

Ideas and suggestions for reading at home

You are your child's best role model reader

Try to be 'caught reading' different texts and make sure your child knows that reading is an important and enjoyable part of adult life, not just something children have to do. If reading is a big part of your job or leisure time, make sure he knows this, too.

Books make great presents

Remember the four-present rule for Christmas and birthdays: 'something you want, something you need, something to wear and something to **read!**

Hearing reading at home

We all know how important it is for children to practise their reading every day to apply and strengthen the skills they are being taught in school and that means hearing them practise at home, every single day if possible. If this becomes a dreary chore or a source of friction between you and your child, all the joy can go out of reading for both of you. We don't want that, so here are some suggestions for making reading practice a little island of quality time for both of you. To begin with, here are a few general FAQs (frequently asked questions) to help you get the mood right and to offer some variety.

When is the best time to hear my child read at home?

This is an individual choice that will depend on your routines and preferences - there is no one 'best' time. Try to pick a time when your child is not too tired or hungry to concentrate and when you can give her your undivided attention. If you find she makes excuses not to read, ask her to suggest a good time. The time between coming home from school and bedtime is often really busy and crammed with activities for your child and you, so first thing in the morning before breakfast works for some families.

Which book should my child read to me?

If your child is in YR or Y1, it is important to use the book that came home in your child's book bag. This is because your child is an early reader who has not yet learned all the letter patterns they will need before they can pick up any book and be confident of reading it successfully. Early readers can be discouraged by words which follow rules they have not yet learned or 'break' rules they have just learned: words like **build**, **ocean** and **queue**. If they have to keep stopping for you to explain a word they will soon feel like giving up. Their home readers are carefully chosen so this doesn't happen.

Once your child is reading fluently, however, she can read to you from her home reader or from another book she chooses herself if she has forgotten or finished her home reader. It won't matter – just be sure to make a note of the book's title in her reading log.

Should my child read aloud to me or is it OK for him to read silently?

Early readers won't be able to read silently yet, but once they can, they can read chunks of their book silently. Just be sure to dip in and hear them read some of it aloud so you have something to report in the log. Run your eye over what they have read, too, so you can talk about it together. If you are busy cooking or have your eyes and hands busy with something, even the fluent readers can be asked to read aloud so you can share, enjoy and then talk about what they have read.

If my child gets stuck on a word, should I just read it for them?

If you just supply the word, all your child learns is that you are a better reader than he is. Encourage him to sound through the new word and blend the sounds together. If he is getting stuck on a particular bit, you could supply just that bit: 'Letters o and i together say /oy/. Try sounding it with /oy/.' (e.g. poisonous) Or 'Letters c and h together usually say /ch/ but in this word they say /c/. Try sounding it with /c/.' (e.g. *Christmas*). Be patient if the newly decoded word pops up again on the next page and the one after that and they get stuck again and again. It usually takes several encounters to recognise a new word without sounding it through!

Can I read some of the book aloud to my child?

Of course you can, just not all of it! Reading is hard brain-work, especially at first, so it's helpful if you read the first sentence or two to your child as a warm-up and then let her take over. You could read alternate sentences or, later on, alternate

paragraphs in longer books. Be sure to make a note in the log that you shared the reading this way so your child's teacher knows she did not complete all those pages alone.

Why do I need to keep hearing an already fluent reader?

Whether your child is an early reader or fluent, reading to you – and talking to you about what he has read – will extend his vocabulary, improve his comprehension skills and increase his love of books and reading. It all helps to build 'reading miles' which will give him a huge advantage. Avid readers tend to do well in further education and have better career prospects.

Should I just listen or can I talk about what my child is reading?

Inside your child's book or book bag you may find a bookmark with some questions you could use as a prompt to start a conversation with your child. Choose a natural pause at a page turn or the end of a sentence, paragraph or chapter or just wait until she has finished reading to ask a question and get a conversation going. The question you ask is not a test or an attempt to catch her out but a chance to share ideas and opinions about the book. There will rarely be right or wrong answers – bookmark questions are usually about opinions and ideas. You may find yourself asking follow-up questions to learn more – that's great. Ideally, you and your child will chat about what she read for at least as long as the reading itself took.

