

Reading For Pleasure: A Whole School Approach

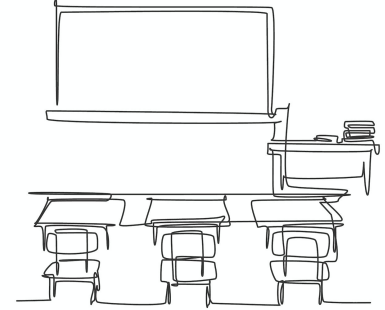
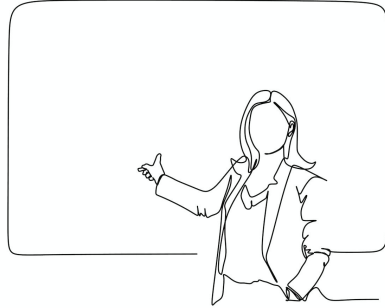
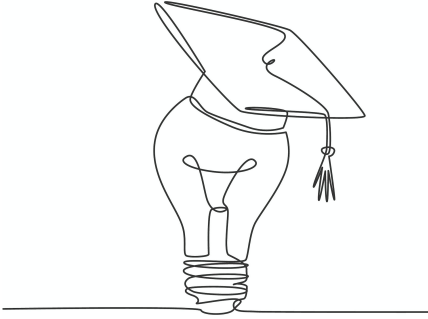
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Classroom Ideas, Teacher Training & School Resources

Reading For Pleasure: A Whole School Approach



The Importance of This Approach

Why it should be a priority in every school

1

Practice + Pedagogy

Best practice in reading for pleasure

2

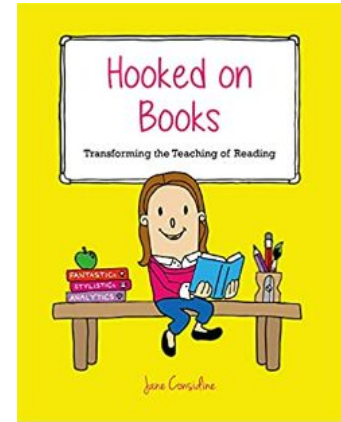
Whole School Implementation

Practical ideas and planning

3

This resource is inspired by 'Hooked On Books' by Jane Considine (2017), as well as general best practice from my experience and research.

In her book, Jane seeks to transform the teaching of reading based on her fundamental principles in order to convert struggling readers into book lovers. She has been involved in supporting reading in schools since 2000 and advocates the importance of reading for pleasure being the biggest single predictor of academic success.

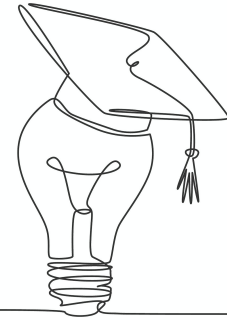


[Find 'Hooked On Books' on Amazon](#)

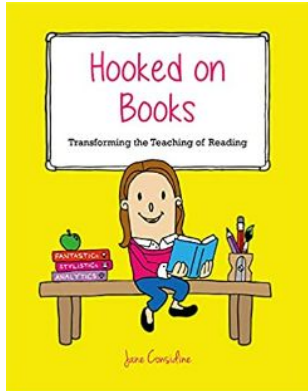
Part 1

The Importance of This Approach

Why it should be a priority in every school



If teachers only had one job to do, then it should be bestowing the gift of reading. Without reading, a child's world shrinks and begins to narrow. Opportunities are limited, doors begin to close and self-esteem crumbles.



Why is teaching reading a moral duty?

As teachers, we already understand how important it is to read. However, it doesn't always hit home until we look at the statistics for the implications of not being able to read well. Reading is fundamental in our society.

Considine states that it comes as no surprise that the majority of the UK's unemployed population is barely literate.

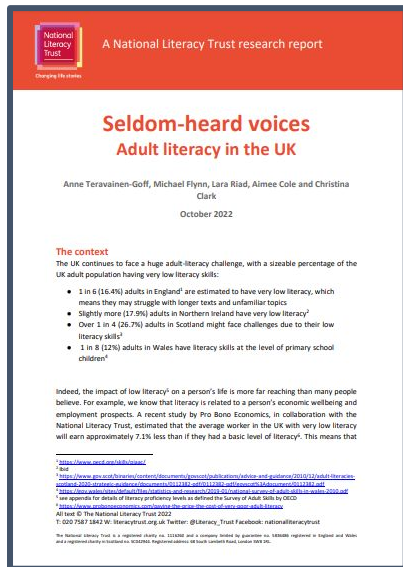
An estimated nine million adults of working age have low basic skills.



[Literacytrust.org.uk](https://www.literacytrust.org.uk) through their research, have found that...

In October 2022, the National Literacy Trust published a research report on [adult literacy](#). Their main findings:

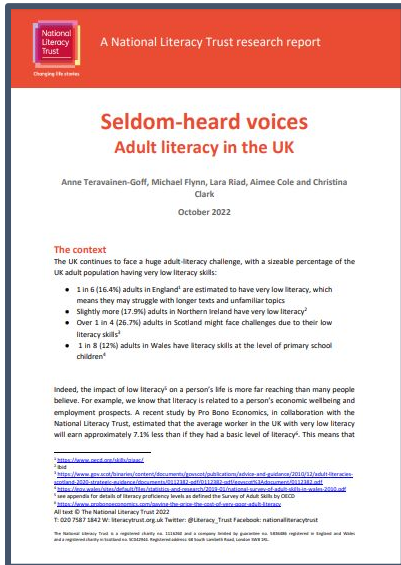
- 1 in 6 (16.4%) adults in England are estimated to have very low literacy, which means they may struggle with longer texts and unfamiliar topics
- Slightly more (17.9%) adults in Northern Ireland have very low literacy
- Over 1 in 4 (26.7%) adults in Scotland might face challenges due to their low literacy skills.
- 1 in 8 (12%) adults in Wales have literacy skills at the level of primary school children.



