Stromness Academy
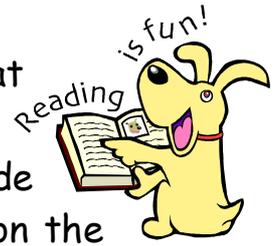

LITERACY ACROSS LEARNING

A Guide to Promoting & Improving

READING

Introduction to Guide

This booklet is designed to show how pupils and teachers at our school can work together with parents / carers in order to promote and improve reading skills. This guide recognises that reading is not just about books. Reading on the internet and through social networking are growing practices.

We hope that a reading guide will be helpful. There is overlap with writing as they are such closely related skills. Our main aim is to support pupils and in this booklet we hope to outline a few straightforward ways which can help pupils to improve their reading.

Literacy within the context of *Curriculum for Excellence*

Literacy, as defined by *Curriculum for Excellence* is:

> *"the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful."*

Literacy across Learning covers the inter-related themes of 'listening and talking', 'reading' and 'writing' and aims to:

> *Promote the development of skills in using language.*
> *Apply knowledge about language.*
> *To enable young people to communicate effectively.*

Reading within the Context of *Curriculum for Excellence*

Traditionally we assume reading to be associated with the written or printed word on paper in books, magazines, etc but within the current context of the *Curriculum for Excellence Literacy across Learning* pupils are expected to encounter a wide range of 'texts'.

> *"a text is the medium through which ideas, experiences, opinions and information can be communicated."*

These include:

> **comics, newspapers and magazines**
> **films, games and TV programmes**
> **text messages, blogs and social networking sites**
> **web pages, catalogues and directories**
> **novels, short stories, plays, poems**
> **reference texts, the spoken word**
> **advertisements, promotional leaflets**
> **charts, maps, graphs and timetables**
> **labels, signs and posters**
> **CVs, letters and emails**
> **recipes, manuals and instructions**
> **reports and reviews**

In the fast-changing, information-rich modern world, all kinds of texts are important. They are supported in both learning and leisure.

We need to encourage pupils to exercise choice and flexibility in their reading and awareness of a range of media. Young people may be keen to listen to audio-books, or read graphic novels, or develop a blog. Books will continue to be part of these personal choices.

"People who read for fun are usually better at it."   - www.connexions-direct.com [accessed 25/8/10]

Purpose of Reading

Reading for Enjoyment:

To entertain ourselves

Relaxation

Reading for Learning:

To find out about things - finding information

Learning subject matter for school courses

To read and understand instructions

Benefits of Reading

Stimulates imagination

Widens vocabulary

Improves understanding

Improves general knowledge

Increased confidence in writing

Encourages creativity

Improvement in spelling and punctuation

Encourages faster reading
(useful in exams)

Improved overall literacy

Enhances ability to focus & concentrate

Helps to accept other cultures or religions

"Reading is like jogging for the brain – get your feet up kids, and get reading!" - Spike Milligan

Regular reading is an essential life skill and impinges on all aspects of life. It is a key skill useful in all subjects in school as well as helping in the 'outside' world in further and higher education and in a future career.

How can we help pupils to enjoy reading?

We feel that enjoyment and choice are key motivators. At school, we try to help pupils choose suitable fiction or non-fiction which interests them.

Pupils sometimes need help and encouragement to find appropriate reading and this booklet outlines some ways in which we can all help. If suitable and interesting reading material can be provided, reading is usually enjoyable even for reluctant readers.

What can they read?

We would like pupils to read widely, but realise that some need encouragement and support. The school librarian, Mrs Sinclair ensures that the library is stocked with some of the latest teen fiction, classics, quick reads, graphic novels, poetry and general information books so pupils can select from a wide range of resources.

Traditional books

With 600 years of novels, the influence of traditional books is undoubted. It is an important part of any education to be familiar with the culture and tradition these display. No matter what your reading level there are always novels appropriate to your interest and ability. From vampires to goalkeepers the range is vast and there always is the opportunity to dive in to non-fiction to broaden knowledge. Research, background or general interest reading develops general knowledge, vocabulary and expression and talking and writing skills.

In addition to traditional fiction and non-fiction books, we recommend some other material as being helpful in encouraging the development of reading.

Graphic Novels and Comics

In the past comics were often regarded as disposable, and they, along with graphic novels, weren't treated as legitimate reading material. In recent years, with the surge of Japanese Manga titles and the need to encourage reluctant readers, such titles have become useful tools in the reading and literacy arsenal.

