



Dallam  
School

# Reading booklet

A guide for parents and carers: supporting  
your child with reading at home.



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# Those Who Read Succeed!

Please talk to your child about the book they are currently reading and foster a love of reading culture at home.

Why read 20 minutes at home?

Child A Reads:	Child B Reads:	Child C Reads:
20 minutes per day	5 minutes per day	1 minute per day
3,600 minutes per school year	900 minutes per school year	180 minutes per school year
1,800,000 words per year	282,000 words per year	8,000 words per year

The average word count for a typical novel is anywhere from 70,000 to 120,000 words

Between 15 and 25 books a year!	3 or 4 books a year	Less than one book per year
		

Want to be a better reader? Simply read!

At Dallam School, we aim to establish and nurture a lifelong love of reading among students; while expanding their vocabulary and equipping them with the tools they need to communicate effectively throughout their teenage years and beyond.

## Why read?

**Reading is important: you need it to learn, to understand the world around you and to become capable, independent adults.**

Even just 10 minutes of reading a day can have a positive impact in many ways.

As part of students' English homework, we request 20 minutes of reading every day.

## Benefits of reading on a child's learning and skills:

- ✓ Reading improves your spelling, punctuation and grammar
- ✓ Reading improves your vocabulary
- ✓ Characters enable us to develop empathy for others

- ✓ We can gain a better knowledge of other cultures
- ✓ Reading improves your memory
- ✓ Reading can improve your creativity
- ✓ Reading can improve your focus and attention span
- ✓ Reading can improve your communication skills
- ✓ You are more employable

### Benefits of reading on a child's mental health:

- ✓ Reading is a brilliant way to relax and unwind
- ✓ Reading has been scientifically proven to reduce stress and anxiety
- ✓ Reading can help boost your mood
- ✓ Reading can help you get a better night's sleep
- ✓ Reading increases your self-esteem and confidence
- ✓ Books provide an escape from the pressures of everyday life
- ✓ Reading can improve socio-emotional growth
- ✓ You can feel in control of reading
- ✓ Characters' emotions help show that we are normal
- ✓ Characters' perspectives can be an advice mechanism in dealing with own problems

### **Reading is also enjoyable!**

For more information, check out all these benefits on the BookTrust website:

[The benefits of reading | BookTrust](#)

### *What's the issue?*

Independent reading only works for those who **CAN** read. 'Skipping' unusual words which are difficult is normal - we all do it. Students who struggle may skip the main bulk of a text.

It was on a XXX night of November that I XXX the XXX of my XXX. With an XXX that almost XXX to agony, I collected the XXX around me, that I might XXX a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain XXX XXX against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the XXX of the half-XXX light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a XXX motion XXX its limbs.

**Vocabulary = the words a person knows and can use.**

Research has shown that vocabulary size is a powerful predictor of academic success.

Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process and is critical to reading comprehension.

Working vocabulary of  
Year 7 students who  
perform better at GCSE:

**25,000**

Working vocabulary of  
Year 7 students who  
underachieve at GCSE:

**12,000**

**Linguists believe most adults know between 50,000 - 75,000.**

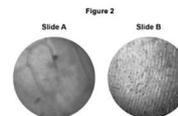
When students can't understand the vocabulary, they can't access the content being taught.

GCSE questions can be especially challenging. The following two examples are from GCSE Maths/Science papers:

F = ke Calculations

1. A spring has a spring constant of 3N/m. What force would be applied to get the following extensions?
- |         |         |           |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| a) 1m   | d) 4m   | g) 25cm   |
| b) 0.5m | e) 0.2m | h) 100mm  |
| c) 0.3m | f) 1.5m | i) 0.02km |

The cells on the slides are unclear to see.



(a) Describe how the student should adjust the microscope to see cells on Slide A more clearly.

If a student is unable to read the word 'constant', they will not be able to answer the question, even if they have the mathematical skill to do so.

If a student is unable to read the word 'adjust', it may be unclear which part of the question the student found challenging when answering.