This study provides new insight into how it feels for adults who have struggled in this area, often they had negative experiences of school.

“I would like to read and write properly and go on at a certain level, so I wouldn’t look so stupid. I mean I’m not saying people say I’m stupid; but in their mind, they might be thinking that.”

“I didn’t go to school, didn’t like school, hated it. That’s probably where ... like you know. I couldn’t see how school was helping me with work, if you know what I mean. I didn’t ... In my mind, I couldn’t see how it was going to help me, you know?”



The report concludes that the UK continues to face a huge adult-literacy challenge, which adds to the reinforcement of an intergenerational cycle of disadvantage.

The National Literacy Trust works with various communities and the prison system (as notably, the literacy levels of the prison population remain significantly lower than the general population), to combat some of the barriers to engagement.



Misconceptions

Some may argue that the school system is much improved since the current generation of adults with low literacy levels were at school. It is a consideration that teaching and learning is indeed of a higher quality overall. However, the barriers are still there whether they are from a school budget or a socio-economic viewpoint.



There is also a misconception that those with low literacy levels also have less potential for being successful readers. Partly due to factors such as SEND or lower tolerance in conforming to the school system.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the barriers such as lack of understanding of teaching methods for pupils with SEND such as dyslexia or lack of support with challenges from a pupil's home life have been too many. Many of the people this applies to have a great many skills in a variety of areas. As a profession, we need the expertise and resources to support all children effectively.

'Cause I Ain't Got a Pencil

I woke myself up, because we ain't got an alarm clock

Dug in the dirty clothes basket, cause ain't nobody washed my uniform

Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark, cause the lights ain't on

Even got my baby sister ready, cause my mama wasn't home.

Got us both to school on time, to eat us a good breakfast.

Then when I got to class the teacher fussed,

Cause I ain't got no pencil.

By Joshua T. Dickerson

Here is a [TT version!](#)

Reading For Pleasure: A Whole School Approach

Ask your extended school community these questions in order to get a flavour of literacy barriers that parents face. You may wish to focus on key parents. Asking them sensitively and in person would also be beneficial.

Did you enjoy school?	If not, what were the things that stopped you enjoying it?
How was your school attendance?	If you did not attend regularly, what was the reason?
Did you find learning easy?	If not what would have helped you?
What were your parents views on school and education?	How have these views influenced yours and your children's views?
Would you say you are a confident reader now?	If not, what are your main areas of difficulty?
Would you be interested in being supported further with literacy?	How would you like to be supported e.g. help with form filling in, CVs, reading classes etc?
Were there any other barriers to your learning at school?	If so, what would have helped you overcome them?

Some parents may not be willing to share information but others will no doubt be very open!

Reading For Pleasure: A Whole School Approach

Reading supports ...



Part 2

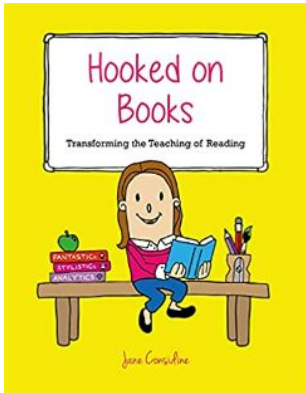
Practice and Pedagogy

Best Practice in Teaching Reading For Pleasure



Phonics is a critical part of a pupil's reading journey and in the early stages of reading development must be taught in a fun, fast and furious way.

In Year 1 classrooms, six year olds are subjected to the high-stakes phonics test. The fact that [some of] these words are nonsensical, is the strangest part of the test. If at the heart of reading, children are taught to create meaning, it is a retrograde move by government to test with these types of words - undermining the very nature of reading itself.



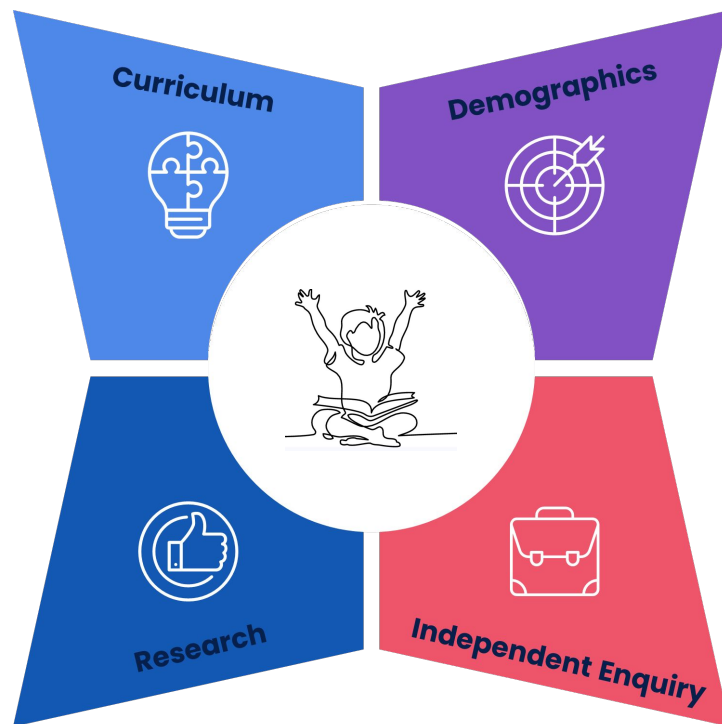
Considine asks, why not use real words? As there are plenty in the English language! She also calls for a more useful test involving the reading of sentences.

