



# REMAIN READING AT HOME

SOME PRACTICAL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND FAMILIES



**“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”**

**- Emilie Buchwald**

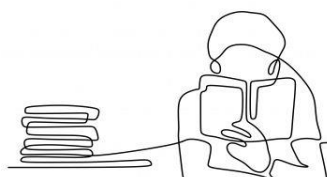
Times just now are tough for all of us and we are all finding ourselves in unprecedented situations. It can be difficult to comprehend what the coming weeks and months will look like. In the meantime, this booklet is intended to provide some support and practical guidance when reading with your child, or children, at home.

Reading is a fundamental skill we need to equip our young people with, but it is not a natural skill. We are not simply born ‘good’ or ‘bad at reading’. It requires a lot of learning, resilience and experience. The more we engage with texts and apply our learning, the more confident and effective we become in accessing and using language.

Providing opportunities for your child to read as much as they can while these current measures continue is key to supporting their ongoing learning and development. Research shows that twenty minutes of daily reading exposes your child to approximately 1.8 million words per year. This has huge benefits for their learning and life.

Included in this booklet are some suggestions to help you promote and support positive reading experiences in your home during this difficult time.

**STAY HOME. STAY SAFE. REMAIN READING.**



# PREPARING FOR READING

## Encourage your child to choose a comfortable reading spot.

How are they feeling? Find out what suits them best that day.



Sitting at the kitchen table?

Snuggled on the sofa?

Sprawled across the floor?

Lazing in the garden?

Cosied up in bed?



## Encourage your child to maintain their focus.

Minimise distractions and make this a quiet time, where possible, for everyone at home. Unless technology is being used to access text, turn off devices like TVs, phones or computers.

## Encourage your child to engage in reading for a set time.

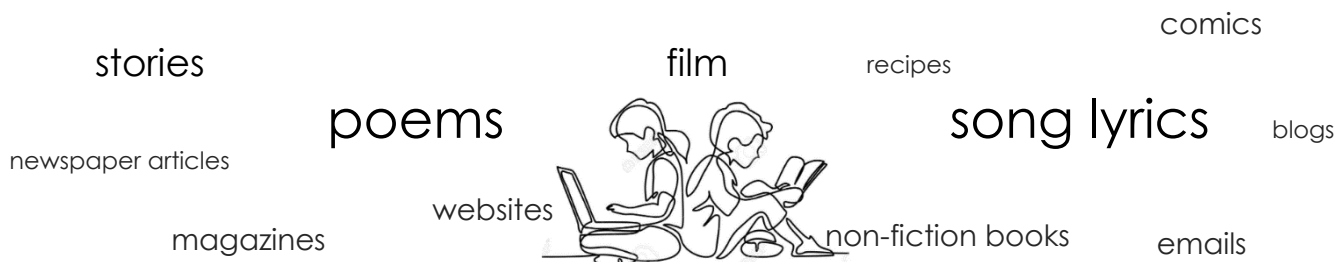
Try agreeing a time limit with your child for the reading session.

Consider time intervals of 1 minute, 5 minutes, 10 minutes or 20 minutes.



Discuss what you feel is realistic and achievable with your child. Bear in mind that every day will be different. Be responsive to how they are feeling and don't force it. Remember that even just a little reading on their own that day is better than no reading at all.

## Encourage your child to read/engage with different types of text.



## Encourage your child to read aloud.

Reading aloud draws your child's attention to their fluency and expression. Encourage them to read aloud to:



# DURING READING



## Encourage your child to join in.

When reading aloud to your child, invite them to join in with any repetitive, funny or interesting parts of the text. If using specific voices for characters, or emphasising words or phrases, encourage your child to mimic these to help them develop their own use of intonation and expression.

## Encourage your child to take a turn.

Children of all ages benefit from shared reading and having someone model effective reading behaviours to them. Try taking turns when reading the same text and enjoy the shared reading experience. You could swap after every sentence, paragraph or passage. Mix it up! See <https://www.startwithabook.org/reading-aloud> for some more practical ideas.

