classroom library¹², as it serves as a constant reminder for the children to pick up a book and start reading. Classroom libraries with books from a variety of genres and covering a range of potential areas of interest increase pupils' literacy-related skills and promote phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and writing.

By providing access to a rich classroom library, teachers promote greater amounts of reading, increased reading frequency and more diverse reading experiences among their students, thus helping them to attain greater levels of reading achievement.

According to researchers¹³, there are at least five important functions of an effectively designed classroom library: supporting literacy instruction; helping students learn about books; providing a central location for classroom resources; providing opportunities for independent reading and curricular extensions; and serving as a place for students to talk about and interact with books.

In order to fulfil all these functions, there needs to be a wide range of categories of reading materials within a classroom library, for example:

- stories and narrative accounts, eg, fairy tales, folk tales, and biographies;
- picture books with thought-provoking images and examples of artistic talent;
- information books;
- computers with bookmarked Web pages, including major reference sources;
- miscellaneous reading materials, such as popular magazines, newspapers, catalogues, recipe books, encyclopaedias, maps, reports, captioned photographs, posters, diaries and letters;
- joke books, comic books, word-puzzle books; and
- student-authored books and stories.

¹² Neuman, S. B. & Celano, D., *Access to Print in Low-Income and Middle-Income Communities: An Ecological Study of Four Neighborhoods*, Reading Research Quarterly, 36(1), 8-26, 2001.

¹³ Reutzel D.R. and Fawson P. C., *Your Classroom Library: New Ways to Give It More Teaching Power*, Scholastic, 2004.

The size of the collection will depend upon how much financial support is available in your school and upon how much creativity and energy you can bring to the task. Very often, organising an effective classroom library requires a multi-year, phase-in plan. Resources are seldom sufficient to immediately stock a classroom library adequately. See the on-line resources guide ICT section for ideas about how to develop your classroom library stock and lots of examples of class, school and public library activities.

“What makes children *want* to read? Staff at Ashmount Primary School have frequently asked this question when considering strategies to adopt which encourage pupils to read for pleasure and experience, rather than ‘because they have to’.

We put this question to several children across the school, and we noticed similar responses each time.

It is about being comfortable and relaxed, sitting on comfy cushions and chairs – *allowing your mind to get into the book*. The reading corner has to stimulate interest – it has to be full of colour and decorated to a genre or theme of book. There has to be a variety of multicultural and multilingual books of mixed genre within a topic. And finally, not too many books to choose from – well displayed, with clearly labelled areas and easy access.

Sit back and enjoy!”

***Sally Greener, Year 6 Teacher/Assistant Headteacher –
Ashmount Primary School, Islington, with thanks to colleagues
Sharon Turney and Juliana Kilanko***

Encouraging boys to read

Choose appropriate classroom resources for boys

According to research¹⁴, boys generally like to read:

- books that reflect their image of themselves – what they aspire to be and to do;
- books that make them laugh and that appeal to their sense of mischief;
- fiction that focuses on action more than on emotions;
- books in series, such as the Harry Potter series, which seem to provide boys with a sense of comfort and familiarity;
- science fiction or fantasy (many boys are passionate about these genres);
- newspapers, magazines, comic books, sports cards, and instruction manuals – materials that are often not available in the classroom. Interestingly, when they read these materials, many boys do not consider themselves to be reading at all, precisely because these materials are not valued at school.

There are a number of specialist guides and resources to help schools and teachers select reading materials which will be attractive to boys.

- **Riveting Reads:** Boys into Books lists for Key Stages 1-4 are available to download from <http://www.sla.org.uk/riveting-reads.php>
- **Books and Boys:** acts as a portal to a range of boy-related reading lists, reviews and articles <http://booksandboys.blogspot.com/>
- **Times List of Top Books for Boys:** recommended by readers and their parents http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/article1794683.ece

Participate in a special programme or project

Reading The Game is a national programme to motivate reading through football. At www.readingthegame.org.uk you can access downloadable football-related literacy activities. Resources, practical ideas, case studies and quizzes all aimed at using the great love of football possessed by many children (especially boys) to help create a love of reading are available at <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Football/RTGResources/rtgresources.html>.

