



# Beaminster: *A Reading School*

Why do we want to be known as a reading school?

- We believe that reading is essential to playing a full role as a citizen.
- We believe that reading is a source of continual self-improvement – both in knowledge of the world and in understanding the human condition.
- We believe that reading – especially a good book - is one of the greatest experiences of being alive.

## How to support your child with **READING**

Whether your child is a keen or reluctant reader, the ten top tips below can help you encourage a lifelong love of reading.

**KEEP THINGS REAL:** Make explicit connections between the ability to read and future options in life. If your child is already thinking about college or a particular career path, have open, honest discussions about the ways reading might be necessary for success. Find role models who struggled with dyslexia (for example) – but who persevered and came out on top. Discuss, not preach!

**LET YOUR CHILD CHOOSE:** The best way to encourage kids to read is to allow them to read whatever they find engaging be it comic books, cookbooks or romance novels about vampires or zombies. The books they are drawn to may not be your favourites, but don't discourage those preferences. Avoid any urge to act as a censor; it doesn't really matter what or how they are reading. Allow young people to read on an electronic device. Online options are also great for those who love fan-fiction. Many parents are worried about screen time and we are too, but remember that reading is a habit and for many, reading on a device might be a great place to start.

**LOOK FOR BOOKS AT YOUR CHILD'S READING LEVEL:** When youngsters struggle with reading in secondary school, it can be challenging to find high-interest books at the right reading level. Look for books that specifically target reluctant teen readers. Let your child use assistive technology that makes reading easier, such as audiobooks. Getting practice with something accessible is better than giving up on a traditional book that is geared for more advanced readers.

**MODEL READING:** The best way to create a culture of reading in your home is to read as much as possible. The more young people see their parents and other adults in the home reading, the more likely they are to follow suit. This doesn't change once they enter secondary school. Teens are even more resistant to any message that implies do as I say, not as I do.

**DISCUSS WHAT YOUR CHILD READS:** Talk in meaningful ways about what your child reads. Ask questions and encourage debate. Create an environment of deep discussion and critical thinking. Talking frequently about what kids are reading can help in more ways than one. Help kids stay motivated by having them read short passages (perhaps with you or even to you) and then discussing them.



**RESIST THE URGE TO CRITICIZE:** When young people are reluctant readers. You want to prevent them from shutting down about reading altogether; that means keeping negative opinions about what they read to yourself. If you don't like the vampire stories your teen likes, don't voice that criticism. If you think magazines are inferior to novels, don't share that opinion while your child is reading a magazine. Be tolerant and encourage reading, whatever form that takes.

**FIND A COMPELLING SERIES:** Readers who get hooked on the first book in a series can follow the same characters or themes through many more books. For young people with learning and thinking differences, starting a new book can be daunting. However, the familiarity of a series can help to make it easier to understand the text and reduce the negative feelings associated with starting a new reading task. Find the right characters or themes, and even reluctant readers will be more likely and keen to pick up the next book in the series.

**CONNECT READING TO YOUR CHILD'S PASSION:** For many young people, as reading becomes linked to exam and school pressures, they can begin to be turned off reading. Refocussing reading as an enjoyable experience, linked to hobbies or interests, will help to counter this. For example, if your child is a reluctant reader who wants to work with animals, make it clear how important reading will be to learn more about veterinary science. If your child has a favourite film, game or television show, look for books based upon those. Using books based on existing interests can really help young people identify what they might like to read and gain confidence in selecting books for themselves.

**TIE READING TO SOCIAL MEDIA:** If your child likes texting and posting on social networks, you can give mini-assignments that use those interests. For example, encourage your child to start following a blog and to read interesting posts aloud to you occasionally. Or you could ask your child to be on the lookout for interesting abbreviations people use in texts and then make a cheat sheet or to quiz you on what these abbreviations stand for.

**LEVERAGE INTEREST IN CURRENT EVENTS:** Highlight the ways that your child can use reading to keep tabs on what's happening in the world. Encourage him or her to pick up a newspaper or subscribe to a magazine. For young people with learning and thinking differences, reading might seem frustrating or boring but if your child is interested in sports, politics, celebrities, music, you name it, there will always be something to read.