## Encourage your child to actively listen.

When reading aloud to your child, let your child just listen, imagine and be absorbed by the words and the sound of your voice.



Try not to interrupt the flow of reading by stopping to ask questions or give additional information. Think about when you've been engrossed in a TV programme or film and someone keeps interrupting to ask you questions about it or giving their own running commentary! Annoying isn't it?

Instead, do this *afterwards*. You can go back and highlight specific parts of the text when asking questions or engaging in conversation about certain aspects you want to focus on.

## Encourage your child but don't force it!

It is so important to make their reading experience an enjoyable time rather than a chore. If you find your child is becoming disengaged, restless or showing signs of distress then stop.

Talk with them about why they might be feeling the way they are. Consider the type of text, their interest level in the reading material, time of day or environmental factors.



What could you try differently the next time to improve things?

## Encourage your child to find 'just right' texts for them.

If you find that your child is really struggling during reading, it could be that the text is just too challenging for them. The 'five finger rule' is a quick and easy way for your child to check if something is suitable for them to read on their own.



For every word that they don't know, ask your child to hold up a finger. If they hold up five, this would suggest the text is probably a bit too advanced and they will likely struggle. Around two or three fingers suggests a reasonable level of challenge. They should still come across new words or terminology but be able to read enough of the text confidently to experience success. For further information: <https://readingeggs.co.uk/articles/2017/04/07/just-right-books/>

## Encourage your child to use strategies.

You might hear your child ask, "What does this word say?" but instead of just telling them the word, try one of the suggested questions below if they encounter a challenge. Remember, we are not born 'good' or 'bad' readers, we learn to be more effective by problem solving!

- "Can you use any pictures to help you work out this word?"
- "Can you find any parts of the word you know?"
- "Reread the whole sentence again."
- "Say each sound slowly as you read the word."
- "Did that word not make sense? Try a different vowel sound. What word do you think would sound right in the context of what you are reading about? Stop and have a think."
- "Skip over the word and keep reading. Now go back. Can you think what word would sound best so the whole sentence makes sense?"



## REMEMBER TO USE LOTS OF PRAISE AND POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

It is OK to say "well done" but consider how these statements might be more encouraging.

I really liked the way you broke the word down into chunks to help you.

### BE SPECIFIC

You tried so hard! I loved how determined you were to work it out for yourself.

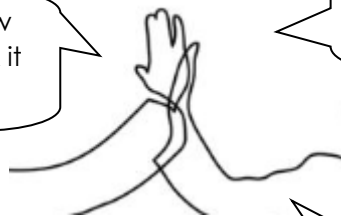
### ACKNOWLEDGE THE EFFORT INVOLVED

I'm so proud of you!  
Even when it was tough, you didn't give up.

Well done for using that strategy. Now you know what to do next time!

### BUILD CONFIDENCE

Remember that you are always learning and getting better. When you aren't sure the next time, just tell yourself you can do it. You just need to figure it out.



# AFTER READING



\*based on the four basic questions in Aidan Chambers (2011) *Tell Me: Children, Reading and Talk – How Adults Help Children Talk Well About Books*

## FOUR QUESTIONS\* TO ASK YOUR CHILD

1. "What did you like about this text?"



2. "What did you dislike about this text?"



3. "Did anything puzzle you or make you wonder anything?"



4. "Did you notice any patterns or make any connections?"



More reading tips can be found at <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/supporting-literacy-at-home/>

## Encourage your child to engage in further conversation.

Engaging in conversation develops your child's ability to talk about texts, gives them the confidence to offer ideas and deepens their understanding. Try asking one of the following questions and see how they respond.