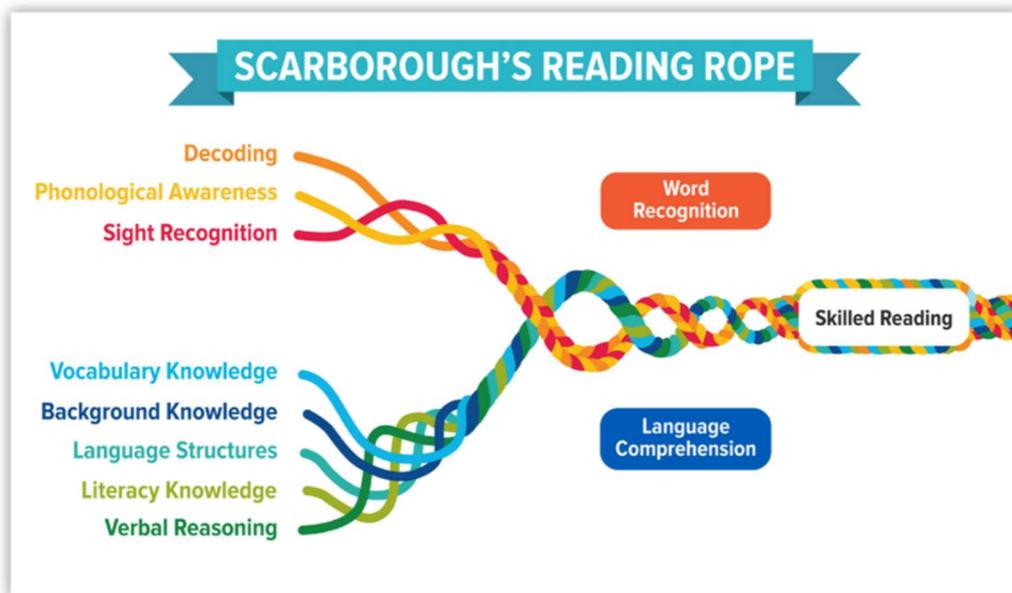
Throughout secondary school, texts become more academic and they increase in frequency, length and complexity.

**You can help improve your child's vocabulary: read and talk with them often.**

## Why do secondary students struggle to read?

- SEND issues – diagnosed or undiagnosed
- Lockdown – missed learning
- Don't see the value in reading
- Ineffective phonics scheme delivered at primary
- Catch up limited in KS2
- Vocabulary becomes more academic and complex, texts become longer and more frequent
- Haven't yet found their "one text" which unlocks a love of reading
- Reading is complex...

The model below is intended to highlight how many different 'threads' there are in becoming a skilled reader. Broadly, reading consists of two elements: being able to decode the letters and words (**word recognition**) and understanding what is being read (**language comprehension**).



In order to be fluent, readers need to have mastered all threads. When a reader has achieved fluency, their working memory does not have to focus so much on decoding the letters, etc. Instead, the brain can focus on making meaning.

**Fluency = reading with few mistakes, with expression in your voice and with minimal effort.**

Fluency is not "reading quickly".

Read for understanding meaning, not for speed.

## What are we doing as a school?

At the start of the academic year, students completed two diagnostic tests so we could determine relevant reading data.

### **Accelerated Reader Star tests:**

All students in Years 7-9 completed these.

- Assesses students' understanding of texts and vocabulary.
- Immediate data as to who needs intervention or urgent intervention.
- These students will receive support through **Step**.
- They will also read in smaller groups during English Library lessons with a member of staff.

### **NGRTs:**

All students in Years 7-10 completed these.

- Assesses which elements of reading students may require support with.
- A more thorough picture of the specific reading needs students require.
- These students will receive support through **Leap**.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Leap</b>
Delivered by trained Sixth Form Reading Buddies	Delivered by a trained member of staff
Twice a week during form time	Two 30 minute sessions a week, on a rolling rota so not to miss the same lessons
Read an accessible book in pairs, with a supervising Reading Buddy, where your child will be prompted with questions to check and improve understanding	Work through a series of phonics lessons, activities and decodable books where your child will recap letter and sound combinations
This will focus on reading comprehension, vocabulary, improving reading age and fluency	This will focus on decoding, phonological awareness, reading age and fluency

Soon, there will be a third intervention programme running (**Launch**), determined by areas of need identified in NGRTs.

