



Books Open Doors, Reading Opens Minds



Supporting reluctant readers

Practical tips for parents of primary-aged children

③ Choosing the right books and texts



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1. Finding the right books for primary-aged pupils



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Choosing the right books for your child is essential to help them develop a love for reading and build their skills. While every child is different, understanding what types of books are best suited to different age groups and developmental stages can help ensure that your child is engaged and motivated to read. The key is to find books that match your child's interests, reading level and cognitive abilities, without overwhelming them or making them feel like reading is a chore. Here you will find a breakdown of the kinds of books that are ideal for primary-aged pupils, as well as some tips on non-traditional texts that can also foster a love of reading.



“Wherever I am, if I’ve got that book with me, I’ve got a place I can go and be happy.”

- J.K. Rowling



Age 5-7: Picture Books, Simple Chapter Books, Rhyme, Repetition

At this stage, children are just beginning to develop their reading skills, so books should be simple, visually engaging and offer plenty of repetition. Picture books remain a crucial part of their reading diet, not only for their illustrations, but for the structure and rhythm they often have. Repetition in texts helps children feel confident as they start to recognise patterns in language, which is key for early literacy development.



Picture Books with clear narrative structures, repetition and rhyme will help reinforce word recognition and fluency.

Simple Chapter Books are ideal for those who are ready to move on from picture books. They have large fonts, short chapters, engaging stories and are often part of a series, so your child can begin to really get stuck in once they find a series they enjoy. They are short enough to prevent frustration, yet complex enough to suitably challenge their reading abilities, all while introducing them to the joys of longer narratives.

Rhyme & Repetition: Rhyming books, especially those with repeated key phrases, are great for building rhythm in reading, therefore developing fluency. 'Dr Seuss' books are classics that children in this age group often love.

In the early years, focus on building fluency, confidence and a love of reading. Read books that use simple language, repetition and engaging visuals, without overwhelming them.



3. Ages 7-9



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Age 7-9: Illustrated Chapter Books, Funny Series & Comics

At this age, children are becoming more proficient readers. They may be ready for books with more complex storylines, but still with plenty of illustrations to maintain their interest. Humour and light-hearted narratives are often key to keeping them engaged.



Titles like 'Charlotte's Web', 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' and 'Dog Man' balance fun visuals with richer narratives, making reading enjoyable and encouraging independence.



Books for this age group should encourage independent reading and help build both confidence and comprehension. Funny, illustrated and graphic novels are great ways to keep reluctant readers entertained and coming back for more!



"There's so much more to a book than just the reading."

-Maurice Sendak

4. Ages 9-11



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Age 9-11: Adventure, Fantasy, Historic Fiction & Graphic Novels

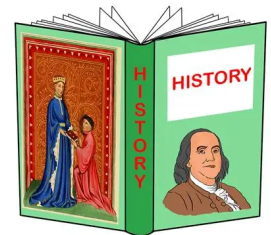
By now, children are ready for richer plots, deeper characters and themes that reflect real-life.

Adventure & Fantasy

Series like 'Percy Jackson', 'Harry Potter' and 'Narnia' ignite imagination while exploring themes of friendship and bravery.

Historical Fiction

Books like 'I Survived' or 'The War That Saved My Life' connect school history to engaging stories which build empathy.



Graphic Novels

Still popular, offering visual appeal with meaningful stories.

Real-World Themes

Titles such as 'Wonder' or 'Bridge to Terabithia' help kids reflect on friendships, family and social issues.

The goal for this age is to further develop their reading skills while still keeping them entertained. Books should encourage critical thinking, empathy and a sense of wonder.

At this age, children should be reading books rich enough that they can't help but discuss them once they're finished.



5. Non-Traditional Texts



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Reading habits can be enriched by non-traditional texts, leading to a greater enthusiasm for reading. They also give children a chance to engage with information in different ways.

Joke Books & Riddles:

A great way to engage children's sense of humour and introduce them to the structure of language in a fun, light-hearted way.

Cookbooks:

Recipes encourage children to try new things, follow instructions and can also introduce basic Maths and Science concepts through measuring ingredients or understanding how food reacts during cooking.

Sport Magazines: For sports-loving children, magazines and books about their favourite teams, players, or the history of the sport combine facts, stories, and pictures, encouraging them to read more.