In her work, she sees phonics dominating the school timetables. She considers that this is largely due to the need for healthy phonics data.

Reading cannot be all about mechanics however, these are essential for the magic to be discovered.

Reading For Pleasure: A Whole School Approach

In my research for Teacher Toolkit in the area of phonics, I discovered that getting the balance right is critical. In considering your school phonics, have you thought about ...



- 1. Demographics** – Some families have plenty of books at home. Children will receive support from home to ensure that eclectic approach. However, many families do not own books. These children miss out on the daily joy of book sharing with an adult. Check that your balance of top-down and bottom-up approaches suit your demographic and individual families ...
- 2. Curriculum** – With busy curricula plans, I have been in schools where quality time with books is being pushed out. Storytime at the end of the day is magical for children. In my career, I've spent thirteen years teaching reception and year one. It has been evident that even those children who struggle to concentrate normally, love storytime.

3. **Research** – ‘Scholars agree that there are a lot of advantages in using the eclectic approach, which opens the language teacher to a range of alternatives and embraces all the four language skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening’ (Alsayad, Ali and Alhafian. 2019).
4. **Independent enquiry** – (Clark and Glazzard. 2018), surveyed 230 heads and 1,384 teachers. 85 per cent stated that the test should not continue to remain statutory.

Further links to support phonics:

1. <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2022/05/23/early-reading/>
2. <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/product/teaching-phonics/>
3. <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2022/10/13/phonics-scheme/>
4. <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2022/05/09/phonics-test/>

When phonics doesn't work...

It should be noted here that phonics is *not* for everyone. Children with Dyslexia or associated literacy difficulties, often have to develop alternative mental strategies in order to become proficient readers. This includes learning to read whole words as opposed to relying on phonics.

Further links to support dyslexia:

1. <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2019/02/04/10-tips-for-understanding-dyslexia/>
2. <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/10/03/one-minute-cpd-33/>

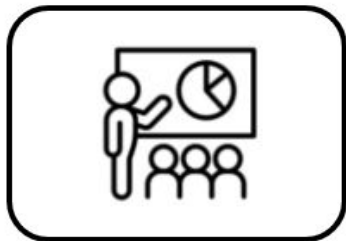
Use this poster as a handy reminder of what a dyslexic friendly classroom looks like.

1. Good practice for dyslexia is good practice for everyone.
2. If you suspect a pupil may have dyslexia, discuss this with your SENCO.
3. Print out for every classroom.
4. Refer to: [10 Tips For Dyslexic Friendly Classroom](#) for further support.
5. The font in the example is called, 'open dyslexic.'

This resource could be used as a whole school non-negotiable to ensure that all learners with persistent literacy difficulties (dyslexia) are supported effectively.



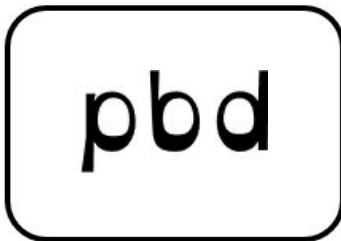
A dyslexia friendly classroom should include...



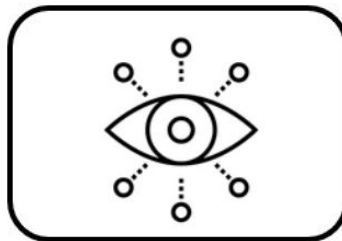
1. Backgrounds - Change your smartboard backgrounds to another colour.



2. Books and overlays - Some pupils may find it easier to write in books with coloured backgrounds or have an overlay.



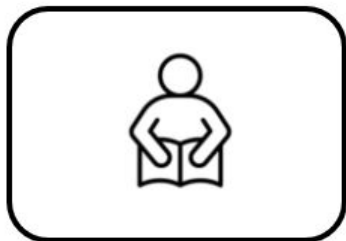
3. Dyslexic friendly fonts - Use a font designed for dyslexia that everyone can read.



4. Visuals - All pupils benefit from visual processing to support retention and retrieval.



5. Teacher Talk - Chunking the lesson into smaller parts and limit the teacher talk. Use mini plenaries.



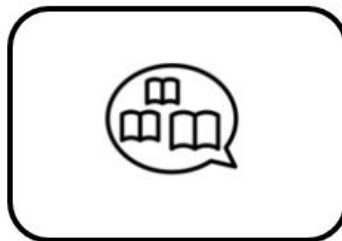
6. Nurture reluctant readers - Pupils can read to an adult, on their own or with a trusted peer any time. Not in front of the class.



7. The usual strategies - For example, brain breaks and memory aids such as word mats. Pupils may benefit from being near the front.



8. Mark positively - Start with what they can do and build on that. Use plenty of positive verbal feedback.



9. Inclusive homework - Set homework that is useful for pupil development. You may need extra resources to scaffold the task.