Should I still be reading aloud to a child who is a fluent reader?

Yes. Your child will let you know when he has outgrown bedtime stories and it can be later than you think, unless he is distracted by electronic devices in his room; it's hard to compete with a computer! Reading exciting new authors or your own childhood favourites or books he is not yet able to read for himself all helps extend his vocabulary and grow his love of reading. And do let him read to himself in bed, too. He will stop when he gets tired.

What should I write in the reading log?

First the date, of course, and the title of the book your child read from. You could note whether she was eager or reluctant to read or any comment she made as she got the book out, such as saying the book was 'too easy', 'too hard', 'boring,' or 'great.' When she has finished, note which pages she read from and to.

Here are some suggestions:

Don't try to use all of them at once! Look down the first column for the sort of reading your child is doing. The second column tells you whether the comment is suitable for KS1 children, KS2 or either. Then come the suggested comments (with gaps if you will need to put some detail in) and finally some suggestions for how to praise or prompt your child and how to start the conversation that will give you evidence for making a comment. Keep it chatty and follow your child's lead – the questions are not meant to test your child.

Area of reading	Key stage	Suggested comment	What you could say to your child
Word reading			
<p>Reading 'tricky' words (words where letters don't make the sounds children have been taught)</p> <p>Here are the tricky words for each letters and sounds Phase: Phase 2: was, the, to, no, go, I Phase 3: he, be, she, we, me, my, you, all Phase 4: like, have, said, so, do, some, one, come, there, were, little, when, out, what Phase 5: people, Mr, Mrs, should, their, looked, would, could, oh, called, asked</p>	KS, lower KS2	<p><i>Recognised tricky word (write word)</i></p> <p><i>Needed reminding of tricky word (write word)</i></p>	<p>'Well done for remembering that tricky word.'</p> <p>Or</p> <p>'Remember, this is one of those tricky words that we can't sound all the way through.'</p>
<p>Tackling unfamiliar or longer words by sounding and blending</p>	KS1, KS2	<p><i>Sounded through (write word) and blended it without help.</i></p> <p><i>Or</i></p>	<p>'Well done for sounding and blending that new word – do you know what it</p>

		<i>Tried to sound through (write word) and blend it but needed help with (specify problem bit).</i>	means? If not, let's find out.' Or 'Well done for trying to sound that new word – let's look at the bit you got stuck on and I'll help.' Or 'Let's cover up part of that long word so you can try sounding it in chunks.'
Reading words containing apostrophes like don't, I'll, could've.	KS1, KS2	<i>Read (write word) without help.</i> <i>Needed help to read (write word).</i>	'Well done for reading (word with apostrophe)'. Or 'Remember, that mark tells us some letters have been left out so it's really two words squashed together – can you remember what it means?'
Comprehension:			
Understanding Texts with rhyme or repetition	KS1, KS2	<i>Noticed rhyming words.</i> Or <i>Didn't notice rhyming words.</i> <i>Noticed and enjoyed the repeated bits.</i> Or <i>Didn't notice the repeated bits.</i>	'I think there might be a pattern here – what do you think?'
Understanding Events in a story	KS1, KS2	<i>Able to retell the story with the events in order</i> Or <i>Not sure about the order of events in the story</i>	'So can you remind me what happened in the story?'

