



# HELP STUDENTS RUN THEIR OWN WORLD BOOK DAY




## INTRODUCTION

By the time young people are at secondary school their attitudes to reading and their book choices are more personalised. This pack is designed to support you to work with your students to establish what their reading for pleasure looks like and to design a World Book Day in school that better meets their needs. No one is better placed than your students to design an event that will support them and this pack takes you step by step through working with them to research, plan, market and evaluate their event.

### THIS RESOURCE WILL:

- 1 Share our research insights
- 2 Support your students to run peer-to-peer research to find out what students in your school want.
- 3 Work with your students to plan run and evaluate a student lead, school-specific World Book Day celebration



**ALL SCHOOLS WHO SUBMIT A CASE STUDY WILL BE ENTERED INTO A COMPETITION TO WIN £200 WORTH OF BOOK TOKENS FOR THEIR SCHOOL.**



*This pack has been put together with support from the National Literacy Trust. This year we have commissioned them to explore the factors influencing young people's reading in 2021, with an aim of understanding what might engage 11 to 16-year-olds more effectively in reading for enjoyment*



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# INSIGHTS FROM RESEARCH

## Why focus on supporting young people's reading for enjoyment?

Reading for enjoyment is associated both with better educational attainment and higher mental wellbeing. This is particularly relevant to young people during adolescence, as they work towards exams and can experience changes in emotional state. However, as academic pressures and leisure options increase as children move from primary to secondary school, the percentage who say that they enjoy reading drops sharply: while **62%** of those aged 8 to 11 say they enjoy reading, only **51%** of those aged 11 to 14 and **48%** of those aged 14 to 16 say the same.

## What do we know about what might engage young people with reading?

World Book Day and the National Literacy Trust have gathered insights from existing research, teachers and librarians' feedback and surveys and focus groups with young people, and summarised these below. We hope these will inform practitioners working with this age group to better support young people's reading enjoyment, and that young people themselves can use them as a starting point for further surveys of, and discussions with, their peers ahead of World Book Day 2022.

## What does research tell us about young people's reading?

A combination of practical barriers (e.g. increased schoolwork, leisure options and independence), intrinsic factors (e.g. reading confidence, preference for activities such as watching videos, social media or playing video games) and extrinsic factors (e.g. access to appealing books, culturally relatable role models, perceived 'social capital' around reading) may all affect young people's reading motivation.

### Studies show:

- While reading offers opportunities for relaxation and escapism, it can also be seen as time-consuming, effortful and uncool. As they receive less encouragement to read from adults than when they were younger, young people may lose the habit. Time, space and initiatives to read for pleasure are therefore important.
- Young people may be encouraged to read for enjoyment by offering a choice of relevant and interesting reading material, creating comfortable environments, and focusing on the fun of reading, rather than its potential impact on attainment.

## What do teachers and librarians tell us about teen reading?

The top things we hear from teachers and librarians include the need to support young people who may not be reading at the level expected of their age, the need to connect young people with titles than interest them, and broader issues around motivation to read.

For example:

- **For young people who struggle with reading, practitioners feel it can be** *"seen as boring - something only clever kids do"* so they need support to find *"a book that is of interest but also at an understandable level."* Even for more confident readers, there is concern about familiarity with longer-form narratives: *"[Young people] don't watch TV or films, just YouTube so stories are not a thing", "Too much competition from social media/life. Lack of reading stamina, schools just read extracts from stories."*
- **Poor access to good quality, interesting books and adults' ability to connect young people with those titles was cited frequently:** *"Access to books that would interest them is always the biggest barrier", "Pupils won't read if they don't have access to something they actually want to read" and "...adults in their lives (parents/teachers) not knowing what is available ...having no understanding of children's/YA books"*.
- **Other comments suggest that young people who are confident readers need a reason to read that is relevant to their lives, as they** *"...say they can read, but [see] no reason to read for pleasure."* This may be related, in part, to an association with schoolwork (rather than, for example, relaxation or mental wellbeing), *"School focusing on [reading] for attainment rather than fun."* Relatedly, several comments from teachers and librarians feel young people lack strong reading role models, whether this relates to *"Peer pressure stopping them showing an interest"* or *"No parental support for reading, parents not willing to engage."*

## What do young people tell us about reading?

Mirroring both existing research and some of the comments from teachers and librarians, the top things we hear from young people that stop them reading include reading difficulty, finding books on topics than interest them, and broader issues around motivation to read.