Reading Champions supports primary and secondary schools in involving boys and men in creating a reading culture. The scheme supports schools in changing boys' attitudes to reading by using the motivational power of male reading role models. At www.readingchampions.org.uk you can see the resources it offers, which encourage boys to champion reading activity. To find out what *Reading Champions* can offer to a school, including *Reading Champion* posters and booklists visit <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/Champions/resources.html>

Set up reading groups for boys – involve the boys in setting up a reading group. Work with the boys to find themes of books that will interest them.

For more information on encouraging girls to read and equalities issues in reading go to www.teachers.org.uk/reading

¹⁴ Moloney J., *Boys and Books: Building a Culture of Reading Around Our Boys*, ABC Books, 2000.

Organise fun reading activities – for example:

- Fantasy sports league: have boys nominate players for a fictional “dream team” by having them read about their favourite sports figures and make a case for why those athletes should be on the team.
- Dare to read: have students read horror or mystery books packaged in black bags.
- Reading recommendations: get the boys to create posters of themselves promoting their favourite reads. You could use these as screensavers, posters or leaflets. Do not restrict displaying posters to the classroom or library; put them up in places they would be least expected such as toilets, sports hall, changing rooms, the canteen. Make sure you regularly rotate them to keep the boys interested.
- Extreme reading; get the boys to take photographs of themselves reading in odd or unusual situations. Display these images around the school and offer prizes to the most original or funniest photo.

“I find that boys tend to respond well to action, so I often use TV and film clips on the whiteboard as a stimulus for Big Write activities, such as the first time Doctor Who and Amy meet. For when they have finished writing, I make sure I have books available which tie in with what we have been writing and talking about. I always display them with the cover to the front as it makes them look more attractive and easier to choose – it can also inspire them with their writing. Most of the children choose something without any prompting now.

The boys in my class are particularly keen at the moment on the Doctor Who, Merlin and Robin Hood series of novels, as well as the tie-in books for the new Famous Five cartoons, which have updated the original stories. Football novels are always popular, such as those by Rob Childs and Michael Hardcastle. As well as an attractive cover, the number of pages in a book seems to be more important to boys than to girls – the less confident or reluctant readers will be put off if they think it will take too long to read, so I also make sure I have a good selection of comics, magazines and children’s annuals. I do have to say sometimes that “it’s not a magazine day today”, otherwise some children would choose them every time.

I encourage the children to make their own choice of reading materials – the main rule is that they do not swap more than twice in any class reading session. As I have 35 children in my class and no full-time support, I involve the children in managing the “choosing” sessions and looking after the class library. I make sure there are equal numbers of boys and girls as class library monitors.

I don’t keep any sort of reading log for the children or ask them to fill something in, that is what we do for guided reading. Instead, at the end of each session each child puts their book in a plastic wallet which has their name on it and these are stored in one big box. It is therefore very easy to quickly flick through these, see who is reading what and how much they have read, which I can tell from where their book mark is. As well as saving on workload, it also helps to keep the books in good condition!”

Andrew Robinson, Year 5 Teacher, Greenfield Primary School, Walsall

Regular time spent reading aloud by the teacher for pleasure only

Children can benefit tremendously from being read to aloud. Studies show that children who are read to aloud are more likely to do better in school both academically and socially.

Effective reading aloud time is all about creating a positive reading experience to engage the students, so you will want to model your enthusiasm for books and reading for them. Being familiar with the book you are going to read is crucial to reading aloud well. When you are not prepared, you will stumble over words and phrases and the experience will not be as pleasant. Don't just read to your class; interact with them. Ask questions about what you have just read or the pictures they have been shown. This will help improve students' comprehension of the story.

When choosing books to read aloud, strike a balance between following the students' preferences and inviting them to try new types of books to expand their horizons and spark new interests. Say, "this looks like a good story. Let's give it a try!"

