

Supporting your child's reading



Research into the reading skills of 15 year-olds across the world found that children who are more interested in reading do better at school than those who don't read for pleasure. Studies also found that parents who talk to their children about books, TV programmes and films help to keep their children interested in reading. Having books, newspapers and magazines around at home also made a difference to how interested children were in reading.

Here are our tips to support your child's reading:

- Let your child choose what to read, rather than choosing what you think they should read.
- Read yourself! It doesn't matter what it is – pick up a newspaper or magazine, take a look at a cookery book, read a computer manual, enjoy some poetry or dive into a romance or detective novel. And get your children to join in – if you're cooking, could they read the recipe? If you're watching TV, can they read out the listings?
- Encourage your child to read magazines, comics, newspapers and the internet as well as books.
- Buy books as presents. Don't forget TV tie-ins and books about interests such as computer games or bands.
- Help your child to find books they will enjoy by joining the public library, if you are not already members. It is free to join and many libraries have CDs and DVDs that can be borrowed very cheaply, as well as many different types of books that can be borrowed for free.

- Read together. Try picking reading material about interests or hobbies you share, like your football team or a place you have visited together. 10 minutes a few times a week will make a difference.
- Talk to your child about the types of reading they think they will be asked to do in school; get them to explain to you what they already know about types of non-fiction (factual writing), and try to match them to the subjects your child does at school.
- Chat about which books or magazines your child might read, to learn more about the subjects they will be doing at secondary school.
- Try some skimming and scanning together. Skimming is when you read through a piece of text quickly to find out what the main idea is; scanning is glancing through a piece of text to find a specific piece of information. You can do this with a newspaper – perhaps ask your child to find something out for you. Why not ask them to scan a newspaper for news about a favourite footballer or to find out the weekend weather, or get them to skim read a recipe to tell you the basic steps?
- Help your child to work out what an unfamiliar word means by getting them to read the rest of the sentence and look for clues.
- Help by testing your child when they have spellings to learn, and by encouraging them to look up words they don't know in a dictionary.
- Build up the number of words your child knows – their vocabulary. As they go through secondary school, your child will need to know specialist words and recognise them when they are reading. To help them learn these words, you could ask your child to explain to you what they mean.
- Read books or plays that your child needs to study for school – in Year 9 English your child will study two scenes from a Shakespeare play. It can really help them if you read these together and talk about the language and characters. Why not learn a few short quotations together as a competition?
- Cut out newspaper articles about topics your child is studying.
- Read together if your child is having problems with reading in a particular subject.
- Look up technical words you or your child don't recognise from their work in a dictionary or on the internet and make it your word of the day. When you have a list of new words you could test your child on them.

Sources:

[A Guide to Supporting Reading for Parents of Secondary Students](#)

[Reading with your Child](#)

