

Having fun with reading

101 activities, top tips and ideas to support reading.



“A compilation of tips to support before, during and after reading, games to help early reading skills and to support comprehension and ideas which you may find useful to engage young people with their reading engagement.”

With thanks to ESCAL Reading Volunteers

Activities, top tips and ideas to support reading

The Virtual School have compiled 101 things to support reading which include activities and top tips. Thank you to our ESCAL Reading Volunteers for sharing their ideas from experiences of working with children and young people in our Sheffield Schools. If you have any further ideas to share, please email faye.jeffrey@sheffield.gov.uk.

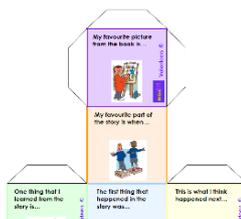
1. Create a **wordsearch** using words from your favourite book – there are lots of templates online. If you would like one creating with images, please email virtualschool@sheffield.gov.uk.

c	y	d	m	e	c	s	o	u	n	d	s
a	f	r	o	b	o	t	b	a	t	h	k
f	s	d	m	e	c	h	a	s	o	p	g
h	o	n	f	s	f	g	b	y	u	r	n
l	u	a	a	r	o	i	o	r	n	o	v
i	r	m	o	r	e	l	e	e	f	g	r
g	s	m	e	m	o	r	y	t	a	r	s

2. Look at the **front cover** of a story book and ask the child to make their own story up by using the illustration and title. Remember to plan the plot giving it a beginning, middle and end.

3. Turn a favourite book into a **comic strip!** Remember to use speech bubbles for your characters.

4. Give a **book introduction** to a family member or friend over Zoom, then read the story using voices or the characters or by using your acting skills!



5. Use a **storycube** to ask each other questions about the text. Contact the Virtual School for some electronic cubes you can print!



6. Think about your favourite part of a story and **create a picture**. Think about the setting of the picture or even colours to show moods of characters.

7. Practice some tricky words by using **Clear the Board** game. You can also use this to practice letters, or diagraphs (for example, words with 'sh' or 'igh').

Clear the Board

1

2

3

4

5

8. Polly, ESCAL Volunteer says:

"Top Trumps are keenly played by many children, especially boys; we made some about Woodland Animals for our grandson. Even children who are rather reluctant readers will often enjoy the competitive aspect of the cards and read quite difficult words in the process."



Harry Potter	Peter Pan	Cinderella	Wally
Magical Ability 86	Magical Ability 92	Magical Ability 12	Magical Ability 43
Comedy Value 23	Comedy Value 76	Comedy Value 17	Comedy Value 62
Friendliness 96	Friendliness 84	Friendliness 100	Friendliness 81
Scariness Factor 12	Scariness Factor 08	Scariness Factor 02	Scariness Factor 04

9. Make a **who, what, when, where, why** wheel to ask questions about characters and the plot of the story. This is a generic resource and can be used with any story!

10. Sign up to **Sheffield Libraries** online and borrow a book. Take the opportunity to have a look at something you normally wouldn't!



11. Take a look at the free e-books on **Oxford owl** and check out accompanying resources.



12. Look at <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/storybooks-and-games/> for online books, activities and Storytime videos to watch.

13. Rosalind, ESCAL Volunteer says:



"One of the things I did turned practice into a bit more fun. If I noticed that a child was repeatedly having trouble in distinguishing between some types of words (examples below) I wrote them out on bits of card or paper and put them in a bag. The job was to pick the bits of card out of a bag, then read them, or sort them or write them out, or whatever seemed appropriate. I think the children liked putting their hand in and not knowing what they would pull out. It obviously took a bit of preparation as it was tailored to the individual, but I found it quite fun to work out the words that would make the point."