- **Having to do a lot of reading for school makes it a less attractive prospect as a potential leisure activity,** *"In high school, there's lots more ...educational reading, it took away the fun ...what I liked in it when it [became] just really about school - I don't want to have that all the time, so I stopped at home."* There is some nostalgia for reading experiences when younger: *"At times I definitely do miss it" and a sense of the potential benefits for mental wellbeing, "I think it can be relaxing"*.
- **Some young people struggle to read, or to process what they are reading:** *"My dyslexia makes ...reading hard", "I never really get the story"*. A preference for activities that require less focus can also be related to lack of a quiet space at home, *"I try to read when it's quiet, but I have two younger siblings so that's hard. I need it to be quiet so I can concentrate enough."*

- **Many young people consider reading, as an activity, less beneficial in comparison to other activities they may enjoy in their free time.** Contrary to a common conception that these are primarily digital, young people often enjoy both physical sport and video game playing, and perceive these to have more immediate physical and social benefits: *“When you’re gaming or doing something active, you’re doing it with people and having a laugh, whereas with books ...you don’t really do anything else”*. Conversely, reading was associated with inactivity for some young people, with readers considered to be, “normally, in my school...less active people” while, *“...if you’re not busy doing sports or playing games, then you might be more likely to read a book.”*
- **Activities such as watching videos and social media can both present a barrier to reading and support, inspire or encourage it.** Some young people felt discussions and recommendations from peers online could get them interested in a book: *“I would look for recommendations off social media because it is ...for young people so if I wanted to find a book targeted for my age I would go there. Most of the recommendations I’ve got for audiobooks are off TikTok”, “...I would go off something that I’ve watched off Netflix like a series and see if they have it in a book and that would really interest me.”*
- **As mentioned by teachers and librarians, some young people feel it could be made easier for them to find books they’d be interested in:** *“When I ...go to a library, it’s much easier to find the children’s section. ... There’s definitely a gap in how easy it is [to find books for teens] because of our age and ...what we’re interested in”*. Topics of interest to young people included, for example, music, comedy, horror and *“Stuff about criminals - true crime”* but also subjects more often read about online, such as sport, current affairs and mental health.
- **Family members may be seen reading, but are not necessarily considered role models:** *“I feel like they do enjoy it [reading] because she [Nan] doesn’t know how to use her phone. I think that’s why she likes reading.”* Many young people would, however, welcome more encouragement from adults to read themselves: *“...my English teacher said I need to read a bit more, but she said it once and never again.”*

## Insights from secondary student-facing events and surveys

Feedback from National Literacy Trust programmes show the value children and young people place on socialising reading experiences and having opportunities to engage in book talk with their peer groups.

For example, a feedback survey about a quiz competition indicated that 84% of respondents enjoyed talking about books as part of the quiz, with comments including, *“I really liked the teamwork aspect because I made some new friends and really enjoyed working with them”*. Our survey of young people during lockdown also found digital tools could facilitate a social aspect to reading: *“I read the same book as my friend and we talked about it through FaceTime.”*

## Common threads and contradictions

Teachers and librarians’ perceptions of barriers to reading in young people focus on areas such as poor school library investment, a lack of home support for reading and the need to improve book knowledge in adults supporting young people’s reading. Young people’s comments were complementary to these themes (for example, lack of awareness of books that suit their interest), but provided additional insight into the topics and genres they find interesting, the value of book recommendations from peers and the role of social media in discoverability. In addition, they suggest linking to typical teen interests as seen in other media (YouTube, podcasts etc.)