### Accelerated Reader:

Most of the books we have in our school Library are levelled in ability corresponding with a colour (as shown here). After the initial test, each student will receive a level and colour. As your child's reading improves, they will progress through the levels.

After reading a book, your child can take an Accelerated Reader quiz using the link below (this should be posted on their English Teams):

<https://global-zone61.renaissance-go.com/welcomeportal/2235940>

### RENAISSANCE Accelerated Reader

	Level 0 - 1.9 books
	Level 2 - 2.9 books
	Level 3 - 3.9 books
	Level 4 - 4.9 books
	Level 5 - 5.9 books
	Level 6 - 6.9 books
	Level 7 - 7.9 books
	Level 8 - 8.9 books
	Level 9+ books

If they get the answers correct, the quiz will count how many words they have read in that book. **Word Millionaires are rewarded and celebrated!**

### Phonics:

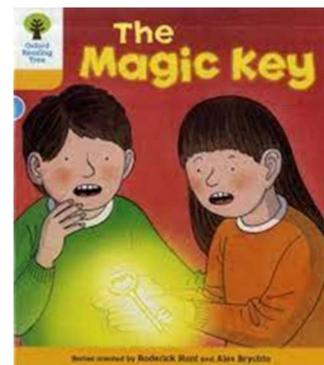
When you think of phonics, you may recall the early books your child was reading at primary school.

However, we all rely on phonics as a basic strategy in learning to read new words.

Read this word:

**Synchrocyclotron**

Even if you don't know the word, you are using your phonological knowledge to decode the letters and sounds.



### What else are we doing as a school?

- Our school library offers a wealth of books and resources, including stories, non-fiction, poetry, graphic novels, magazines, shelf-help books, dyslexia-friendly texts, decodable phonics books and many more...

- We have computers available in the Library for students
- Audio books
- E-readers coming soon
- All students in Years 7-9 have one designated Library lesson a fortnight as part of their English timetable (20 minutes reading homework)
- Opportunity to choose a book, read and discuss with their peers
- These lessons include creative tasks to celebrate the story and characters as they read
- Book bingo to encourage wider reading
- Quizzes on the computer to show understanding of books read
- These count the words students have read – prizes and certificates available
- The Library is open to all students every break and lunch as a quiet space to read, take book quizzes and partake in word-based games
- Literacy activities throughout the year celebrating calendar events, such as National Poetry Day and World Book Day
- Literacy activities throughout the year to punctuate diverse days, such as Black History Month and Autism Awareness Month
- Book Club Monday lunchtime in the Library
- Author events – in person and online
- Competitions and writing workshops
- Book Fair
- Transition book (Year 6 – 7)
- Form time reading (Year 7 only at the moment)



## How can I help at home?

Research shows that parents and carers taking an interest and getting involved in their child's learning is more important than anything else in helping them fulfil their potential.

Motivating children to read and engaging in positive interactions about books can create a generational cycle of enthusiastic readers.

**You know your child best.** These ideas and suggestions are for you to choose from – **you will know which ones suit you and your child:**

- Set time aside for regular reading (10-20 minutes a day)
- Read together
- Encourage your child to read aloud to you
- Take turns to read aloud
- Split texts in to smaller, more manageable chunks which are not overfacing
- Ensure there is easy, sufficient access to books
- Encourage your child to find what they like
- Be interested in your child's reading habits and preferences
- Explore a variety of texts; including magazines, autobiographies and fact books
- Include E-readers, blogs and online texts too
- Find news articles about your child's hobbies and interests
- Ask your child to read aloud the menu, instructions, recipe, etc.
- Read song lyrics
- Read books which have been turned into films/TV shows
- Read travel writing books, reviews or travel guides before going on holiday
- Have conversations about your child's favourite books, genres and authors
- Find articles and texts about the topics your child is studying at school
- Explore Booktok
- Visit the library/bookshop together
- Ask for recommendations
- Reading challenges – library or online
- Download Borrowbox/Libby apps – free access to E-books
- Explore audiobooks
- Talk positively about reading
- Discuss the benefits outlined above
- Encourage reading for pleasure, as well as for homework/study
- Praise, reward and incentivise
- Gift book vouchers as presents, books or magazines as treats
- Model reading
- Show that reading is enjoyable

When listening to your child read, use the following four types of questioning techniques to develop their understanding.