- **“Do the voices** Try to make sure each character talks differently – this makes the story come to life for the listeners. You could try making them talk higher or deeper, faster or slower, or even in different accents. If you have trouble thinking up voices, ask your audience to give you ideas for how a certain character might talk – they could even read one character's lines for you...
- **Get with the programme** Make sure you have a regular slot in which to read every day. This makes sure you don't forget about it, and stops everyone forgetting the plot! (This idea is used by lots of soaps, where there are lots of different stories to keep in mind, like Hollyoaks or Eastenders).
- **Go for a journey** If you have a regular reading time every day, choose a longer chapter book. It'll be more of an experience for you and your listeners, and helps build their memory and understanding.
- **Keep them guessing** Ask questions every so often to find out what everyone thinks might happen next. This can help to build the suspense and make it more interesting for your listeners.
- **Make sure they're still with you** Recap what's happened every few pages to make sure your listeners know what's going on (especially important if they are younger).
- **Always leave 'em wanting more** Quit reading at an exciting point in the story – maybe at the end of a chapter or even in the middle of a sentence! TV dramas use cliffhangers like this to make sure their audience comes back tomorrow to find out what happened – yours will too."

Top Tips to Read a Story Aloud – Reading for Life

Regular time for students to read self-chosen books silently

This should be a given, but obviously much easier to justify for primary class teachers and secondary English teachers than others.

In his book *Reads like a Novel*, best-selling French author Daniel Pennac outlines the ten 'inviolable' rights of the reader.

You could display these in the classroom or library and use as a basis for discussion or ask students to think of some more rights. To download a copy of a full colour poster illustrated by Quentin Blake, go to: www.walkerbooks.co.uk/Downloads/The-Rights-of-the-Reader-poster.

Ten 'inviolable' rights of the reader

1. The right not to read
2. The right to skip pages
3. The right not to finish a book
4. The right not to re-read
5. The right to read anything
6. The right to 'bovarysme' (to read for the instant satisfaction of our feelings)
7. The right to read anywhere
8. The right to browse
9. The right to read out loud
10. The right to remain silent (not to have to comment on what has been read)

You might want to consider as a school Drop Everything and Read (DEAR). At a set time each week, get EVERYONE in the school to stop what they are doing and read something they enjoy for 20/30 minutes. The key to a successful DEAR is getting all staff and students to take part, consistency as to when and how often it takes place and making sure the students are supported in bringing along something they will enjoy reading on the day.

Reading games and competitions

Some students, particularly reluctant readers, may respond better to efforts to encourage them to read for pleasure or to read more widely if it is introduced in a fun way. Boys can sometimes also be highly motivated by competition – below are a few ideas which may be helpful.

Book Associations – Students make up clue words or phrases unique to a book. Other students must then guess the book title from the clue. Clues can be put up around the school with book titles separate from clues. Classes can be invited to try and match as many titles to clues as possible. Example, CLUE: "A cat who loves lasagna." TITLE: Garfield.

Inter-class reading quiz or treasure hunt – Hold an inter-class quiz or treasure hunt based on reading, either as a one-off session, or as part of a challenge that lasts a term/ half term. Reward (eg, house points, credits, certificate) the winning pupils or class/ tutor group during an assembly to raise the profile of the quiz/treasure hunt and the winning pupils' achievements.

Get Caught Reading raffle – In the lead up to a whole-school reading event, issue tickets to pupils every time they are 'caught reading'. The more times they are caught reading, the more chances they have to win a prize in the raffle. Prizes should ideally be reading materials.

"A reading challenge is being run by our librarian this term. It is popular with the children and has particularly attracted the interest of the Key Stage 2 boys although all children in the school are obviously invited to take part. To précis the challenge:

"Follow the footprints to the library to find the wonderful world of Monsters, Beasts and Bugs. In the library there are three boxes labelled:

- Monstrous Fiction
- Beastly Facts
- Fabulous Poems

For each box, if you read four books and complete a worksheet, you will get a special certificate in assembly.

When you have completed the trail by reading twelve books, you will receive a monstrously beastly and fabulous prize!"

The completed worksheets, usually pictures of the main characters or mythical beasts etc, are displayed on a board outside the library."