10. Technology - What technology (e.g. text to speech or reading pen) is available at your school to help?

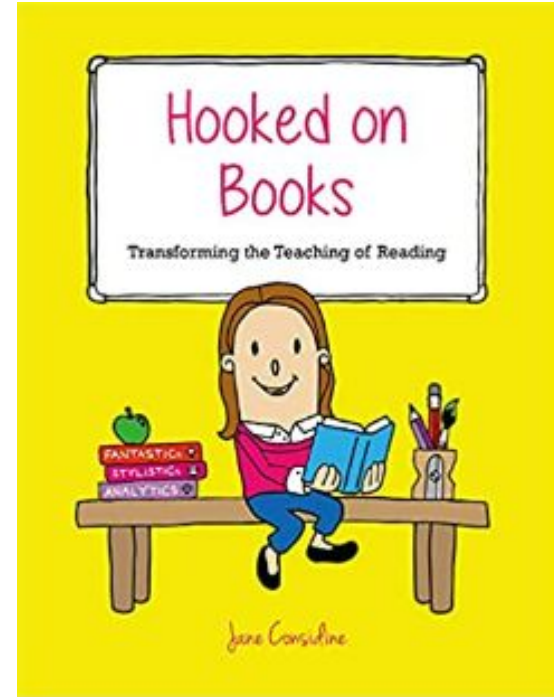
Dyslexia Friendly Classroom: School Overview Checklist

Class:													
Backgrounds													
Books and Overlays													
Dyslexic Friendly Fonts													
Visuals													
Teacher Talk													
Nurture Reluctant Readers													
High Quality Teaching Strategies													
Mark Positively													
Inclusive Homework													
Technology													
<i>Are there any areas that need further support as a school or for individual classes?</i>													

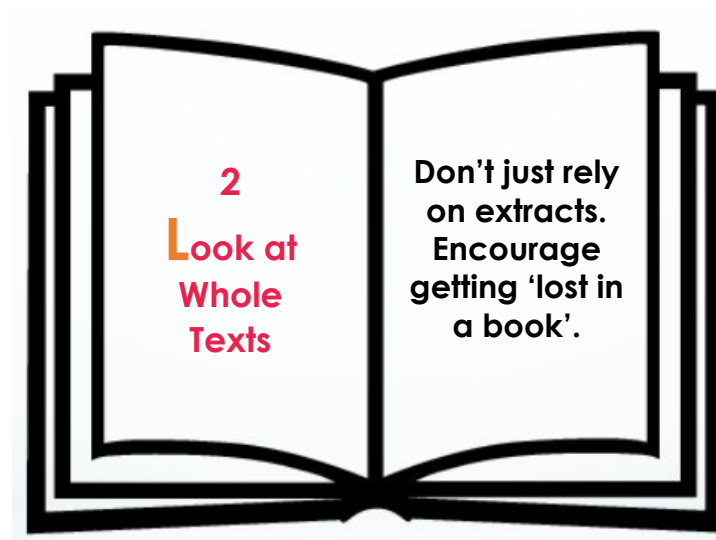
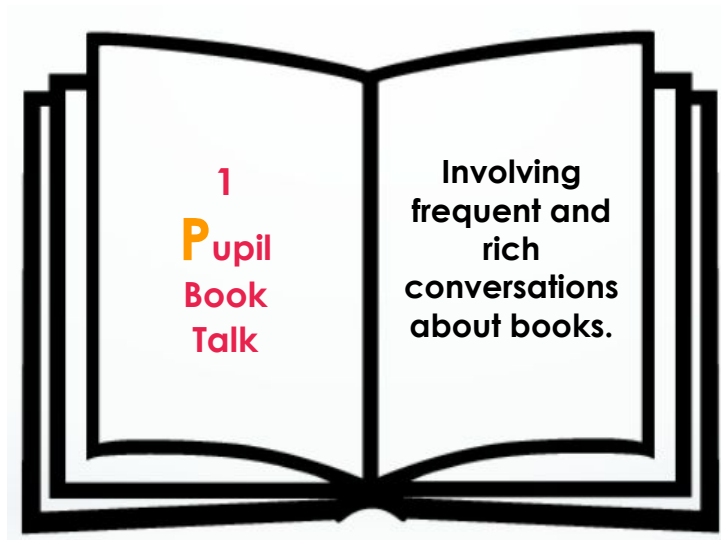
Dyslexia Friendly Classroom: Class Overview

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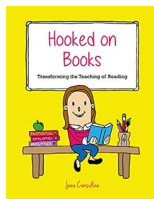
Considine offers the following approaches to promote the pleasure of reading ...



Reading for **Pleasure**

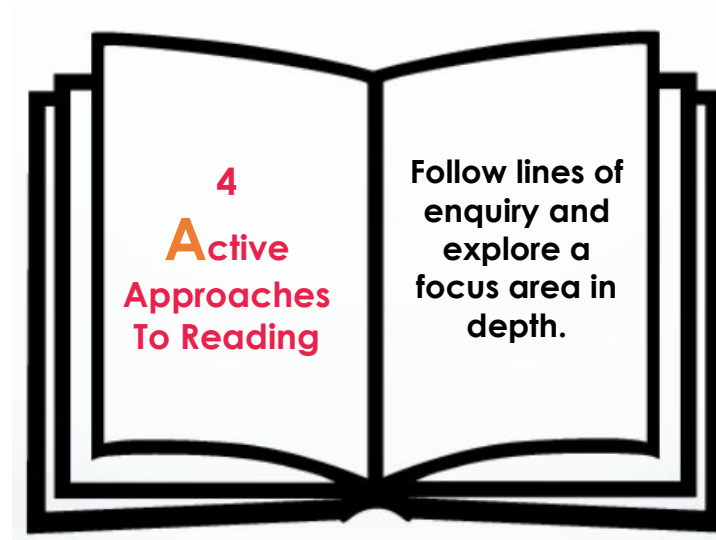
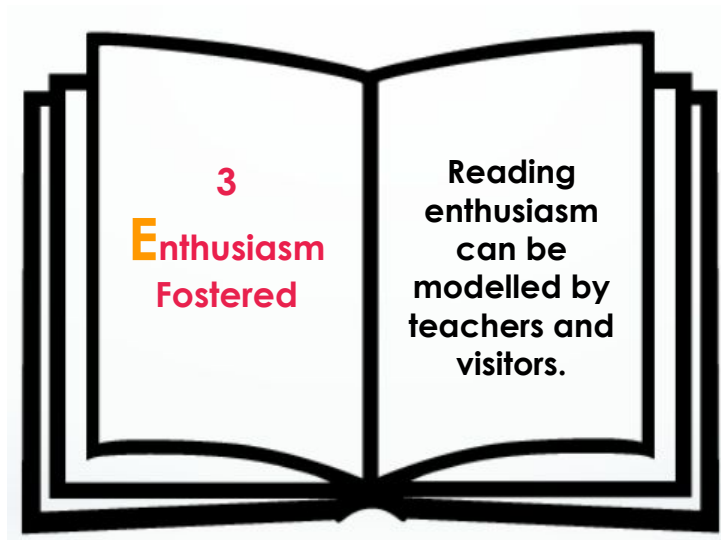


