

Why is reading so important?

- Once you find it easy enough, it's fun!
- It encourages language development
- Fuels imagination, creativity and inquisitiveness
- Helps develop understanding of social interaction
- Improves academic achievement in all areas by improving cognitive development over time
- Provides some tranquility in increasingly hectic days
- Develops understanding of the world

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By reading I have..

- been to an alien planet
- taken a tour of a magical chocolate factory
- fought against Ancient Greek Monsters
- lived through the Holocaust

What does reading offer you?

From an imagination and understanding of the world point of view, we learn so much from reading stories – and pick up so much fact from fiction. This picture is a rather obvious metaphor but it shows the world that a child can have inside their imaginations and the experiences they can gain from reading that they may not ever be able to gain from their own lives

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By reading I have..

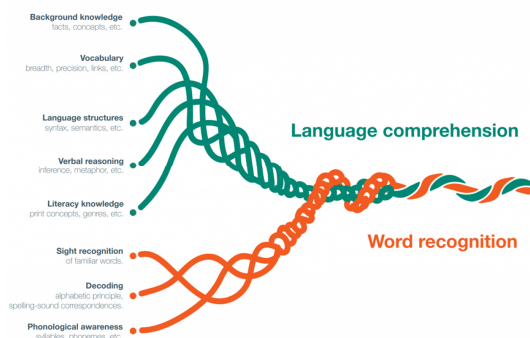
- been to an alien planet
- taken a tour of a magical chocolate factory
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These are just some of the books that are studied in class across the school that allow children to experience such things

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What is reading?

FIGURE 1: THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING



What is reading? – a collection of skills that combine together:

This is Hollis Scarborough's Reading Rope. He is a leading dyslexia researcher whose theory is that there are many strategies that bind together when a competent reader reads. Fluency is the result of this coming together of different strategies; we might see fluency as a skill that we can develop in children by teaching them a range of strategies.

Often, when it comes to the initial stages of teaching reading in Early Years and KS1, the focus is placed solely on phonics and decoding, but recognising words on sight is far more important once a reader is beyond the stage of learning to read that involves decoding. When a competent

reader reads, unless they are reading a very complex scientific text, for example, they will be reading most words by sight rather than by decoding them. With children, the aim is to teach them phonic recognition and skills in decoding so that they are eventually familiar with all the words they will commonly come across. If children don't get to the point where they are reading words on sight, they won't be able to read fluently.

At this point, they are able to spend less time worrying about what sounds there are in words and more on the comprehension or understanding of the text – the green strands. The green strands are all developed by more reading – for example if you read more books you will have more background knowledge which will allow you to access more of the text more easily. If you have read lots of horror books you will be able to infer more from the inclusion of darkness, creaking and being alone in a bedroom than if not; it will heighten your expectations and interest in the text. A lot of the strategies for accessing the green strands are picked up automatically, and are also focused on at school in reading lessons

Year 3 Reading expectations:

In age-appropriate texts:

- read aloud many words quickly and accurately without overt sounding and blending
- sound out many unfamiliar words accurately using phonic knowledge
- To read accurately and at a speed that is sufficient to focus on understanding rather than on decoding words
- To use a range of different strategies to read and understand unfamiliar vocabulary:
- To use a range of phonic strategies to decode most new words outside the spoken vocabulary (including using syllables, prefixes and suffixes)
- To use knowledge of root words, suffixes and prefixes to read and understand new words
- To use the context of a sentence to help read unfamiliar words

These are the basics of what we would expect an average Year 3 child to be able to do in reading by the end of Year 3. However, these expectations are almost exactly the same for all year groups (age-appropriate texts) but the emphasis tends to be placed more on the green strands (the understanding skills) from the previous slides as children get older or more proficient.

Most of this can be summarised into: In texts that are appropriate for their age, children should be able to read most words by sight so can understand what is being read and then is able to 'read' unfamiliar words using phonics, morphology (bits of words) and working out what the word means using what is going on around it. It's exactly the same in Year 6 but the words tend to be more advanced.

Sound out many unfamiliar words accurately using phonic knowledge. Why is this tricky?