## How to talk to your child about **READING**

Talking to your children about the books they read is one of the best ways to support literacy development. Your child needs to engage in critical thinking to discuss a book – a key skill for success in school as well as life. Here are some tips on how to start and sustain a book discussion with your child:

### **Before your child reads a book ask**

Why did you select this book?

What makes you think this book is going to be interesting?

What do you think this book is going to be about?

Does this book remind you of anything else you've already read or seen?

What kind of characters do you think will be in the book?

What do you think is going to happen?



**While your child is reading a book, try asking:**

- Will you catch me up on the story? What has happened so far?
- What do you think will happen next?
- If you were that character, what would you have done differently in that situation?
- If the book was a TV show, which actors would you cast in it? Why?
- Where is the book set?
- If the main character in that story lived next door, would you be friends?
- What does the place look like in your head as you read? Would you want to visit there?
- What new words or facts have you learnt so far?

**After your child has finished reading a book, ask questions like:**

- What was your favourite part of the book? Why?
- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- What surprised you most about the story? Why was it surprising?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned from the book?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- Would you have ended the book differently? Why/why not?
- Did the book end the way you thought it would?
- Did the problem of the book's plot get solved?
- If you could change one thing in the book, what would it be? Why?

## FAB FACTS about **READING**

**CHILDREN WHO READ**  
sleep better.

**CHILDREN WHO READ**  
have better mental  
health.

**CHILDREN WHO READ**  
have better brain  
development.

**CHILDREN WHO READ**  
are more creative and  
imaginative.



## KEY STAGE 3 READING LIST

### CLASSIC FICTION

**The Hobbit** – JRR Tolkien  
**The Jungle Book** - Rudyard Kipling  
**Moonfleet** - J Meade Falkner  
**The Railway Children** - E Nesbit  
**Five Children and It** - E Nesbit  
**Treasure Island** - RL Stevenson  
**What Katy Did** - Susan Coolidge  
**The Last of the Mohicans** - J Fenimore Cooper  
**The Secret Garden** - Frances Hodgson Burnett  
**The Jeeves Stories** - PG Wodehouse  
**Goodnight Mister Tom** - Michelle Magorian  
**Lord of the Flies** - William Golding  
**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** - C S Lewis  
**The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** – Mark Twain  
**My Family and other Animals** - Gerald Durrell  
**The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** – Mark Twain  
**Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** - Arthur Conan Doyle  
**The Hound of the Baskervilles** - Arthur Conan Doyle  
**Through the Looking Glass** - Lewis Carroll

### MODERN FICTION

**Noughts and Crosses** - Malorie Blackman  
**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night time** - Mark Haddon  
**Chaos Walking Trilogy** - Patrick Ness  
**Monsters of Men Trilogy** - Patrick Ness  
**His Dark Materials Trilogy** - Phillip Pullman  
**Out of the Ashes** - Michael Morpurgo  
**Stormbreaker** - Anthony Horowitz  
**Point Blanc** - Anthony Horowitz

**Skeleton Key** - Anthony Horowitz  
**Fade** - Robert Cormier  
**The Bumblebee Flies Away** - Robert Cormier  
**On the Edge** - Gillian Cross  
**The Thief Lord** - Cornelia Funke  
**Inkheart** - Cornelia Funke  
**Sally Tomato** - Jean Ure  
**The Wolves of Willoughby Chase** - Joan Aitken  
**Indian in the Cupboard** - Lynne Reid Banks  
**Ballet Shoes** - Noel Streatfeild  
**The Graveyard Book** - Neil Gaiman  
**Skellig** - David Almond  
**Holes** - Louis Sachar  
**Harry Potter** (all) - JK Rowling  
**The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas** - John Boyne  
**Watership Down** - Richard Adams  
**Tiger Moth** - Suzi Moore  
**A Kestrel for a Knave** - Barry Hines  
**The Bone Sparrow** - Zana Fraillon  
**The Fault in our Stars** - John Green  
**Wild Boy** - Rob Lloyd Jones  
**Charlotte's Web** - E B White  
**Private Peaceful** - Michael Morpurgo  
**Anthony Horowitz** - all  
**Patrick Ness** - all

### NON-FICTION

**The Greatest** - John Cunliffe  
**The Diary of a Young Girl** - Anne Frank  
**I Am Malala** – Malala Yousafzai