



Stromness Academy

reading

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READING

parents' guide



Introduction to Guide

This booklet is designed to show how pupils and teachers at our school can work together with parents / guardians in order to promote and improve reading skills. This guide is similar to the one on writing which has already been published and was well received.

We hope that a reading guide will also be helpful, although there will be some overlap as reading and writing 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.

Why Read?

To find out about things



To read and understand instructions

For entertainment and leisure



We would like all pupils to read frequently, because as well as being an essential life-skill, it can be enjoyable and informative. Accurate speed reading is also a key skill in all subjects and very important in examinations. Other benefits of reading can include improvements in spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and written expression.

How can we help pupils to enjoy reading?

We feel that enjoyment is the key motivator. At school, we try to help pupils choose suitable fiction or non-fiction which interests them. Pupils sometimes need a lot of help 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. Recently, the School Librarian, Mrs Sinclair, has been awarded a grant from the Scottish Executive under the Home Reading Initiative. This has allowed us to extend our reading resources and to respond to pupils' suggestions.

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

1. Magazines / Journals

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

2. Newspapers

The library stocks a daily national newspaper. The two local newspapers are also available each week and we have many back copies which pupils enjoy reading.



3. Audio books



We are extending our selection of audio books as we believe these 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.

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 Blurb [usually on the back cover]

Read Read a few pages or the first chapter.

Interest Does it Interest you?

Look Look for pictures / illustrations.

Length Check the Length. 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.

How else can they 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 English Teachers or the Librarian. They will also be available on the Library web pages when the school website comes online.

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. In particular the English Department has age appropriate fiction and non-fiction book boxes. The Support for Learning Department has books to suit pupils who can find reading difficult. Please contact the Principal Teacher directly should you and / 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.]

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]. It is usually also open on Tuesday evenings from 6-8pm. Pupils are advised to see the Librarian in advance if they wish to use the library at these times.

2. Library Assistant Scheme

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 is a certificated scheme with recognition for different levels of proficiency achieved. Any interested pupils should see Mrs Sinclair.

3. Reading Group S3-S6

This is for keen readers [pupils and staff] who meet fortnightly during Thursday lunchtime to discuss their reading and make recommendations for the library. Light refreshments are served. More details from Mrs Sinclair.

4. English Classes

We are piloting a new scheme for S1 classes 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.

5. Special Events

Pupils are given opportunities to take part in special events which are held annually. These include World Book Day in March, a Book Fair in September and National Poetry Day in October.

In what other ways can we encourage reading?



1. Regular reading

We recommend regular reading - just 20 - 30 minutes a night could make a big difference. Pupils sometimes 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 public libraries can provide more choice.

3. Discussing 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. Websites

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

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

www.readtogether.co.uk

www.rif.org.uk Reading is Fundamental

www.readingconnects.org.uk

www.amazon.co.uk Amazon is useful for giving reviews and recommendations.

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

Modern Languages

www.primolo.de S1/2

www.juma.de/v.php?fl=welcome.html S4-6 Youth magazine

www.jonet.de Youth magazine

www.youngmiss.de Youth magazine

www.didierbravo.com S3 - 6

www.tomlitto.com S3 - 6

www.momes.net S3 - 6

www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/c4modernlanguages S1/2 French / German

6. Tell us what you think

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