Comics combine images and texts to create greater meaning than either could alone. Comics use many of the visual reading skills that students have already developed from interaction with film, television and video games, but combine them with a unique grammar, which expresses tone and emotion through typefaces, formatting, design and layout.

Comics are a medium which incorporates any genre and there is a vast array of titles available, from humorous comic strips and adaptations of prose classics to historical fiction and academic texts. Readers tend to find them easily accessible, despite comics' sophistication and complexity.

Benefits of Graphic novels:
- Attractive to teens
- Fewer words on the page
- Visually stimulating
- Accessible to even the most reluctant reader
- Bridge between genres
- Vocabulary building
- Bridge to further reading

Magazines / Journals

Sometimes pupils who don't enjoy books will respond to magazines. A small selection of magazines is available for reading at lunchtimes or after school. There are also a small number of subject specialist journals available.

Newspapers

The local newspaper is available each week and we have many back copies which pupils enjoy reading.

Back copies of national newspapers are often obtained from the Orkney Library (Stromness) and used to up-date the Project Topic files giving pupils access to issues on current topics for project work.

Audio books

Audio books can help stimulate interest or can provide support for pupils whose reading skills do not match their interest level. Again audio books can be a good way to start reading more difficult books and pupils can listen while doing other tasks.

Internet

Using the internet requires reading skills for users to make best use of it. It has given us access to vast amounts of information and it has become a part of everyday life for most. It requires a different approach to reading. In particular pupils need to be able to select and evaluate relevant information from many web sources and be able to see beyond flashy images and graphics. Pupils and parents need to recognise that not all information on the internet is reliable and any information should be checked against other websites and books such as encyclopaedias. When being used for research projects it should be used to supplement and complement information gained from paper-based resources.

Research   *Social Networking*   *Webpages*

News   *Email*   *Blogs*   *Instant messaging*

Communication & Collaboration

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." *- Richard Steele, Tatler, 1710*

How do you select a book to read?

We recommend the following method to help pupils make informed choices. We call it BRILL!

When selecting a book you might have the following in mind:

- Favourite author
    - Favourite genre [eg. Fantasy, Crime]
        - Favourite subject [if looking at non-fiction]
            - Recommendation from someone else.

OR if you don't know what you want you will go on **First Impressions**:

- Interesting title
    - Colourful cover
        - Length of book

Once you have spotted a book you will need to decide whether it is right for you. Use **BRILL** to help you make that decision.

Blurb   Read the <u>Blurb</u> [usually on the back cover]

Read   <u>Read</u> a few pages or the first chapter.

Interest   Does it <u>Interest</u> you?

Look   <u>Look</u> for pictures / illustrations.

Length   Check the <u>Length</u>. Do you want to read a short or long book?

If you are still not sure **ASK** a teacher, a librarian [school or public] or a friend.

"I read because one life isn't enough, and in the pages of a book I can be anybody."
- Richard Peck

How else can young people find books to suit them?

1. **Fiction Booklists**

   There are a number of booklists produced which are based on library stock. These are continually being up-dated and include various types of fiction such as historical novels, fantasy, science fiction and classics. Copies of these lists are available from the Library.

2. **Other Suggestions / Recommendations**

   To help pupils make selections they can refer to 'Teen Titles' magazine which has reviews from pupils across the UK for pupils in the UK. Recommendations from other pupils are frequently displayed in the library.

3. **Subject Departments**

   Many departments stock subject specific books and will loan them to interested pupils. The English Department has age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction book boxes. The Support for Learning Department has books for pupils who find reading difficult. Please contact the Principal Teacher directly should you or your child feel that some extra reading material would be helpful or assistance needed.

   Modern Languages are keen to promote reading in the foreign language. There exists a number of excellent websites which offer reading opportunities to pupils at different levels. (See list of websites at end of this booklet.)

4. **Visiting the Orkney Library & Archive**

   Both Stromness and Kirkwall Libraries have excellent collections of fiction and non-fiction for young adults. Stromness Library: 850907; Kirkwall: 873316

5. **Buying Books**

   Purchasing books is another option. Visit the local bookshops, whose staff can recommend books or browse online bookstores.

"The trouble with a book is that you never know what's in it until it's too late." - Jeanette Winterson

How else does the school help develop reading?