Andrew Rowe, Head Teacher, Melton Primary School

Reading for Life has a range of reading games and activities suitable for early years and Key Stage 1/2: <http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/kids>

Love to Read is a Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 literacy initiative which has fun and exciting online activities for children and whiteboard games: <http://www.welovetoread.co.uk/teachers.asp>

Hogwarts Live offers an online role playing game for fans of Harry Potter (Key Stage 2+): <http://hogwartslive.wizards.pro/>

Jacqueline Wilson website enables students to access Jacqueline's diary, send e-cards, play games, write or read reviews and write their own very private diary (Key Stage 2+): <http://www.kidsatrandomhouse.co.uk/jacquelinewilson/>

Booked Up is designed to encourage Year 7 pupils to read for pleasure. Visit 'Your Space' to review books, play games, enter competitions and see what celebrities are reading. www.bookedup.org.uk

KidsReads is an American website featuring information about books and series, reviews of new titles and author profiles, games, competitions and links to other book-related sites (Key Stage 2+): www.kidsreads.com.

Rating books and writing book reviews

Consider carefully the frequency with which you ask students to write reviews of books they have read – too often and they may become resentful and think you are only interested in written work! You will still wish, however, to keep up-to-date with what the students are reading and what they have enjoyed, so here are some alternatives to the traditional review to consider:

Tweet review – Similar to a Twitter blog, the students have 140 characters (three sentences or so) in which to review their book. The reviews can be put on display next to a board showing pictures or extracts from the books they have reviewed. The students could then guess which book matches which review.

Desert island reads – Ask pupils which five books/magazines/newspapers they would take to a desert island. You could make a related poster display using postcards or a "message in a bottle" motif.

Graffiti reading tree – Use part of a wall in the school to create a graffiti reading tree. Distribute graffiti leaves to pupils who want to recommend a good read and attach their comments/ reviews to the branches of the tree.

World Book Day vote – On World Book Day hold a whole-school 'top reads' vote and announce the top ten for each Key Stage in assembly. You could use the downloadable Reading Connects "top ten reads" poster (http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/reading_connects/resources/380_reading_connects_top_ten_reads_posters) to display the results around the school.

Tutor group poster – Each tutor group/class could have a wipe-clean laminate poster which could be used to recommend a book/magazine/newspaper/website of the week. Every student should have the opportunity to recommend something they have enjoyed reading.

Our students read: the movie – Ask students to video interviews with each other about their favourite reads. Encourage them to use a simple video editing programme, such as Windows Movie Maker, to create a montage film of all of the video clips. Upload the film to the school website or play it on the screen in reception if you have these facilities.

School screensavers – Tap into the skills of the pupils who enjoy ICT and get them to make a screensaver of a recommended read of the month. Upload the screensaver to the school's computers for a month.

School website: Reading zone – If your school has a website, include a reading zone for pupils to post and read reviews.

Internet radio programmes – Involve pupils in making internet radio programmes about what they are reading that can be podcasted. This is a good activity to raise the profile of pupils' reading with parents and the local community. www.radiowaves.co.uk is an example of this kind of platform.

Book club

"The Class Book Club is a very simple idea that really encourages children to read whole books and to talk about them.

To make the display, all you need is a suitable table in a corner of the classroom. I decorate the wall behind with covers of well-known children's books. If you do a Google Images search for book titles you will easily find pictures of book covers. I then print these off A4 in colour and laminate them. I stick these to the wall behind the book club. I have also printed a few quotes about books from various people, eg, *Never judge a book by its movie*, by J W Eagan.

I then start the year by displaying a few books on the table which I think the children will like. At the beginning of the year I introduce the book club and tell them that I have put a few of my favourite books on the table and go through them, looking at the author, the title and why I like them. I then say that when they can't find a book they like the look of in the library they can come and take a book from the book club.

I also say that I would like them to recommend books for the book club. They must have read the whole book and be able say why they liked it. Every so often I go through the books in the book club and the child who has recommended it comes out and says a few words on why they think the class would like it.

I feel that the book club has helped promote reading in my class. A lot of children have recommended books for the club and I have seen many children settle down quickly with a book from the book club. You do need to remind them about looking after the display as after a while you can get a large selection of books and it starts to look messy. I have a couple of bookshelves as an 'overflow' where the older books go. That way the display always looks nice and they can still go through the older books."

Stephen Martindale, Bishop Ridley Primary School, Welling, Kent

Assembly – related opportunities

Assemblies are the perfect time to send out messages about reading to the whole school. Include reading slots as a regular feature, award ceremonies for reading challenges, visits from members of the community to explain why reading is important to them or author/storyteller visits.