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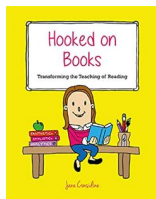


As a team, rate how well you have embedded each aspect of reading for pleasure in your school.

Reading for Pleasure

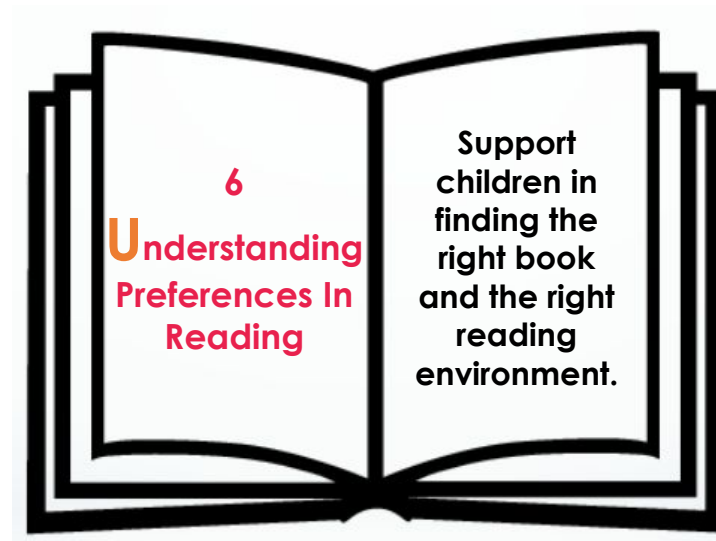
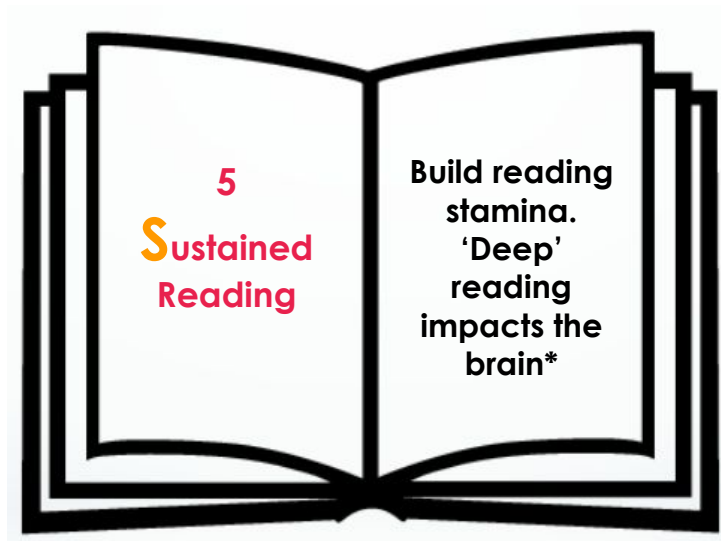


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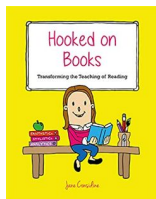