1. Library Opening
   Apart from being open before school and at lunchtimes, the library is open after school on Tuesdays until 4.30pm when transport home is available. It is also open until 4pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays (subject to staff meetings). Pupils are advised to see the Librarian in advance if they wish to use the library at these times.

2. Pupil Librarian Training
   This is an opportunity for pupils of all ages to help in the Library. Here they can learn how to find resources and gain some basic organisation skills. It gives recognition for different levels of proficiency achieved. Any interested pupils should see Mrs Sinclair. We have recently embarked on the *Youth Achievement Award* for pupil librarian development, too.

3. Reading Group
   This is for keen readers (pupils and staff) who meet to discuss their reading and make recommendations for the library. Light refreshments are served. More details from Mrs Sinclair. This only runs if there is enough interest.
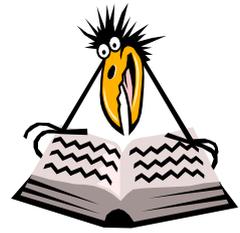
4. English Classes
   We run a '**Reading Record** scheme for which rewards individual reading. Bronze, silver and gold certificates are awarded. S1 and S2 classes have a regular weekly chance to visit the library and pupils should always have a reading book. S3 and S4 classes also have opportunities to go to the library on a regular basis and the seniors are encouraged to use the library for their studies as well as personal reading.

5. Special Events
   Pupils are given opportunities to take part in special events which are held annually. These include National Poetry Day in October, 'Spooky Happenings' storytelling at Hallowe'en or World Book Day in March.

"You want weapons? We are in a library! Books, the best weapons in the world. This room's the best arsenal we could have!" *- Dr Who (David Tennant) Series 2 Episode 2 Tooth & Claw*

In what other ways can we encourage reading?

1. Regular reading
   Just 20 – 30 minutes a night could make a difference. Pupils need encouragement to establish a routine which soon becomes enjoyable.

2. Availability
   Pupils can also benefit from having a wide choice of reading materials. Encouraging pupils to borrow from The Orkney Library as well as the school library can provide more choice.

3. Discuss reading
   Pupils can find it very helpful to discuss their reading at home and see and sample what friends and family are reading.

4. Reading with others
   Pupils could read aloud to younger brothers and sisters. Parents could also read aloud to pupils as many youngsters and indeed adults still enjoy being read to.

5. Extend reading
   Encourage pupils to read beyond their comfort zone by trying out different genres / types of books. They need to challenge themselves to try something different to their usual choice of reading.

6. Link movies and computer games to reading
   Many movies are based on novels. Use this to encourage pupils to read the book. Conversely, some movies and TV programmes are turned into novelisations and can also be used to encourage reading.

   Computer games feature in most young people's lives. Many provide on-screen information which they can be encouraged to read. Some are based on historical time periods and may have snippets of information that can be read. Encourage them to follow up any interesting information in books from the school or public library. Many are set in fantastic realms or based on science-fiction which can lead on to reading sci-fi and fantasy books.

7. <u>Websites</u>

Below are some websites which parents and/or pupils might wish to consult and which we think are helpful.

Cool Reads - www.cool-reads.co.uk   Books for 10-15 year old readers by 10-15 year old reviewers.

The Scottish Book Trust - http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/

Read Together - www.readtogether.co.uk

Reading is Fundamental - www.rif.org.uk

Reading Connect - www.literacytrust.org.uk/reading_connects s

Amazon - www.amazon.co.uk Useful for giving reviews and recommendations.

Blackwell's - http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk/jsp/welcome.jsp An alternative to Amazon

Teen Reading - www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/tipsenc/tipsencourage.htm Tips to encourage reading.

Literacy across Learning - http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/learningacrossthecurriculum/literacy/index.asp

Parent Zone - http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/index.asp (Learning & Teaching Scotland)

Modern Languages

Primolo - www.primolo.de S1/2

Young Miss - www.youngmiss.de Youth magazine

Didier Bravo - www.didierbravo.com S3 - 6

Momes - www.momes.net S3 - 6

6. <u>**Tell us what you think**</u>

We welcome parental involvement and obviously successful learning is based on a partnership between parent, pupil and school. Please contact Miss Learmonth or the Librarian, Mrs Sinclair, directly if you have any further suggestions.

December 2010
F. Sinclair, Librarian

"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." *- Dr. Seuss, I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!*