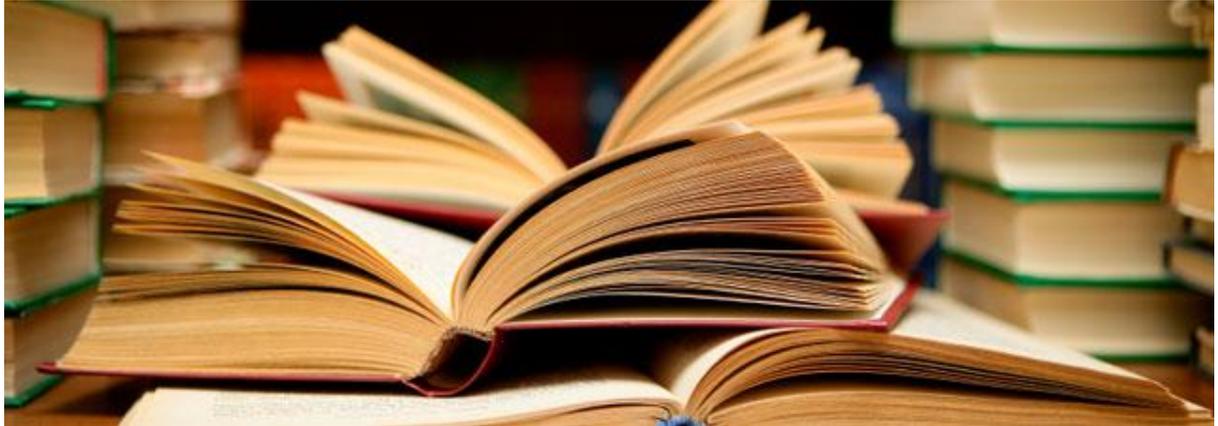


Help your child develop their reading



Helping your child improve their reading skills is the single most important thing you can do to ensure that they make good progress at secondary school – not just in English, but in all subjects.

- Create a 'printed word' environment at home and let your child see you enjoy reading and that reading has a purpose. Read books, magazines, newspapers, recipes, letters, shopping lists, instructions, timetables, the computer, text on the TV - anything you can get your hands on.
- Give your child access to a wide variety of reading material including: story books, information leaflets, poetry, riddles and jokes, children's magazines, comics, information on the computer, lists etc.
- Enjoy choosing books together from the library or bookshop.
- Explore the different purposes of books – fiction, poetry, non-fiction, reference.
- Use titles, cover pages, pictures and 'blurbs' to predict what the book might be like.
- Ask more confident readers about their favourite author and get them to recognise familiar publishers. They could make their own anthology of their favourite poems, books, authors etc.
- Choose from a wide range of fiction including traditional tales, stories from other cultures, best-selling authors and books that your child has been introduced to at school.
- Get your child to recognise that certain types of books are targeted at particular readers, for example fantasy, junior science fiction, humour.

- Continue to read to your child and make this a cosy, relaxed time - even when they're a fluent reader.
- Make the experience interactive. Ask questions about the story and get your child to make predictions. *What will happen next? What do you think of the characters? Where is the story set?* For older children, talk about the dilemmas facing the characters. *What would you do in this situation?* Link themes in books with their own experiences.
- Read poetry and rhyming books that play with language.
- Find information in non-fiction books using the contents page or index.
- Encourage your child to read out loud.
- Early on, prompt your child to re-tell stories that you've read to them. Encourage them to get the main points of the story in sequence. *What happened first? What came next? How did it end?*
- Encourage them to make up stories from pictures in books. Some books are published without words for this purpose.
- More confident readers can role-play characters in stories with you. Make this fun, changing the voice for each character. Look at how dialogue is written.
- Involve the whole family – read simple plays together. Encourage expression and varied tone of voice when reading stories.
- Ask your child questions about what they've read. *Why has this happened? Why did the character do or say that? What do you think about what's happened?*
- Use a dictionary to look up the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Don't get stuck on one word! Otherwise the sense of the text will be lost, and the enjoyment will go. Sometimes it's best to tell the child the word and move on.
- Share the reading. Read a sentence or a page each. Get your child to read a couple of pages and you read on. They can re-read the bits that you read at another time.
- Have patience and concentrate on the enjoyment. Children develop their reading at very different rates. For some children, it will suddenly click. For others, it will be slow and steady. They all have their ups and downs.

Giving your child confidence with plenty of encouragement and praise is the biggest help you can provide.