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Reading for Pleasure

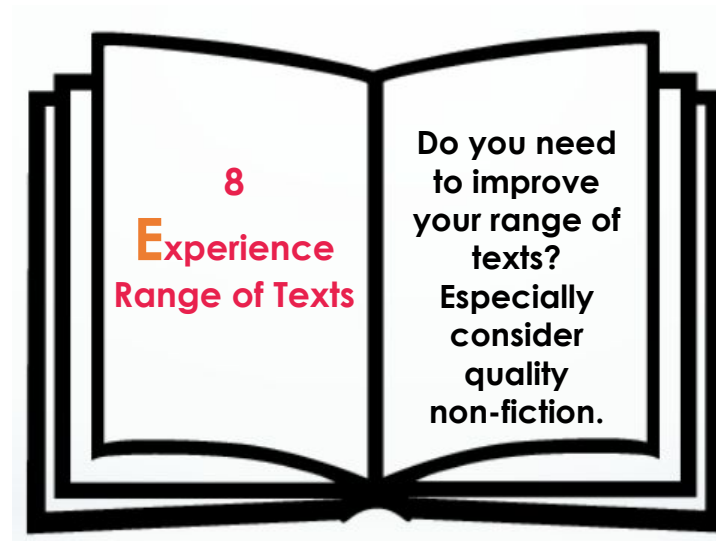
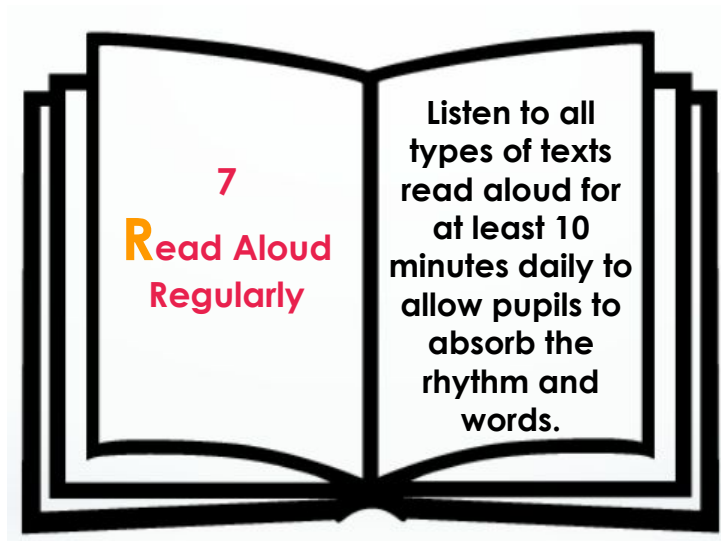


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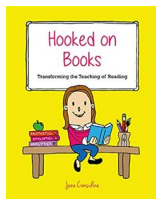


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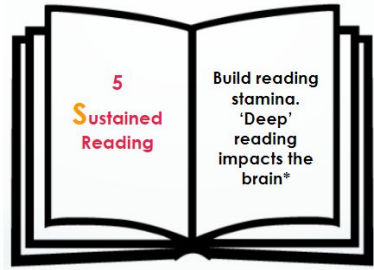
Reading for **Pleasure**



Adapted from:



As a team, rate how well you have embedded each aspect of reading for pleasure in your school.



* Considine cites the research of Anne Murphy Paul in this area. Her 2013 article, '[Reading Literature Makes Us Smarter and Nicer](#)', states:

“Deep reading” — as opposed to the often superficial reading we do on the Web — is an endangered practice, one we ought to take steps to preserve as we would a historic building or a significant work of art. Its disappearance would imperil the intellectual and emotional development of generations growing up online, as well as the perpetuation of a critical part of our culture.

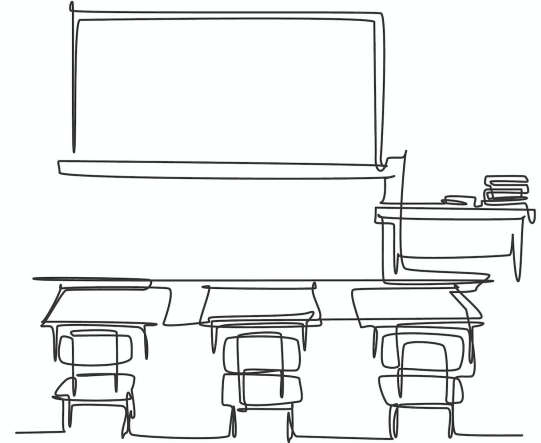
Observing young people's attachment to digital devices, some progressive educators and permissive parents talk about needing to "meet kids where they are," molding instruction around their onscreen habits. This is mistaken. We need, rather, to show them someplace they've never been, a place only deep reading can take them.

How does this link to your thoughts on the digital age and its link to reading?

Part 3

Whole School Implementation

Practical Ideas and Planning



Reading For Pleasure: A Whole School Approach

I opened a book

**I opened a book and in I strode
Now nobody can find me.
I've left my chair, my house, my road,
My town and my world behind me.**

**I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,
I've swallowed the magic potion.
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king,
And dived in a bottomless ocean.**

**I opened a book and made some friends.
I shared their tears and laughter,
And followed their road with its bumps and bends,
To the happily ever after.**

**I finished my book and out I came.
The cloak can no longer hide me.
My chair and my house are just the same,
But I have a book inside me.**