Examples:

Where an "e" at the end of a word changes the sound: e.g. hop and hope, rip and ripe, dud and dude

Where similar sounds have different spellings: e.g. soar/saw, wore/war, raw/roar, pour/paw (homophones)

Where the same letter combination is said differently: e.g. language, guard, guest, penguin

Where the "g" is said differently depending on the letter following: e.g. gambling, geranium, generous, gorgeous

Where there is a "kn" combination e.g. need and knead, knight and night, knew and new

14. **Express yourself.** Using a camera, make faces of the emotions a character experiences during a book. Put your photos in a document on the computer and type what emotion the character felt and why.

15. **Think different** – Choose 3 important events from a book and explain how you would have handled them differently to the character. Explain how this would have affected the characters or plot of the book. Remember to consider the cause and effect of your decisions!

16. You have **three wishes**...A genie lands in the story and gives a character 3 wishes. What 3 wishes would the character make, why would they make them and would the wishes change anything about the story?



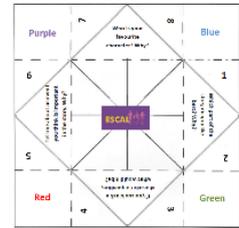
17. **Comprehension dice** – Use a dice to ask comprehension questions. Roll a 'one' and ask "if you were writing this story, what would you see and hear?". Contact Virtual School for the full version.

18. **In the hot seat** - After reading a story with a child, let them play the role of a character! Ask the child simple questions, pretending they are in a 'hot seat' situation. This idea can be used for any story but remember to choose one of the main characters to encourage lots of talk! For the 'Three Little Pigs', you could pretend to be the wolf! Ask questions like:

- What is your name?
- Where do you live?
- Why do you want to upset the pigs?
- How did you feel at the end?

Pretend to hold a microphone for the child and make sure they sound like a wolf!

19. Use an **origami storyteller** to answer questions about the book. Please request a template from Virtual School.



20. Make some **fact cards**! Research about your favourite things and make some cards with questions on one side and answers on the other. Make this into a game to see how many you can get right. Email us for a copy to use.



How many years can the Galapagos giant tortoise live for?

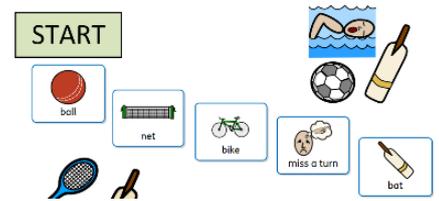


How fast in miles can the peregrine falcon swoop down from the sky to catch its prey?

21. Create a **read and rhyme game**. Read a book and select words from the text, or base it around a hobby. Write the words on a game board template. When you land on a word, you have to say a word that rhymes with it. For an example to be sent to you, please email us.

Sports Read and Rhyme game

Roll the dice and land on a word. Think of a word which rhymes and say it out loud. The winner is the first one to the finish line!



22. Find a **phoneme** as many times as you can in a book or magazine. Make a list of them and find the words that rhyme (a phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in speech). Why not try to change the I sound in 'lack' to a b – the word then changes to 'back'?

23. Use a book title to create an **anagrams** game. How many words can you make from 'We're going on a bear hunt'?

24. Alison, ESCAL Volunteers says:



"I read with a Year 2 pupil who struggled to concentrate during her reading support and would lose interest in reading quite quickly. I suggested that we took it in turns to read pages of the book and during my turn I missed out a word on each page to see if she could spot it. It ensured that she read along with me and she then read the missing word and the full sentence. I would then reread the page in full to ensure the meaning / storyline could be followed."

25. Make a **book scavenger hunt**. Hide books around the house and write out some questions "find a book that has the word 'what' on page 4". To make it easier, have a pile of books and ask easier questions like "find a book about an alien."

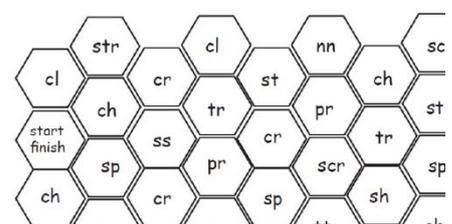
26. Read a story with a child and **create a blurb**. Look at how authors have written blurbs for books.