- "Was there anything that you'd never found in a text/seen in a film before?"
- "If you gave up, where did you stop and what stopped you?"
- "Did it remind you of any other texts/films? How were they similar or different?"
- "Would you recommend other people to read/watch this?"
- "What made this text/film unique?"
- "How would you have made this text/film even better?"
- "What information/image will stay in your mind? What has it made you think about?"
- "Did this text/film make you think of anything that is happening in your life right now?"
- "Is there anything you would you like to find out or know more about because of this text/film?"



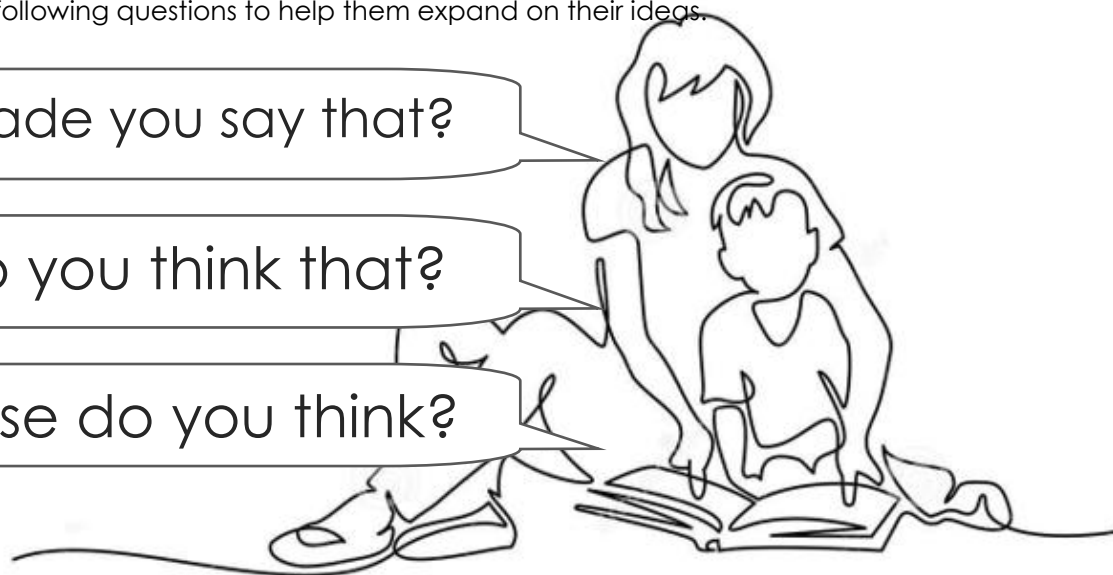
## Encourage your child to say more when sharing their views.

Try using some of the following questions to help them expand on their ideas.

What made you say that?

Why do you think that?

What else do you think?



More reading tips can be found at <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/reading-tips-parents-multiple-languages>

## Encourage your child to think about the purpose of the text.

Ask "What was the purpose of the text you read? To entertain? To inform? To persuade?"

Encourage your child to think about what kinds of choices the author made to achieve this. Did they use any particular features such as the font, images or the layout? Did the author use any particular techniques? How did these affect your child's appreciation of the text? To help support with this, you can find more information about the different techniques an author may use at <https://penandthepad.com/info-7925939-list-writing-techniques.html>

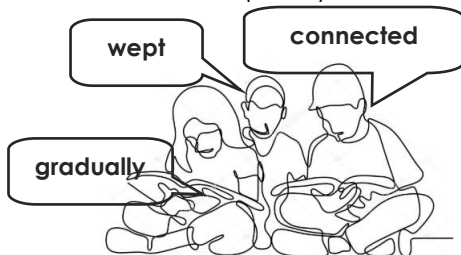
## Encourage your child to find and talk about interesting words.

It can be useful to think of the words we use in three categories, or 'tiers'.

Tier one words would include the most basic language e.g. *house, walked, hot*.

Tier two vocabulary can be thought of as a more sophisticated level of language which help us to be more specific. If we consider the same examples above, tier two alternatives could be *apartment, strolled, blazing*.