The English Language has:

- 26 letters creating 44 phonemes (sounds) in 144 combinations to form around half a million words in current use.
- 21 consonants; spoken English uses 24 consonant sounds.
- 20 spoken vowel sounds, but only 5 vowel letters.
- **How do you recognise or write a long a sound?**

Sounding out and decoding is tricky because we have so many different ways of writing the many different sounds in the English language. Once children are confident in the different phases of phonics, they have a good chance of reading most words because 85% of words in English are decodable with phonic rules.

On Saturday, the **forgetful** carpenter left his spanner at my property.

For-get-ful

Strategies for tackling tricky words:

When we are reading with children, we have a tendency to listen to them read and then they will come to a word that they get stuck on, such as forgetful in the example shown here.

Children tend to do one of a few things in this situation:

- Spend ages on the first letter or syllable then give up on the rest
- Just substitute a word that they almost have in their sight recognition bank and say that instead
- They might ask
- They might sound it out (if we're lucky) which would usually enable them to continue because they would probably know what the word 'forgetful' means because they will have heard it before, but perhaps not recognise it in its written form yet.

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By this point, as an adult, we may tell our children what the word is so we can continue with the text. However, the process of chunking the word up (perhaps by covering parts of it and taking it a syllable or 3 letter segment at a time) is very important because it is practising those phonics skills and reinforcing the link between symbols and sounds that we spend so long developing with early reading.

All the words in this particular sentence on the slide can be decoded in the same way because they are in the 85% of decodable words – we just need to look at the chunks and then try to put the chunks together. In year 3, you see many children with strong understanding of the rules of phonics who are very skilled at using this technique but are not quite there with the sight reading yet so there is a lot of f-or-g-e-t-f-u-l (sounding out the individual sounds) taking place before the word can be read as a whole. Encouraging them to combine chunks of the word can lead them to being able to decode the whole word more easily as there are then fewer chunks to remember.

So, when you read with your child, please encourage them to tackle such words rather than letting them substitute or give up. If they don't read those words, they won't understand what they have read, so the whole experience carries no reward for them as a reader.

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To use knowledge of root words, suffixes and prefixes to read and understand new words

disgraceful	dis-grace-ful
premature	pre-mature
misled	mis-led

girlfriend
postman
undertaker

Breaking words into shorter, recognisable chunks:

Another way of looking at some of the words we may stumble over when reading is also to see if they have morphemes (chunks of meaning) in them. At school, we teach the meanings of various prefixes and suffixes (beginnings and endings) of words so discussing these is also a way in to revealing meaning. (dis- and -ful and pre- and mis-)

Also, look out for words within words – is the word just made up of other, smaller, recognisable words just put together? The three words in the second list may look intimidating to younger children as sight words due to their length but they can all be split into words that the children have come across and can probably sight read from KS1 – this is also a valuable tactic in reverse for spelling.

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Reading Fluently – what works?

- **Adult modelling** - fluent reading of a text is modelled by an adult or peer and pupils then read the same text aloud with appropriate feedback; and

- **repeated reading**—pupils re-read a short and meaningful passage a set number of times or until they reach a suitable level of fluency.



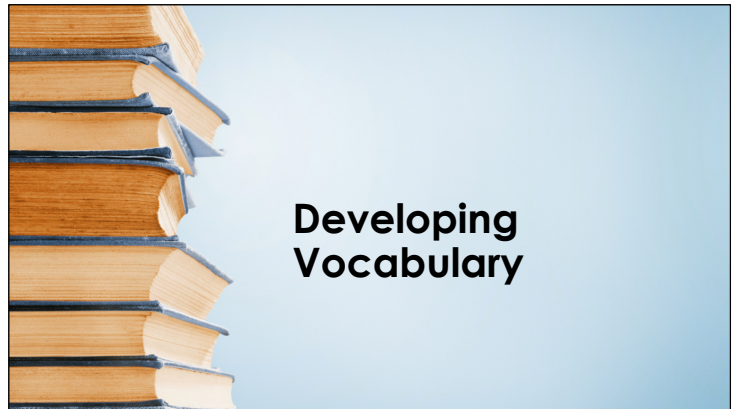
How to encourage fluent reading:

Children need to hear what fluent reading sounds like. If they don't, they won't be able to do it themselves. Perhaps you find a page in the reading book that has a few words that your child can't read by sight but does know in their spoken vocabulary. While they read along so they can sight read the words you are saying, you read the page aloud, as clearly and fluently as you can, then ask your child to copy what you have done. Give them appropriate feedback on what they did well or practise bits that were stumbled over – this is also good for focusing on things like how speech marks or exclamation marks may affect the delivery.