Overall, researchers, teachers, librarians and young people appear to agree that focus on the following areas could support better engagement with reading:

- Provision for reading difficulty (need for HiLo books, graphic, audio etc.)
- Shorter texts with strong connection with subjects of interest
- A need to differentiate reading from school work and better place it within the leisure ecosystem, perhaps also emphasising links between reading and wellbeing
- Regular encouragement from adults and more culturally relevant role models

# WORKING WITH STUDENTS TO DELIVER A WORLD BOOK DAY EVENT TO YOUR SCHOOL

Comments from young people suggest they don't feel as engaged by the World Book Day events run at secondary school as they had in primary school, for example: *"In primary school we would all dress up and take turns reading each other's books. Everyone went home wanting a new book. We should do more at secondary school."*

We know not everyone might want to dress up as a book character once they are at secondary school but there are lots of other ways that books can be celebrated and students are best placed to decide what will engage them.

We are inviting students to follow the same process as the World Book Day team starting with research into the market (with each other) and building an event in response.

## Support your students to run peer-to-peer research

- Helping young people to run a short survey with their fellow pupils will help them find out more about their peers' reading, and how they might like to celebrate World Book Day. Young people may respond better to surveys run by peers in older age groups - you could involve Year 9s in surveying Year 7s, for example.
- It's also a great idea to complement surveys by holding a focus group of around 6 young people to get more insight into reading preferences.
- We've put together some question ideas to get you started with both the surveys and focus groups below, and/or pupils can just write their own questions.

## TOP TIPS FOR PUTTING SURVEYS TOGETHER:

1. Think about the purpose of the survey – what do you really want to know?
2. Think about which questions you most want unique responses to and prioritise those as open questions – keep the others closed to help you organise your data at the end.
3. Think about the order – start with easy questions and move on to the ones that require more thought.
4. How are you going to take the survey? Is there an online survey tool that could help you collect the data too?

## Reading survey and focus group question ideas

### READING ATTITUDES

- What are your favourite things to do outside school? Please tick all that apply (socialising with friends [IRL or online]/ video games/ sport/ watching videos/ something else)
- Do you ever have time to read just for fun, outside school?

- (I make time to read/ I do have time, I'd just rather do something else/ I don't have time to read, I'm too busy with school work and other things)
- Do you like to read just for fun? Has that changed since you were younger?
- Can you usually find books you want to read, if you want to? Should there be more books for young people who might find it more difficult to read?
- If you had someone around your age or a bit older telling you books you might like to read, would that help? How about an online teen book club type of thing, so reading was more social?
- What topics would you be interested to read about? E.g. things you like on Netflix, comedy, crime, horror, mental wellbeing, music, sport, world issues (e.g. Black Lives Matter, climate change etc.)
- Why do you think some people enjoy reading and others don't – what do people who enjoy it get out of it?
- Thinking about young people your age who don't really read much outside school, why do you think that is?
- Can books sometimes feel too long to focus on?
- What (or who) do you think could be a positive influence on young people's reading, if anything /anyone?
- What kinds of messages might make young people think about reading more? For example, links between reading and mental wellbeing, reading (print books) or audiobooks being a break from screen time

### WORLD BOOK DAY

- Have you taken part in a World Book Day event in the past?
- What did you like/ not like about it?
- Can events like World Book Day still be fun when you get to secondary school?
- What could an organisation like World Book Day do to help young people read more?
- What could events or campaigns do better to get busy young people back into reading?

### What is the data telling you?

Once you've collected the information it's time to sort it out.

- Create tables/graphs of the closed questions
- Group the open question responses into categories – what are the common themes?
- Look at all the responses and decide what themes you are being guided to focus on – are students talking most about not being able to find books they like, struggling for time to read, finding it boring or difficult?
- Create a table which lists the themes and the questions that gave you that information so you can refer back to the question responses if you need to.

**You could stop here with some key recommendations to the school regarding Reading for Pleasure or take this information to create your own World Book Day event.**

# PLANNING YOUR CELEBRATION

## MEETING 1

### Use your data to decide what to do

- Put each of the themes onto a piece of flipchart paper – invite students to list ideas that would address this theme to the flipchart.
- You could share these examples if students are struggling for ideas as a starting point:
  - *Data shows that students have no time to read – host a big cosy read in a hall with blankets and snacks*
  - *Data shows that students don't know what to read – invite a local librarian or bookseller to run a recommendation booth*
  - *Data shows that students find it hard to read – host an audio book club*
  - *Data shows that students want to read more about issues that affect them – create book recommendation placards including a slogan that identifies the cause and a book that tells you more about it and display them in the corridors*
  - *Data shows that students are scared to come into the library – host a social media book recommendation surgery*
- Give the students stickers to vote for the 3 activities that they think would work best.
- Review the sheets – what are the top activities? Are there any ideas that address more than one theme? Are there any that would take too long/be too expensive that you need to rule out?
- Run a final vote to pick your favourite idea