Tier three vocabulary is usually very precise, often related to a particular context and used much less frequently than in everyday language or situations e.g. *duplex, sashayed, molten*.



It is so important to develop your child's vocabulary as this gives them a wider range of words to express themselves and understand the world around them. Research shows that focusing on tier two level words is one of the most helpful way to help your child develop their knowledge, understanding and use of language.

## Encourage your child to record their reading.

A simple table, chart or graph could be created to help keep a record of your child's daily reading time. This can help support a feeling of accomplishment and validate their effort.

## Encourage your child to develop a lifelong love of reading.

With schools, libraries and shops closed, you may find that access to reading material is limited but there are other ways to inspire a love of reading, stories and language.



Many online websites like Waterstones or Amazon (other book sellers are available!) allow you to search for specific book titles or just browse. This can be interesting and a productive use of time for your child. Read reviews others have written. Talk to them about features such as the title, blurb, front cover. How have these been designed to grab a reader's attention? How would they design a better front cover for the book? Many books offer a preview, so your child can read a short extract and see if it captures their interest. They could make a 'wish list' of books they would like to read in the future.

Many companies have made audiobook subscriptions free to access online for a trial period. YouTube also offer free audiobook versions of popular children's books as well as classic literature. See the resources section for some suggested links.

Encouraging your child to draw, colour in or doodle while listening to audiobooks, songs or texts as they are read aloud can help sustain their focus and be a relaxing way for them to engage. Having these on in the background as your child plays, studies or engages in other household activities can also help to immerse them in rich vocabulary and language.



# Reading Resources

Some recommendations for free online resources and reading material.

## More appropriate for younger readers

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b00jdlm2/cbeebies-bedtime-stories>

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/storybooks-and-games/>

<https://www.storyberries.com/category/age-4-6-bedtime-stories/>

YouTube have some great clips of popular storybooks e.g.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SweSXYs6DZc>

## More appropriate for primary aged readers

<https://www.storylineonline.net/>

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/books/free-ebooks/>

<https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/>

<https://www.worldbookday.com/resources/extracts/>

<https://sooperbooks.com/bedtime-stories/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/#.html>

<https://www.poetry4kids.com/poems/>

YouTube have free audiobook clips of popular children's novels e.g.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtAmTFbNtw&list=PLESPW8lrGkXVubBtPn0l4Cw5SGqvATlfw>

## More appropriate for more experienced readers

<https://www.2starsandawish.com/home>

<https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/books/>

<http://www.read.gov/books/>

<https://freekidsbooks.org/subject/classic-books/>

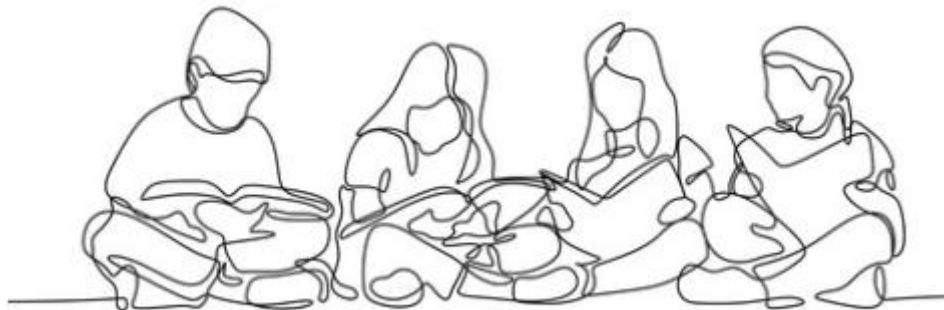
<https://www.readersread.com/excerpts/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news>

<https://americanliterature.com/short-stories-for-children>

YouTube have free audiobook clips of classic children's literature e.g.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/GreatestAudioBooks/videos?app=desktop>



**“Reading gives us someplace to go  
when we have to stay where we are.”**

- Mason Cooley