Children aren't going to be able to sight read words unless they see them more than once. Again, you may find a paragraph in your child's book that they

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struggled with. Rather than skip over it and tell them the words, set them a challenge of reading it accurately and get them to read it a few times until it is. At school, we sometimes use timers for this and challenge children to read it perfectly and improve their time as well. Any mistake means they go back to the start of the sentence they have begun and read from there which adds more time on. The quicker they get, the better about reading they feel = quick gratification and instant success for the child.



Vocabulary Development

Going back to the strands, one of the main 'green' ones is vocabulary, and this is the main aspect of reading that gets more complex. Once the basics are in place, the only thing you can make more difficult about the reading material itself are the actual words in it. To put it in a school context for a moment, on the next slide is an extract from the 2016 Year 6 Reading SATS text paper:

Dawn was casting spun-gold threads across a rosy sky over Sawubona Game Reserve as Martine Allen took a last look around to ensure there weren't any witnesses. She leaned forward like a jockey on the track, wound her fingers through a silver mane, and cried, 'Go, Jemmy, go.'

The white giraffe sprang forward so suddenly that she was almost unseated, but she recovered and, wrapping her arms around his neck, quickly adjusted to the familiar rhythm of Jemmy's rocking-horse stride. They swept past the dam and a herd of bubble-blowing hippos, past a flock of startled egrets lifting from the trees like white glitter, and out onto the open savannah plain. An early morning African chorus of doves, crickets and go-away birds provided a soundtrack.

A Year 6 Reading SATS test extract:

Thinking about the strands/different reading skills mentioned earlier, there is an awful lot of understanding you need for this – background knowledge of game reserves, figurative language and syntax would certainly be useful but the thing that stands out the most is the complexity of the vocabulary and how many higher-level words there are in each sentence. Sight reading of this age 11? And then the children have to understand it and answer comprehension questions on it as well! You can't access this, or any more mature reading material without accessing the vocabulary, and so that is why thinking about developing vocabulary is key when reading.

What are the implications?

11 year old readers need a vocabulary of around 20,000 root words to read with 'minimal disturbance'

If 5 yr olds have around 7000 root words, they need to learn about 800 new words each school year to reach: 10,000 root words by end KS1

Another 2500 words per year to reach: 20,000 root words by end KS2 to access SATS successfully

If we just do this at school - 5 -10 new words per day!

Developing Vocabulary – Why is it important?

Research shows that the main way in which we acquire new vocabulary is by reading. High quality conversations and access to role models – e.g. parents – who model decent vocabulary and engage their children in conversation is also a significant factor but, in terms of developing the words we don't use in our everyday speech, we usually meet them first in a book, and normally fiction books because story authors tend to play with language more than those presenting information. The majority of the words we are talking about here are not scientific terms, they are synonyms – different words with the same meaning as other words – and the reason we have so many of them is due to the history of our country and the variety of languages that, over time, have had their words incorporated into the English language. We have a rich and varied

language; unfortunately that means there are a lot of words to learn!

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Developing Vocabulary – How?

1. Read to your children
2. Discuss new vocabulary before reading
3. Work out the meaning of words in context.
4. Encourage your children to read for pleasure

Strategies for developing vocabulary:

1. Read to your children.
This is so important. The perception that reading to children is a pre-school activity does exist, but if you think that children develop so much vocabulary from hearing their parents read to them in sharing a book when they are little, why should this stop? As a school, we are making sure that children are read to more frequently, basing parts of our curriculum around class novels and really encouraging teachers to be role models for storytelling. It exposes children to books they cannot read independently, gives them a flavour of the world of books that is waiting for them and opens rich discussion about the plot and the vocabulary that is used to narrate that plot. This also isn't just about vocabulary, it presents books in a different way and allows you to

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demonstrate how a story should be told. The amount of children who report that they have read all the flat Stanley books, or discovered Michael Morpurgo, or read all of Roald Dahl's books because they heard their teacher read one of them aloud in the classroom is enough to show that it is a worthwhile activity.