This is known as **Reciprocal Reading**:

**Predict**

- ✓ What do you think the text will be about? Why do you think this?
- ✓ What do you think will happen next? What makes you think that?
- ✓ How do you think this character will react? What clues have you been given to help you answer?
- ✓ How do you think this will end? How do you know?

**Clarify**

- ✓ What does that word mean? How can we work out the definition?
- ✓ What does this phrase mean? Would a different word/phrase have a greater impact?
- ✓ What idea is being given to us here?
- ✓ Can you tell me what we understand is happening here?

**Summarise**

- ✓ What is the text about? Can we make our summary even more concise?
- ✓ What has just happened? What are the key points we need to recap?
- ✓ What have we been told so far?
- ✓ Were your predictions correct?

**Question**

- ✓ Why do you think the character behaved in that way? How did they feel?
- ✓ Why did the writer choose that word? What does it make us think?
- ✓ What does the writer want us to know? Why is that important?
- ✓ What problem has been presented? How could it be resolved?

One of the best ways you can help your child do well at school is by helping them to enjoy reading for pleasure – whether they like magazines, newspapers, novels or comics. Research shows that children who enjoy reading perform better at school, and that parents/carers play a key role in helping to develop this love of reading.

The study also found that parents/carers who talk to their children about books help to keep them interested in reading.

Having books, newspapers and magazines around at home also made a difference to how interested children were in reading.

Take a look at our English book bingo cards below. We have suggested some reads for each half term, some of which link to the topic each year group will be studying in English. Can your child complete a line?

### Year 7

HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Becoming Muhammad Ali by J. Patterson/K. Alexander	The Night Bus Hero by Onjali Q Rauf	The Goldfish Boy by Lisa Thompson	I Am Malala by Christina Lamb and Malala Yousafzai	You Are a Champion by Marcus Rashford	The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank
A book with a green cover	A book with more than 100 pages	A book which has been made into a film	A book with more than 3 words in the title	A celebrity autobiography	A play
A book recommended by a friend	A funny book	A book with magic	A book set somewhere else in the world	A book which was written more than 10 years ago	A book with poetry

### Year 8

HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, by Douglas Adams	Not Your Sidekick Book by, C. B. Lee (Young Adult)	Where the Mountain Meets the Moon, by Grace Lin	Explorers: Amazing Tales of the World's Greatest Adventurers (DK Explorers), by Nellie Huang	Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte	All the Broken Places, by John Boyne
A book with a green cover	A book with more than 100 pages	A book which has been made into a film	A book with more than 3 words in the title	A celebrity autobiography	A play
A book recommended by a friend	A funny book	A book with magic	A book set somewhere else in the world	A book which was written more than 10 years ago	A book with poetry

### Year 9

HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

The Haunting of Gillespie House, by Darcy Coates	Never Let Me Go, by Kazuo Ishiguro	'New Boy', by Tracy Chevalier (modern retelling of Othello)	Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen	Noughts & Crosses (the novel), by Malorie Blackman	Daughter of Smoke and Bone by, Laini Taylor
A book with a green cover	A book with more than 100 pages	A book which has been made into a film	A book with more than 3 words in the title	A celebrity autobiography	A play
A book recommended by a friend	A funny book	A book with magic	A book set somewhere else in the world	A book which was written more than 10 years ago	A book with poetry

Once your child has read a book, encourage them to take a quiz on Accelerated Reader. The link is:

<https://global-zone61.renaissance-go.com/welcomeportal/2235940>

(type into your browser or ask Ms Adams/Mrs Turner for the link on Teams)

