

Ideas for encouraging reading

When it comes to encouraging boys (and adults) to read more, the most important thing is to keep it fun. Reading is a joy and should never be made a chore. Just because a book has been started, doesn't mean it has to be finished. It is also good to remember that reading doesn't just mean novels: poetry, short stories, non-fiction, magazines, newspapers, webpages, all of these and many more offer great opportunities for expanding reading interests. Listed below are some of the English Department's favourite ideas for encouraging reading.

Ideas suitable for all ages

- Shared reading - parent and child read the same book at the same time.
- DEAR - Down Everything And Read as a family at a certain time each day/week.
- Browse Amazon/Library/book shops together to find reads.
- Read book reviews together/send book reviews to each other in order to select new books to buy.
- Read for half an hour before bed/in bed before sleep (get into a daily habit).
- Ask your son to write you a list of the next five books he's keen to read but doesn't have yet (so you can get them for him).
- Leave books lying around (on sofa/in bathroom/on bedside table) where others will browse and start reading them.
- Take different roles in plays and read them together.
- Create a family bookshelf on goodreads or similar.
- It doesn't have to be a 'book'; good quality journalism is also important. Even the sports pages of a broadsheet have the very best journalists writing in them. The Sunday Times should last a family a week.
- Look at [Pics & Ink](#) to find interesting independent magazines.
- Look for any films the family want to see that are adaptations of books, and ensure everyone reads the book before seeing it.
- Short Story Challenge: take it in turns for each family member to pick a short story that everyone must read that week. Then discuss, and pass on the role of chooser. [Classic Short Stories](#) is superb.

Encouraging reading in younger boys

- Paired reading – parent and child read alternate paragraphs aloud to each other (the child follows along while the parent reads).
- If your son has read for 30 minutes (at least) one night in bed, encourage him to extend his lights-out time by another 15-20 minutes two or three times that week, for more reading.
- Ask boys to make a trailer for a book they think you or other family members should read.
- Parents can ask their sons to read to them whilst they are cooking: then ask him to explain (pretend you lost the thread).



Encouraging reading in the Middle and Upper School

- Ask your son to recommend a book to you.
- Subscribe to LRB, TLS, mslexia, Aeon, The Guardian Long Reads.

In addition to the above ideas, there are also a wealth of opportunities for boys to spread their reading wings in school – just ask a member of the English Department how you can get involved.

- Bookworms (Lower School)
- Form Room Book Boxes (Lower School)
- Talking Books (Lower School)
- Literary Society (Middle and Upper School)
- Reading Week (All years)
- Year group suggested reading lists (All years)

I hope boys and their parents enjoy trying out some of these ideas.