27. **Write a letter** to a character. What questions could you ask them? What would you like to find out?

28. Involve clapping! To help read **syllables**, clap them out together "Sep-tem-ber!"

29. Play **consonant cluster** – a consonant cluster is a group of consonant for which have no vowels. For example, 'spl' or 'sk'. Email us for a version of this game.

Consonant Clusters Blockbusters Game Board

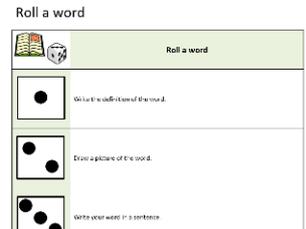


30. Find the **longest word** in the book and make sure you understand it's meaning. Can you draw a picture of the word or find any smaller words within the word?

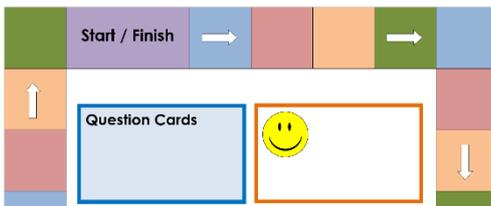
31. Make a **multiple-choice quiz** from a favourite fact book and test someone! (Multiple choice normally offers different answers. A, B or C).

32. Have a good laugh and read some **joke books**. Horrid Henry is a must! Can you make up your own jokes and perform them?

33. Play **roll a word**. Use a word you are practicing and roll a dice to ask questions about the word. For example, what does the word mean? Think of a word that rhymes with this word. Email us for a template of the game.



34. **Research** your favourite city or country by reading books or searching the internet. Create a travel brochure and think about the currency, food and any landmarks.



35. Play a generic **story game** to test comprehension skills!

36. Use themes of the story to **create a newspaper article**. Remember to create a mind map and a plan to make it a little easier.

37. Create some **silly sentences**! Locate 10 to 15 words in a book (page 3, 5th word). Write them down and create silly sentences using the words (you are allowed to add some conjunctions such as 'and' or 'I').

38. Grab a **free recipe card** and cut it up. Read each section and try to put it back in order of the method you would use.

39. Create an **acrostic poem** about a character in the story – make sure to highlight what they look like, what kind of character they are and what they get up to.

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41. **Talk, talk and more talk!** The most important thing to do. Talk about the characters, talk about what you have found out so far, ask questions (including words you don't know) and have discussions about the text. Remember that reading and communication go hand in hand!

42. Play '**Guess Who**' and ask questions to find out which character your child is thinking of.

43. **Opposites** – read a book and identify words or phrases where you could note the opposite. For example, the opposite to 'can' would be 'can't'. How would the story change if the opposite word had been used instead?

44. Find a **simple play** (script or dialogue) and ask your child to be an actor. Share the characters out (just one or two characters to start with) and make sure each character has a different voice (a well-spoken man, a mouse or a giant with a deep voice) – keep things fun to engage!



45. Using a **dictionary** – if you come across a word which might be unknown, have a chat about what it might mean. Grab the dictionary and check if you were right. Expand by asking the child to think of another sentence the word could be used in.

46. Read books about activities you could do together to **plan adventures**. For example, 'The Wild Weather Book'.

47. Remember **voices!** Talk about what the character would sound like and add voices to the book to add expression and fun.

48. Write a **one page 'pitch'** to a movie producer, explaining why the book you have read would make a great film. Make sure to sell it to them to create a Hollywood spectacular!



49. Cathy, ESCAL Volunteers says:

"Create a treasure hunt around the home or garden to find the names (written on card) of characters in a favourite story and fill the names in on a sheet as you find them. You could even follow the story as you are finding them!"

