



The Writing For Pleasure Centre

- Promoting research-informed writing teaching

A guide to reading with children

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Introduction

The mission of The Writing For Pleasure Centre is to help all young people become passionate and successful writers. We look to accomplish this goal by investigating what world-class writing teaching might be. We do this through:

- Our school residencies, teacher training institutes and workshops.
- Curriculum development and creating resources.
- Conducting, disseminating and publishing research.
- Working with children, teachers, school leaders, teacher-educators and charities.

We have developed our research-rich website and pedagogy to share the most effective teaching practices. It's our hope that teachers regard The Writing For Pleasure Centre website as a place where they can access a specialist network and continued professional development that is free.



The Research Base

For the past fifty years, research has been consistent about what great writing teaching involves. Despite this, we as teachers can be inundated by a variety of approaches and training, all promising a lot but often lacking the necessary grounding to be successful in the long-term. This is why our website and pedagogy is based on the following:

- Extensive scientific research into the most effective writing instruction.
- Case studies of what the best performing teachers of writing do that makes the difference.
- Our own research into a *Writing For Pleasure* pedagogy.
- The wisdom of professional writers.

If you're new to the idea of a *Writing For Pleasure* pedagogy, you can read all about it at writing4pleasure.com

The Writing For Pleasure Centre functions both as a think tank and as an action research community. The result is that we are continually engaged in sharing effective practices, case studies and research findings.

We are fortunate to be supported by our close links to national literacy associations like The UKLA and The National Literacy Trust as well as with academics, exceptional teachers of writing and teacher training universities both at home and abroad.

Finally, if you're interested in becoming more involved in our work, you can contact us at:

www.writing4pleasure.com/contact

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What Is It Good Young Readers Do?

<p>Connect With The Book</p> <p>Explain what they know about the book so far.</p> <p>Connect with the themes of the book.</p> <p>Relate parts of the book to their own lives and experiences.</p>	<p>Suggest</p> <p>Make logical, plausible or inventive suggestions as to what <i>could</i> happen next in the book or about the character(s) personality and intentions.</p>	<p>Question</p> <p>Ask ‘Looking’ questions: Find answers to their questions in the text.</p> <p>Ask ‘Clue’ questions: Use clues in the text to find answers.</p> <p>Ask ‘Thinking’ questions: Give their opinion on the text.</p>	<p>Clarify</p> <p>Ask for clarification about unknown words or phrases.</p> <p>Look to confirm they understand what’s going on.</p>
<p>Summarise</p> <p>Tell you the main events, actions, or ideas in the text so far.</p> <p>Cut out what isn’t needed and only tell you what is most important.</p>	<p>Think Aloud</p> <p>Read a few sentences or a paragraph and talk about their thoughts so far.</p>	<p>Visualise</p> <p>Develop a visual image of the written text.</p> <p>Draw about what they have read.</p>	<p>Reader In The Writer</p> <p>Develop a written text based on or in personal response to what they have read.</p>

What To Do When Reading Alongside Children

We learn to read so that we may read to learn, but more important is to learn a love of reading.
– Orin Cochrane

Your role as a supportive adult is to help children become ‘**reader thinkers**’. Thinking is intrinsic to reading. Thinking should happen after reading, thinking *must* happen before reading (as readers set up expectations of what the book will be about) and it *must* happen during reading (as readers confirm or disconfirm their predictions). As the co-reader, you must help children understand that you respect their thinking and share yours too.

The best things you can do when helping a child learn to read:

- Devote time to it. Make it a quality experience. Show your own interest and pleasure.
- See yourself a co-reader – take part and offer sensitive support. You’re not there simply to be read to but to engage in the text yourself too! Ask your own questions. Talk about the things it makes you think of too.
- Allow children to choose the text.
- Always remember, children are allowed to skip a word or two. They come back to it, they can guess what a word is if they want to. These are all strategies used by real-life good readers. Fluency and meaning are ultimately what’s important.

The worst things you can do when helping a child to read:

- Rush the experience.
- Ask children to read a text they haven’t chosen for themselves.
- Control the reading.
- Focus only on the decoding of the text – not socialising over the text.
- Insist on 100% accuracy in word-reading above everything else.
- Stop to correct errors immediately (don’t stop the child’s ‘flow’ or enjoyment of the text but instead come back to it later).
- Asking child to read a text ‘cold’, without talking about it or ‘warming it up’ beforehand.
- Leave no time for discussion or response.

How Do We Decode Text?

You may think that reading is all about pronouncing the words correctly and using only phonics or ‘sounding it out’. This isn’t the case and in fact sometimes this can slow a child’s reading right down if over used.

There are three tools that we all use to read, these are:

1. **Grapho-phonetic** – letters and the sounds they make.

But please also encourage children to also use:

2. **Semantic** –using what they know about the story to inform them of what a word might be. – This can sometimes be aided by using the letter sound at the beginning of the word.
3. **Syntactic** – using what they already know about the sentence – again, this can sometimes be aided by using the letter sound.