## FAQs

### **1. My child hates reading, what can I do?**

*Try to find things for your child to read that are about their interests and hobbies. Read travel guides before going on holiday, reviews of computer games, or books that have been made into films. Let them choose what they want to read as much as you can. Magazines, comics and non-fiction (fact) books might be more interesting to them than stories. Show that reading has a purpose too, like following written instructions or a shopping list. Activities like these can also develop reading skills. Praise your child for any reading they do and make sure they see you reading. Keep any reading you do together short and fun. Even though it is worrying, pushing your child too hard or making reading a chore will put them off even more.*

### **2. I'm too busy to read with my child, what can I do?**

*Even 10 minutes a day, or even a few times a week, can have huge benefits. Ask your child to read their book to you while you make tea, or in the car. Talk*

*to your child about books, ask about what they are reading at the moment, gift them with book vouchers. For more ideas, have a look at the 'How can I help at home?' section above. Parents are 'reading influencers' so your effort can really support your children in their own reading journey. There is no right or wrong way to engage with reading – do what works for you.*

**3. I think my child may be dyslexic. Where can I go for help?**

*As a first port of call, contact your child's teachers; particularly English, Geography and History, as these subjects typically include more reading and writing. If your child's teachers have any concerns, they can flag this with Learning Support and our SENCO/SEN Lead will investigate further.*

**4. I struggle with reading myself. How can I help my child?**

*Parents may lack confidence in reading and/or experience of being read to as a child themselves. Research has shown that talking to children about what they are reading, and having books and magazines at home make a difference to children's progress, even if parents have problems with reading themselves. Be positive about reading and let your child see your enthusiasm for books. Use this as an opportunity to learn to read together.*

**5. What do I need to know about reading at Key Stages 3 and 4?**

*In English, students are expected to read many different kinds of text; including stories, articles, plays, poems and travel writing. As well as this, other subjects provide the chance for students to read for pleasure and study. Each subject has their own specific reading requirements. Texts will have more academic, complex and technical vocabulary as your child progresses through secondary school. Home learning booklets are a good way to explore key words and texts across different subjects. If you have any questions about your child's reading in a certain subject, please don't hesitate to contact their teacher.*

**6. My child reads the same books over and over. Is this normal?**

*Children often re-read books they have enjoyed or will stick to a particular genre (for example, horror) or series. Reading the same books or same type of books helps them to build reading confidence, and children will usually move on at their own pace. Don't stop them reading books again – interfering with what children choose to read can often put them off. If you are worried, you*

*could make some suggestions for other books they might enjoy based on what they are already reading.*

**7. My child struggles with reading, so we read to them. Is this okay?**

*In moderation, yes. Make sure your child is following along with the words so they are familiarising themselves with how the words look and sound. Ask them questions about tricky words and their understanding of what is happening in the text. Take it in turns to read – perhaps a page each. It's great that you are reading with your child, but they must practise reading too. If the books are too challenging, find something more accessible for them. The Accelerated Reader levels and colours are a good place to start for this.*