50. For **kinesthetic learners** (children who like to do things with their hands or body), have the child spell out their name or some words using exercises. For example, B = hop on one foot 3 times, E = 10 sit ups and N = 15-star jumps.



51. Play **sight word Twister**. Add sign words (the words used commonly – said, and, I, he) to Twister spots. Call out sight words and play the normal game!

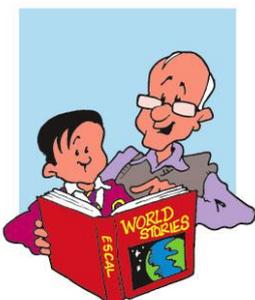
52. Make books **accessible** – have them on a bookshelf and also with toys to show that books aren't just for a bedtime story.



53. Play **rhyming ping pong**. Say a word and take it in turns to shout out a rhyming word to each other. For example: 'cat', 'sat', 'mat'. Expand this to see if you can put the words into a sentence.

54. Don't just read fiction. Make time for **non-fiction** (fact books) such as atlases or books about dinosaurs and remember to be led by interests.

55. Play **'I spy'** with a book. 'Can you find a word beginning with C?' or 'can you find a picture with red in it?'



56. Help children with **punctuation** by having conversations. "When I see the speech quotes, I use this voice" or "When I see a question mark, I make my voice sound like I am asking a question". Contact us for some punctuation prompting cards.

57. Helen, ESCAL Volunteers says:

“Link reading to crafting. Find something you would like to make together (for example, origami) and read the instructions to create a masterpiece!”

58. Always remember to **model** (show the child first). If a child is struggling with expression (fluency or punctuation), take turns to read a page. Modelling what reading should sound like will really help!

59. If the child is using their **finger to point** to each word (one to one correspondence), encourage them to take it away and point to the sentence at the left-hand side. Help them to read the words fluently with their eyes.

60. Make a **homemade book** with a child. Use photographs they have taken and ask them to write a story in their own words to accompany their photographs.

61. Play a **yes or no** game. Choose from a list of 10 to 15 words and ask questions like does the word begin with the letter ‘B’? Does the word end with a vowel?

Card A

clown	train	ship	toe
treat	when	night	boy
blue	stay	track	bell

62. Use **bingo** as a fun way of practicing lots of things such as sight words, letter recognition, diagraphs or rhyming words.

63. Use a **map and grid references** to find landmarks together. Write out questions for the child to read to so they are able to write down the location.



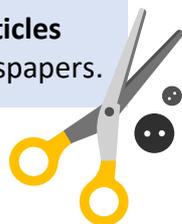
64. Read along with an **audio book** to improve speed and fluency.

65. Children love to **copy adults!** Try to make sure that your child can see you reading to encourage them to do the same from an early age.



66. Remember lots of **specific praise**. It’s great to say “well done”, but even better to say “well done. I really like the way you made it sound like you were asking a question”.

67. Cut out **interesting articles** you might find in newspapers.



68. Play **Connect Four words**. Use your Connect Four game to practice words by sticking the words on to each game piece. If you can read the word aloud, you can use the game piece in the game!

69. Sequence **picture cards** of a story in the order that you think is correct and tell the story. Read the book afterwards to see how right you were. What were the differences?

70. Write down some letters and boxes below them to see how many **words you can make**. For example:

T, A, E, C, F

E * * T * * C * * C * * * F * * * F * * *
Eat Tea Cat Café Fact Face

71. Remember that there are lots of types of text. Expose children to a **wide range of texts** and keep in mind that you can either borrow from a library or buy cheaply from car boot sales or charity shops.

72. Do some gardening – plant some seeds and **read the instructions** on the label on how to do it.



73. **Measure a tree** – estimate how tall it is, measure the width of it and think what stories the tree would have to tell.

74. Practice reading whilst watching the TV (but turn the volume off and put the **subtitles on!**).

75. Cathy, ESCAL Volunteers says:

“Play charades using favourite book titles as the theme. Create some charade cards together using characters or themes of the story.”