➔ Before you start reading, choose one of the following:

- Read a paragraph and have the child read the same paragraph immediately after.
- Alternatively, read with (in unison) and drop out and join in when you feel it is right to so (this can be done quietly, under breath).
- Share the reading. One page each.

➔ When you start reading:

- If you know some background about the book, share it with the child. This means they can begin reading knowing what to expect.
- If they have already started the book, have them briefly explain what the book is about or what happened last time.

➔ During reading, encourage the following:

- **Predicting**

Ask: what could it be? What's the opening sound of the word? Cover up the word and have them consider what it would be and actually, sometimes, simply give them the word.

- **Self-correcting**

Sometimes children will misread a word. That's OK - sometimes they will self-correct. You do not need to tackle every misread word, particularly if their choice makes sense in the context of the story.

- **Confirming**

Ask: does it make sense? Check the text – read it again?

- **Talk! Talk about both your responses to the text:** depending on level of the book - every paragraph/page or so.

So tell me, what have we just read?

What questions do you have?

What do you think will happen in next?

Does this book remind you of anything from your life?

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

If the author or character was here right now? What would you talk to them about?

➔ After reading:

Ask the child what they would give the book out of 10 so far and ask them why. If it is a low score, ask them if they wish to drop the book and choose a new one. Explain that they should always read the first 20 pages of a book before they drop it. After 20 pages, explain that it is fine to drop a book if you don't like it.

Ask them about their future reading plans – what have they got their eye on next?

What Should We Write In The Reading Record Books?

Here are some suggestions you can definitely focus on:

Attitude & Style:

- Does the child read with: pleasure, enthusiasm, commitment, involvement, interest, ease, expression, fluency, confidence, stamina, understanding, rhythm, appreciation, independence or pace?
- Has the child made comments about: theme, humour, sadness, worry, excitement or their own response – if so, what?
- Is the child willing/keen to talk about books with you; share/recommend them to other children or to you?

Strategies:

- ✓ Does the child use the three strategies above - Or does the child over-rely on one?
- ✓ Does the child read for meaning or sense?
- ✓ Does he/she self-correct?
- ✓ Do they have a “re-run” of some sentences if they are unsure or do they just continue on regardless?
- ✓ Read on and then go back and correct themselves?
- ✓ Do they flick back through the book to talk about something from earlier?
- ✓ Do they stop to talk to you about something they are thinking about?
- ✓ Does the child use context or pictures to predict what is coming?
- ✓ Does the child pay attention to word-structure, letters – and to the structure of language?
- ✓ Is the child progressing, developing, becoming more fluent and confident?
- ✓ Are they using voices and otherwise performing the text?

What Books Should My Child Be Reading And Where Can I Get Them?

Library

As a community, we are incredibly fortunate to still have access to a local library. This can be your first port of call when trying to find books your child might like to read. Michael Rosen recommends allowing your child to take a pile of say five books out of the library that they are interested in and to take them home to look at. If those five books don't end up raising their interest, you simply repeat the exercise until the right book is found!

Charity Shops

I would also point you in the direction of local charity shops which often have very high-quality children books at very affordable prices.

Savery Books (Ditchling Road By Fiveways)

Is a wonderful locally run second hand bookshop with a great array of children's books for as low as a £1. They will also purchase unwanted books from you and books can also be used as part exchange.

Bags Of Books (South Street, Lewes)

Is a great little independent children's bookshop in Lewes. They have ex-librarians who can offer lot of helpful advice on book choice.

The Book Nook (St Johns Place, Hove)

Another independent, again offering a lot of informed advice. They also have regular author talks and other special events. They are particularly good for high-quality non-fiction.

Waterstones (North Street, Brighton)

We are lucky to have a massive Waterstones in Brighton which has its own dedicated floor for children's books. It is split into sections and has books recommend for 7-9s and another for 9-11s. This can sometimes be really helpful if you're a bit unsure.

Amazon (Used)

There are now retailers within Amazon which sell second hand books for less than £3. I recommend using the feature which shows you recommended titles. To do this, simply view a book your child has enjoyed and you'll be given a list of other books which come recommended.

Good Reads

Is an app and website covering pretty much every book ever written. It's a place where people create reading lists (for adults and children) and share reviews and 'if you liked this book...' kind of recommendations.

@_Reading_Rocks_

#ReadingRocks is a community of educators and librarians who talk on Twitter about getting children reading. They are a wonderful source for recommending books for your child if you ask and give some background to what your child likes.

And finally...

- Please feel free to contact us at www.writing4pleasure.com/contact



- If you're interested in developing your writing teaching, we offer a wide-range of evidence-informed CPD including our popular school residency programme, teacher workshops and multi-day institutes. Find out more at www.writing4pleasure.com/training

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