**BETWEEN MEETINGS:** Students to think about how the idea could work in school and research similar events.

## MEETING 2

### Make an action plan

- Revisit the chosen idea.
- Discuss and note what would happen on the day using the following prompts:
  - TIME**
  - LOCATION**
  - WHO WOULD NEED TO BE THERE** – think about if there is anyone local who could bring their expertise to the event – do you need a bookseller or librarian on hand to recommend books?
  - AUDIENCE**– invite the students to think about someone they know who doesn't enjoy reading – what would most motivate that student to attend?
  - Note:** *The students might decide to create digital content. If that's the case then the rest of the meetings will need to adjust to reflect that*
- Give the students post-it notes to create items for a to do list to get to the outcome you've discussed- ask them to put one thing on each post it
- Explore the post-it notes and invite them to put in a sequence – once you are happy with the sequence assign team members to each job – you could divide into teams here with students focussing on different areas of the task.
  - Note:** *Using Google Classroom or similar for students to keep in touch with the tasks is helpful between meetings*

**BETWEEN MEETINGS:** Students to complete assigned tasks



## MEETING 3

### Review the action plan

- Have the tasks been completed? Does anything need to change?
- What are the next steps?

#### How will people get to know about it?

- Talk about how students find out things are happening in school and socially.
- Look at some examples of posters, social media event invitations, paper invitations.
- Discuss the best way to communicate your activity so the most people hear about it.
- Think about your non-reading audience – invite the students to think about someone they know who doesn't enjoy reading – what would most motivate that student to attend?
- Decide how you will create your marketing materials and assign tasks.

### BETWEEN MEETINGS: Students to complete assigned tasks

## MEETING 4

### Final preparation

- Check you have everything you need – are there any last minute things to make/buy?
- Have you got your marketing materials out?
- Does everybody know what their role is on the day? –If you are doing an interactive activity use this session to role play or even work with a few other students to practice
- Have you got someone to document what you are doing on camera, on the school Twitter account etc?

### Evaluation

- What do you want to know about how your event went?
  1. Numbers of people who came
  2. What they thought
  3. Did it address the problem you were trying to?
- How will you ask students how they found it – something to do on the spot that isn't a form is a good idea – can students answer a question by adding a marble to a jar or write on a graffiti wall?

## CELEBRATION

- Take some time to congratulate yourselves -look at the pictures, talk about what you all enjoyed
- Review the evaluation information – invite each student to respond to the whole event with 2 stars and a wish (2 good things about the event and one thing they would like to have gone better/done differently)
- Put together your case study.



## LET US KNOW HOW IT WENT



How will you know if your event was successful? Ask for feedback, and please let us know what worked and what didn't.

On the next page is a suggested structure for a case study to help you think about how it went. We'd recommend collating the case study as you go along – once something's happened it's easy to forget the steps.

Submit your completed case studies by **31 March** to [hi@worldbookday.com](mailto:hi@worldbookday.com) to be in with a chance of winning £200 of book tokens for your school.

# CASE STUDY HEADINGS

## School name

## Data collection

- We used a **survey/focus groups/both** to collect our data
- We got information from \_\_\_\_\_ **students**

## The themes that emerged from our data collection were

Theme	Questions that connect to this theme	Great quotes

## Planning the event

This isn't for filling in like a worksheet – it's just to offer the titles

**Theme**      **Our favourite activity ideas that address this theme**

**We chose to do . . .**

**Because . . .**

**Our action an:**

**How we told everyone about our event**

**What happened on the day?**

**How many people came:**

**What did they say?**

**What were the 3 best things about your event?**

**What 2 things would you do differently?**

**What 3 suggestions would you make to your school based on what you've learnt?**