“Reading for pleasure is big both on my personal agenda and professional development in school. I have implemented a class read across school where teachers read for at least 10 minutes a day to their class for pure enjoyment. I have purchased some fantastic books that classes want to read again and again. I hold a story telling assembly each week in which I have at least 200 pupils getting up and re-enacting the story. To further promote enjoyment for reading I have set up a ‘Reader of the Half Term’, a huge display celebrating and promoting children’s reading – they receive a postcard (designed by the children) rewarding them for their reading. We have reading mascots too and the children frequently take them outside during play whilst reading.”

Shaheen Rasool, Year 6 Teacher, Crosland Moor Junior School, Huddersfield

Key Stages 3 and 4

Many of the activities suggested above would be suitable for use in both primary and secondary schools. However, is there a place for reading for pleasure beyond English lessons in your school?

For many years secondary schools have been working hard to develop the teaching of literacy across the curriculum; a focus on reading for pleasure can support this work. It is important for all departments in school to support the development of students' literacy skills, including promoting reading for pleasure. It can be a really effective way to encourage students to get excited about different subject areas, as well as establishing it as a whole-school priority to raise attainment. The following resources and practical ideas are just some of the many available for encouraging reading for pleasure across the curriculum.

Maths Use a selection of maths-related puzzle and quiz books.

Science Look at the science behind science-fiction, for example, use Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, or extracts from Bill Bryson's *A Short History of Nearly Everything* to show how great writing brings science to life.

PE Buy a collection of sports (auto)biographies. Display them around the PE department and encourage students to borrow them.

Humanities Use 'faction' books (for example *Longitude* by Dava Sobel) to bring discoveries to life. Also use accounts by real people of historical events to give students a new perspective on topics (for example, Samuel Pepys' account of the Great Fire of London).

Music Encourage students to identify their favourite song lyrics and explain why they like them. Make a display of all the extracts somewhere prominent in the school. You could hold a whole-school quiz or a karaoke session event to celebrate the school community's love of lyrics.

Citizenship Enlist the help of students to put together a book list to cover issues that are tackled in citizenship such as bullying, racism and globalisation (for example *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman or *No Logo* by Naomi Klein).

Art and design Many books have inspired artists, poets, musicians and film directors (for example *Heart of Darkness* was the inspiration for *Apocalypse Now*). Create a display based on some of these books using images, lyrics or film stills. Get students to add to the list or find poems, articles or books to respond to creatively.

ICT If your school has a website, recruit a group of students to maintain a reading zone featuring reviews, interactive games and puzzles, and signposting good websites.

The NUT on-line resources guide contains lots more practical suggestions and activities. Its contents set out below and opposite include:

- NUT Reading for Pleasure Policy Statement
- Towards a School Policy on Reading for Pleasure
- CPD
- Inspection and School Self-Evaluation
- Involving parents

Libraries:

- Classroom Libraries
- School Libraries
- Public Libraries
- Reading groups
- Book Awards
- Festivals
- Author visits
- Storytelling
- Summer Reading Challenge
- Visiting schools
- Schools' Library Services

Equalities issues – introduction:

- Gender Equality
- Encouraging Boys to Read
- Encouraging Girls to Read
- Race Equality and EAL
- Disability Equality
- LGBT Equality
- SEN and Less Able Readers
- Reluctant Readers
- Early Years

Classroom and whole school activities to promote reading for pleasure:

- Using ICT
- Regular time spent reading aloud by the teacher for pleasure only
- Regular time for students to read self-chosen books silently
- Reading games and competitions
- Rating books and writing book reviews
- Reading groups or clubs
- Reading talk
- Assembly – related opportunities
- Engaging students in promoting reading for pleasure
- Reading for rewards
- Special events
- Book weeks
- Author visits
- Whole school (or key stage) read
- Storytelling day/week/month
- Dress up as your favourite book character day
- Links with other school events
- Lunchtime events
- School trips and visits
- Reading for charity
- The promotion of book ownership
- Book fairs
- Book clubs
- Reading role models
- Key Stage 3-4
- Sources of further information

For further information go to www.teachers.org.uk/reading

Visit www.teachers.org.uk/reading to download a copy of the Reading for Pleasure booklet or browse the on-line resources guide.

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