2. Discuss new vocabulary – if you just tell a child what a word means once, they will struggle to remember it. Try to put it in a new sentence, ask your child to put it in a sentence. E.g. *imperative*:

It is imperative that you turn off the gas.
I am so imperative right now.

Which one is correct? The Project X books that some children in Key Stage 2 bring home introduce new words in the front cover to help with this, but scanning down the page in any book and just picking out anything obvious before reading can make it more fluent and easier to understand when your child reads aloud.

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Work out the meaning of words in context.

I held my nose as the terrible **odour** reached me.

Katrina looked her classmate up and down several times and smiled.

"What a beautiful dress, Annie," she said **ghdlically**.

Working out the meaning of new words in context:

Sometimes we can come across words that are new to us and we don't know what they mean, but the other words around it can help. Many unfamiliar words can simply be replaced by a familiar synonym to aid understanding of the text – 'Come up with another word you could put in there so it still makes sense' – odour/smell.

In the second example, the word in italics doesn't even exist, but we can still have a go at working it out by the words that come before it. Even if we aren't correct, we *might* be.

Possibilities for this word? Sweetly, sarcastically, enviously, encouragingly. We don't know but, if we had read the rest of the book so far, we might know more

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about Katrina and Annie's relationship and be able to make a better guess based upon how the characters are presented by the author – bringing in our previous knowledge to the situation. This is a valuable discussion that will help to embed vocabulary met for the first time and as independent reading improves, it is something that readers tend to do automatically in their heads because they have much greater understanding of everything else that is going on in the book.

At this point in reading, it would also be a good opportunity to 'test' your child's understanding of what they have read so far. How does Katrina feel about Annie at this point? Whatever the word **ghdically** means can radically alter the answer to that question: What has happened so far in the book to make Katrina hate/admire/envy Annie so much?

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But what about 'comprehension'?

Prediction – what's going to happen and how do you know?

Questioning – Get them to ask you questions about the text to 'catch you out'

Summarising – say what's just happened in your own words

Inference – how do you know that, even though it doesn't say it specifically?

Aside from reading, what about demonstrating understanding?

The key to understanding a text is to understand the words in it, but how can you help to develop the other types of response to texts that they will be expected to demonstrate at school? In a nutshell, the main reading strategies can be practised at home and at school, on any page of any book your child is reading, and they are:

Prediction – what's going to happen next and how do you know based upon what has happened so far?

Questioning – Get your child to ask you quiz questions about the text to 'catch you out' and show that they have taken in what has happened.

Summarising – Ask your child to say what's just

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happened in their own words

Inference – Reading between the lines. How do you know that, even though it doesn't say it specifically? What is a character feeling at this point? How can you tell? (perhaps by their actions or what they say)

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Encouraging children to read for pleasure

There is increasing competition for children's time – even children that read a lot probably do less than those of the same age 10 or 20 years ago. Reading requires a bit of effort, is active rather than passive but can be incredibly rewarding provided children are fluent enough readers to really get into a book – so the level of book they are attempting is crucial. If they can't access it, they won't enjoy it.

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Pupil A reads for 20 mins per day	Pupil B reads for 5 mins per day	Pupil C reads for 1 minute per day
7300 minutes per year	1825 minutes per year	365 minutes per year
Equivalent to 20 days at school	Equivalent to 5 days at school	Equivalent to 1 day at school

A context for why reading is so important.

Looking at the examples given on the slide, just imagine how much more fluent you would be, how much more vocabulary you would meet, how many different worlds you would have explored, if you were pupil A rather than Pupil B or C.



1. Read to your children
2. Model fluent reading
3. Encourage them to decode independently – sound out words and look for word chunks
4. Re-read passages until fluent
5. Discuss new vocabulary before reading and work out the meaning of words in context.
6. Encourage your children to read for pleasure and to complete tasks on their bingo cards – be enthusiastic about books!

A summary of the strategies we can use to help our children become more fluent and engaged readers.