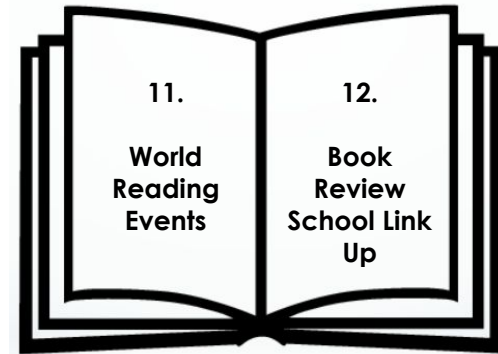
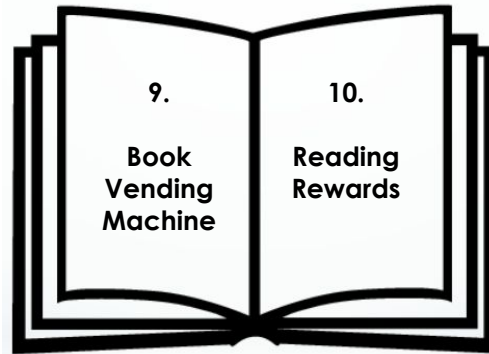
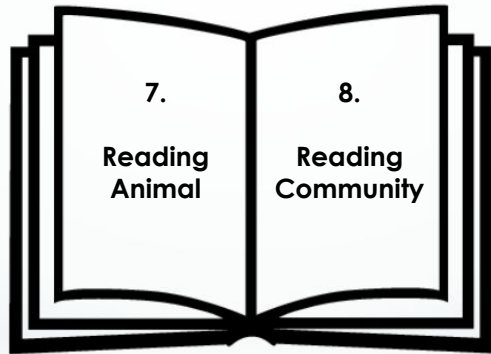
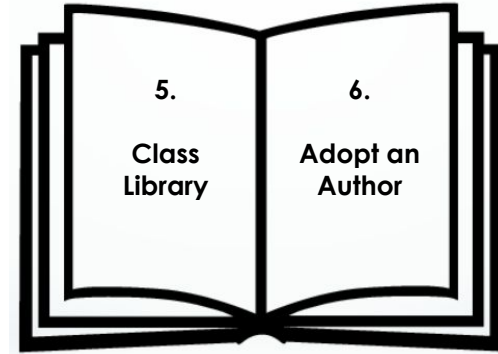
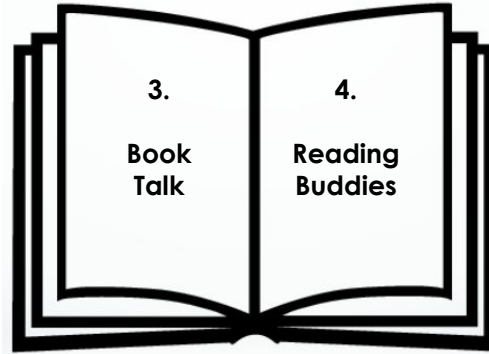
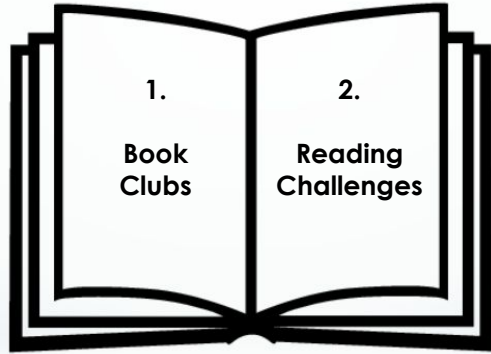


Julia Donaldson

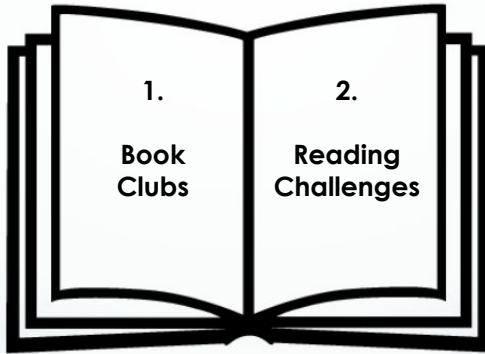
From *Crazy Mayonnaisy Mum*, first published
2004 by Macmillan Children's Books

Reading For Pleasure: A Whole School Approach

12 ideas to use in class:

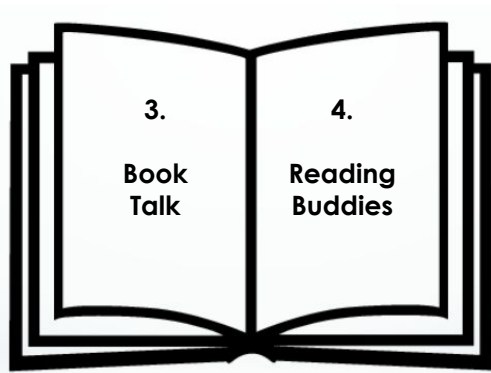


Ideas to use in class:



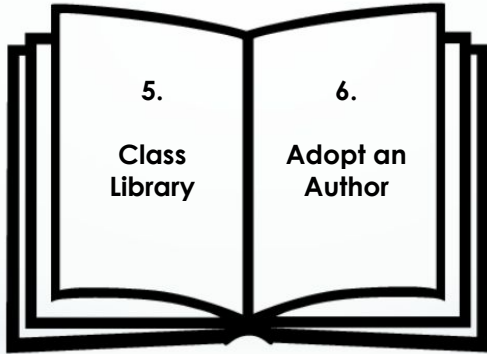
1. **Book clubs:** Create book clubs in your classroom where students can select a book to read and discuss with their peers. This can be done in small groups or as a whole class activity.
2. **Reading challenges:** Set reading challenges for your students to encourage them to read more books. For example, challenge them to read a certain number of books in a month or to read books from different genres.

Ideas to use in class:



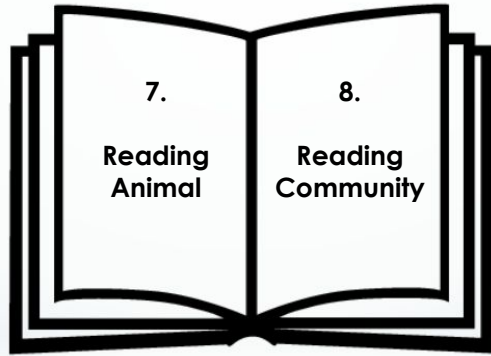
- 3. Book Talk:** 'Young children need frequent and rich conversations about books to become skilled at both interpretation and the development of robust and authentic personal responses' (Considine 2017).
- 4. Reading buddies:** Pair students up and have them take turns reading aloud to each other. This can be especially effective for struggling readers who may feel more comfortable reading with a peer. Also pair up with older/younger children.