			'Did that happen before or after (other event)?'
New vocabulary	KS1	<i>Wanted to know what (write word) meant so we talked about it/looked it up.</i> Or <i>Not interested in finding out what (write word) meant.</i>	'Shall we see what the dictionary says?'
New vocabulary	KS2	<i>Used the dictionary to find the meaning of (write word).</i> Or <i>Needed help to use the dictionary to find the meaning of (write word).</i> <i>Stopped to ask a question about (write word or phrase).</i> <i>Stopped to explain what (write word or phrase) means.</i> <i>Stopped to say what (write word or phrase) made him remember/wonder about/think of.</i>	'Shall we look it up?' 'Do you know any other words from that family?' e.g child reads the word dissolve which belongs in the same family as solve, soluble, insoluble, solution.
Links to other reading/existing knowledge	KS1	<i>Reading (write word or story title) reminded her that she already knows about...</i> Or <i>Recognised (write word) that he has just learned in school.</i>	'Does this remind you of something we read/saw/talked about recently?' 'Well done for spotting that new word and remembering what it means.'
Listening for reading to make sense	KS1, KS2	<i>Listened to herself read and went back to make sure it made sense.</i> Or <i>Forgot to listen to herself read and needed reminding to go back and check it made sense.</i> <i>Realised he had misread (write word) and went back to</i>	'Well done for listening to yourself and going back to the word you misread.' 'Did what you just read make sense to you? I think you might need to go back

		<p><i>correct it.</i> Or <i>Didn't realise he had misread (write word) and needed telling to go back and correct it.</i></p>	<p>and read it again. Listen to see if it makes sense.'</p>
Using the punctuation	KS1	<p><i>Used the punctuation, stopping at the full stops. Or Read through full stops without stopping.</i></p>	<p>'Well done for using the punctuation.'</p> <p>'What does a full stop tell you to do? Did you just go through a red light? Shall we try it again?'</p>
Using the punctuation	KS2	<p><i>Spotted and used (insert punctuation mark) and knew its job and name.</i></p>	<p>'Well done for using that comma/colon/semi-colon/dash/those brackets/dashes/commas.'</p> <p>'Can you explain to me what that punctuation mark is for and what its name is?'</p>
Title	KS1, KS2	<p><i>Talked about the title and what she thought it meant.</i> Or <i>Didn't have any ideas about what the title meant.</i></p>	<p>'What does the title suggest about what sort of book this is?'</p>
Characters	KS1, KS2	<p><i>Talked about (write character name) and how they are feeling/why they did/said what they did/who they are like.</i> Or <i>Had nothing to say about any of the characters.</i></p>	<p>'I wonder why (character name) said/did that?'</p> <p>'I wonder how (character name) might be feeling?'</p> <p>'Is (character name) like anyone you know?'</p> <p>'Would you be friends with</p>

			(character name) if s/he were in your class at school/lived next door to us?’
Prediction	KS1, KS2	<i>Able to say what she thought would happen next before we turned the page.</i> Or <i>Had no suggestions for what might happen next before we turned the page.</i>	‘What do you think might be going to happen next?’ ‘What makes you think that?’
Non-fiction features	KS1, KS2	<i>Commented on diagrams/charts/graphs/maps/labels/captions/headings and was able to say how they help the reader.</i> <i>Unsure why diagrams etc have been used or how they help the reader.</i>	‘This doesn’t look like a story, does it? Why do you think it’s set out like this?’ ‘Why do you think the author put in these diagrams/graphs/labels?’
Author’s intentions	KS2	<i>Said she thought the writer was trying to make the reader feel/think/understand about (write theme) and that it worked/didn’t work for her.</i> Or <i>Unable to identify author’s purpose or a theme.</i>	‘Why do you think the author wrote this book?’ ‘What do you think the writer is trying to get the reader thinking about?’ ‘Did reading it make you think about these things?’
Discussing reading		<i>Said he liked/didn’t like this book because...</i> Or <i>Couldn’t say whether or not he liked this book.</i> <i>Linked this book to others she has read.</i> Or	‘So did you enjoy reading that? Why/why not?’ ‘Did it remind you of anything else you’ve read/seen/experienced

		<p><i>Couldn't think of any other books this one reminded her of.</i></p> <p><i>Picked the funniest/saddest/cleverest bit and said why.</i></p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p><i>Didn't have a favourite bit.</i></p>	<p>recently?'</p> <p>'What was your favourite bit/word/phrase/rhyme? Can you say why you like it?'</p> <p>'Was there anything you didn't like?'</p> <p>'How could the writer have done better?'</p>
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