76. **Memory** – locate 10 words from a book you have read (remember, it’s always good to practice those high frequency words!) Cut up some squares of paper and write the words out twice on the pieces of paper. Spread them out face down and try to match the words.

77. Use the memory idea again, but instead of matching the same word, try to find a word which **rhymes** with the one you flip over (dark / park).

78. In fact, you can use this idea for lots of things! Matching a **letter to a picture** (‘d’ with the picture of a dog) to support **letter recognition**, to support **contractions** (can’t and cannot) and **homonyms** (a word which sounds the same but means something different. For example, deer and dear).

79. **Make connections** – use what children know to understand what they are reading (text to self, text to text, text to world):

This reminds me of.....because
This reminds me of the book.....
This reminds me of when I heard.....



80. Make a **personal bookmark** and write on prompts (and pictures) which will help.

81. Make a **camp or den** and have it as a special place to tell stories! Keep books there to prompt children to read (maybe to their teddies!)

82. Create a **time capsule** (lockdown 20/21). Read through publications on the internet or create a timeline to add into it using illustrations and dates.





83. Encourage children to **use fingers** on their hand to prompt thinking. One – who, two – what, three – when, four – where, five – why.

84. Try **Star Gazing** – search for the star constellations in a book or online and then see which on a clear night you can see – does each of the constellations have a story to tell?



85. Use **inference**. “When the author doesn’t answer my question, I must infer” by using phrases like maybe... perhaps... I think... I’m guessing. Remember to always think like a detective. I wonder...



86. John, ESCAL Volunteers says:

“Play games whilst reading the story by asking simple questions. For example, how many times can you find the word 'the' in the story?”

MuseumSheffield

87. Link reading to our wonderful **museums** and learn about Egypt. You could even make your own mask! Take a look at www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/about/museums-sheffield-from-home.

88. Make **playdough** – follow instructions to make your own playdough. Why not make a 3D collage or playdough versions of a favourite book?

89. **Keep a list** of the stories you have read and put a happy or a sad face beside each one to show how it made you feel.

90. Bring a story to life by **using a puppet**. You could even make your own from an old sock. This puts the child at ease and also helps with early communication skills and confidence.

91. **Search around your garden** for insects and animals beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Can you learn a little about them by reading a book or searching online? Did you find any footprints or tracks? Can you do a little research to find out which insect or animal they belong to?



92. **Watch a film** and retell it in a variety of ways – using drawings, a comic strip, a poem or some writing.



93. **Misfit characters**...use old magazines to cut up pictures and create new characters to create your own story!

94. Create a magical **outdoor fairy or dinosaur garden**. Read on the internet what materials you might need to make it. Can it link to a book you have about fairies or dinosaurs?

95. Carolyn, ESCAL Volunteers says:

“Make a treasure box by decorating an egg carton and filling it with things collected outdoors. Create a story about your treasures and make sure the pirates don’t get it!”

96. What **nursery rhyme** do you know that goes with the story?

97. **Write a story or play** and then **make finger puppets** to tell your tale. Tell the story to your younger siblings or friends.

98. Why not **create your own book**? Make a lift the flap or moving story book. There are lots of instructions and ideas online. You could also create your own visual storybook with drawings. Visit www.mysterybook.com.



99. What can you do with a **cardboard box**? It could be a rocket to get to the moon, a car for the supermarket or a boat to treasure island. Can you write a story about it?

100. There are lots of **different questions** you could ask before, during and after reading. What about:

- What new word have you learned in the book and what does it mean?
- Did the story give you a surprise? What was it?
- Do you think the main character in the story was wearing the right clothes? What would you have dressed him or her in?
- What was the weather like in the story you read? Would it have changed the story if the weather had been different?

101. Remember to be **led by interests, read for enjoyment** and tune in to any hobbies children may have. Always show that we learn to read to be able to read for pleasure, opening up new skills and enjoyment!