Ideas to use in class:



- 5. Classroom library:** Create a classroom library with a wide range of books that cater to the interests and reading levels of your students. Allow students to take books home and encourage them to share their reading experiences with the class.
- 6. Adopt an Author:** Invite authors to visit your classroom and talk about their books. This can be a great way to get students excited about reading and to learn about the writing process. Adopt them by forming a long lasting relationship which involves writing to them and them writing back, as well as an adoption certificate, Christmas and birthday card etc.

Ideas to use in class:

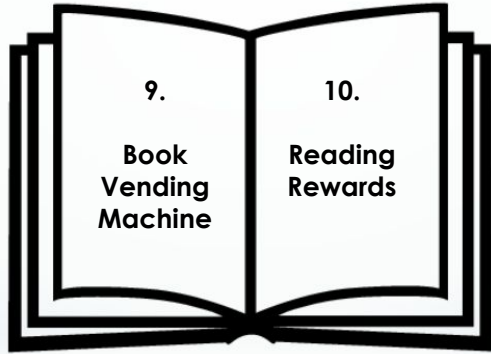


7. **Reading Animal:** E.g. Reading dog. 'The dog isn't just a gimmick to make reading more attractive. Even if the children really struggle with reading, they are much better than the dog. They are reading, not to be instructed or to have their errors pointed out, but to give pleasure. Perhaps for the first time, these children are the experts as they read. This gives them great confidence.'

booktrust.org.uk

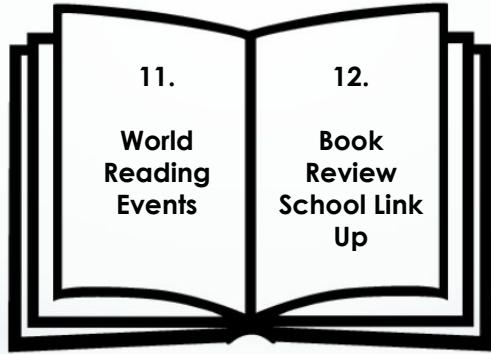
8. **Reading Community:** Invite local elderly people in to school to support reading for pleasure or contact your local care home to build reading relationships with residents. This also supports the elderly who may be lonely.

Ideas to use in class:



9. **Book Vending Machine:** This is exactly as it sounds! Source a second hand vending machine and as rewards and incentives, let children choose a book.
10. **Reading Rewards:** Offer incentives for students (and teachers!) who read a certain number of books or who make good progress. This could include things like bookmarks or books.

Ideas to use in class:



11. **World Reading Events:** Check out the events taking place (such as World Book Day), on the next page.
12. **Book Review School Linkup:** Rather than a traditional book review, link up with others. This could be done with another local school, on [Pobble](#) (where work can be uploaded and shared) or as a [quad blogging](#) exercise which is a child friendly blog which links to 3 other schools in the UK or around the world.

Links to reading for pleasure initiatives:

1. World Book Day: <https://www.worldbookday.com/>
2. National Storytelling Week: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/national-storytelling-week/>
3. International Children's Book Day
<https://www.ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/international-childrens-book-day>
4. Share a Story Month: <https://fcbg.org.uk/national-share-a-story-month-may-2022/>
5. Children's Book Week: <https://everychildareader.net/cbw/>
6. International School Library Month: <https://iasl-online.org/ISLM>
7. National Poetry Day: <https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/>
8. International Literacy Day: <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/literacy>

Whole School Planning Sheet

Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2

On the grid, plot out specific reading for pleasure activities which will take place throughout the year.

Year Group Reflection Sheet

As a year group, consider how you are supporting each of Considine's 8 areas of reading for pleasure.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

This resource was produced by ...



Lynn How

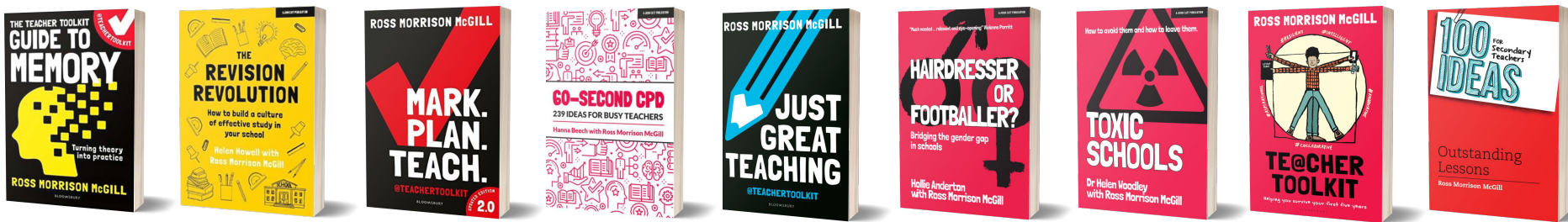
Lynn is the Editor at Teacher Toolkit. With 20 years of primary teaching and SLT experience, she has been an Assistant Head, Lead Mentor for ITT and SENCO. She loves to write and also has her own SEMH and staff mental health blog: www.positiveyoungmind.com. Lynn holds an MA in Education, is a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching (FCCT), NASENCO and NPQH. Her particular areas of interest are wellbeing (staff and pupil), SEND, children's mental health, leadership, mentoring and coaching. Recently she has started an Educational Consultancy business for SEND (SEND support) and Teacher Wellbeing (The Wellbeing Lady). You can find her teacher coaching group on Facebook; a group for those wishing to improve their work life balance in school or who need support in moving out of teaching: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/coachingforteacherwellbeing>

Useful links:

1. [Teacher Toolkit resources and articles](#)
2. www.positiveyoungmind.com
3. [SENDcast episodes](#)
4. [SENCo Survival book](#)
5. [Coaching for teacher wellbeing Facebook group](#)

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