**8. What sort of books should my child be reading?**

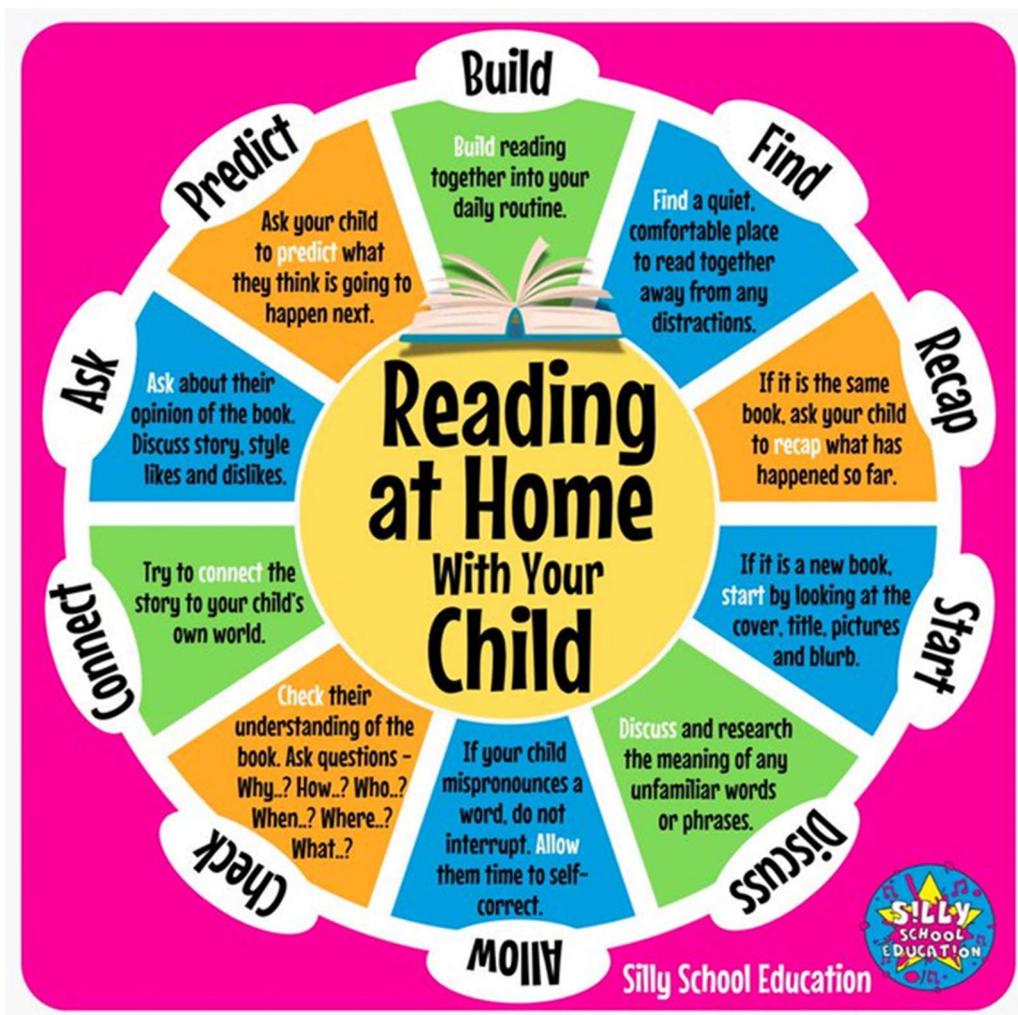
*Ideally, let your child choose books for themselves, as they are much more likely to want to read if they have been able to select for themselves. Let your child explore a variety of text types, and make them accessible for your child at home. Plan visits to the library, or download Borrowbox/Libby to access E-books for free. You can always suggest other books you think your child may like, based on genre preferences, hobbies or favourite authors.*

**9. My child will only read magazines, or online content. How can I encourage them to read books?**

*Don't worry. Evidence shows that children who enjoy reading for pleasure perform better at school, whether they are reading magazines, newspapers or fiction. You could always try suggesting books that they might enjoy based on the magazines they read, or their interests. E-readers or online blogs are a good way to get tech-mad children wider reading. Any reading that your child does is a good thing. Praise them.*

**10. Where can I go for further advice, information or recommendations?**

*Websites such as the National Literacy Trust, the Reading Agency and BookTrust have lots of useful information about reading and how you can support your child. They also often have links to reading challenges and book recommendations. Visit your local library or download Borrowbox/Libby to see what's available. Speak to librarians, bookshop owners or even friends. You can ask your child's teachers for wider reading suggestions on the topics being studied in class.*



25

Scottish  
Book Trust

## Try a Boozilla reading dare!

Read a book from an author you haven't heard of

Read a book set in the future

Watch a spoken word poet on YouTube

Create a playlist for one of your favourite books

Ask someone to choose a book for you

Put your bookshelf in alphabetical order

Choose a book in the library with your eyes shut – this is the next book you'll read!

Read a graphic novel, if you haven't ever done so

Write to an author whose work you enjoy

Read a book set in a country you would like to go to

Read a biography of someone who interests you



THE  
READING  
AGENCY



**Thank you for your support.**

If you have any further questions which I have not managed to answer here, please feel free to email me and I will help you where I can.

*Miss Maple*

*Literacy and Phonics Lead*

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