Instruction manuals:

When your child receives a new toy, what better way to engage them in reading than to help them read the instructions together. They'll be eager to read them to discover how the toy works.

Fact Books: Primary aged children are curious about the world around them, so books filled with short, fun facts about their favourite topics (animals, space etc) can be highly motivating.

These non-traditional texts can help to expand your child's reading horizons and show them that reading can be both educational and entertaining.



6. Book Choices



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Variety is key, but choice is crucial!

One of the best ways to foster a love of reading is to give your child a variety of books to explore. But just as - if not more - important, is giving them choice. Allowing them to choose what they want to read helps them feel empowered and more likely to develop a genuine interest in reading. Making reading fun and personal will help create lifelong readers.



Picture Books for all ages!

Finally, it is important to note that picture books are not just for the youngest readers. Some picture books are specifically written with older children in mind and can be a wonderful resource for developing important reading skills like inference, comprehension and critical thinking. Books like 'The Arrival' are complex, thought-provoking and can lead to incredible follow-up conversations.

Check out the 'Book Choice Cheat Sheet' on the next page for tips on how to choose the best books!





Book Choice Cheat Sheet for Parents

Choosing the right book for your child doesn't have to be overwhelming. Here is a quick 'cheat sheet' to help you find the perfect book:



1. Interest first - Always consider what excites your child.



2. Reading level - Choose books with suitable challenge. Too much they become frustrated, too little they get bored.



3. Mix it up - Variety is key to help them discover their likes and dislikes when it comes to reading.



4. Series books - Found a series they enjoy? Keep coming back for more! Chances are they will love all of the books in that series, not just the one.



5. Challenge & Enjoyment - A book should stretch your child's abilities without overwhelming them.



Remember, variety is key but choice is crucial!

Recommended Book List

Key Stage One



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Here is a small sample of books suitable for Key Stage 1 children to help you get started. If your child doesn't immediately warm to one book, don't give up! Try a different title and keep exploring until you find a book that truly captures their interest.

Title	Author
Food Fight	Alex Latimer
Kip and the Squiggle Doodle	Em Cosh
Marty Moose: First Class Mischief	Claire Powell
Wild Magic series	Abiola Bello and Emma McCann
Strong and Tough	Rico Hinson-King
Super Nani and Captain Yaz	Saira Shah
The Rainbow Bear	Michael Morpurgo
Isadora Moon Goes to School	Harriet Muncaster
Betsy Biggalow: The Detective	Malorie Blackman
Flat Stanley	Jeff Brown
Gordon the Meanest Goose on Earth	Alex Latimer



Ask at your local library for recommendations. They will be happy to help suggest appropriate books!

Recommended Book List

Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3/4)



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Here is a small sample of books suitable for Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and 4) children to help you get started. If your child doesn't immediately warm to one book, don't give up!

Try a different title and keep exploring until you find a book that truly captures their interest.

Title	Author
Bunny vs Monkey	Jamie Smart
Bad Guys	Aaron Blabey
Wild Magic	Tamora Pierce
Amelia Cheeseheart	Cat Weldon
Pirate Academy	Justin Somper
Badgers are Go	Susannah Lloyd
The Land of Roar	Jenny McLachlan
The Butterfly Lion	Michael Morpurgo
Vi Spy	Maz Evans
The Firework Maker's Daughter	Phillip Pullman
Doughnut Squad	Neill Cameron
Podkin One-Ear	Kieran Larwood
Knight Sir Louis	Myles McLeod



"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents."

-Emilie Buchwald

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Recommended Book List

Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5/6)

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Title	Author
Shadow Thieves	Anne Ursu
The Starlight Rebel	Lisette Auton
Lockett and Wildes Dreadfully Haunting Mysteries	Lucy Strange
Nate Yu's Blast From the Past	Maisie Chan
Land of the Last Wildcat	Lui Sit
Fallout	Lesley Parr
When the Sky Falls	Phil Earle
Jonny and the Mystery of the Sun Disc	Melania Giofr�
The Changeling Child	H.S. Norup
Starminster	Megan Hopkins
Undercover Angel	Lisa J Allen
The Shell Keepers	Truly Johnston
Terra Electrica	Antonia Maxwell
Cleme Fatale has been Betrayed	Eve Wersocki Morris
Mizzy Mysteries - A Skeleton in the Closet	Claire Hatcher-Smith
The Clockwork Conspiracy	Sam Sedgman



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