

Your teacher ideas for World Book Day celebrations

In our surveys this year we asked teachers and librarians about any World Book Day ideas and activities that worked particularly well for engaging children, and we loved them so much we wanted to share them with you. As well as being useful for World Book day, we hope that some of these ideas will be usable all year round to promote reading for pleasure. At the end of a difficult term in a difficult year we also wanted to thank you all for your support of and commitment to World Book Day. It was evident from all of the survey responses how much effort you all put in to provide your students with the best possible World Book Day experience.

Masked Reader: Connecting reading to popular culture

“Staff put together ‘The Masked Reader’ where staff read (while disguised) a short extract/poem. The video was posted on our online learning platforms in the morning with an optional quiz sheet to write answers on, and the ‘reveal’ video (where staff revealed who they were) was posted in the afternoon. We had an overwhelming response from students and parents and hugely positive feedback.”

Our surveys showed that “The Masked Reader” activity, an example of just one activity that referenced current global and popular culture (ITV’s *The Masked Singer*), was used a lot within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Primary School activities this year with great success. It was also ranked as the most used activity for Secondary Schools as well. The popularity of this activity highlights the importance of integrating popular culture with book activities - reminding children that reading for pleasure is another option for how to spend their leisure time.

Dressing Up: An opportunity for informal book talk

Schools, children and parents told us when costumes are connected to a celebration of character choice and book talk that dressing up can be a very powerful book recommendation tool for children and their peers. Activities which most supported this were:

- reflecting on who the children have chosen to dress up as and why
- peer-to-peer recommendations and discussions
- integration between home and school reading lives with teachers or other adults sharing whole (if picture books) or extracts of texts that children have brought in

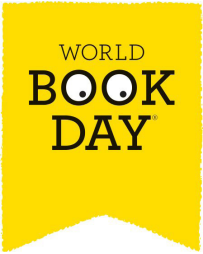
“The children are the best resource; they made their own reading lists to recommend to friends. Children listen to their peers more than their teachers sometimes.”

Even during lockdown families were able to join in with the activity, allowing for more discussions between families of favourite books and characters, and what makes them enthusiastic about them.

“It made my daughters read a book in order to understand the character to dress up as for World Book Day, they love dressing up and explaining why, it’s a huge help, thank you.”

We know that dressing up doesn’t work for everyone and we also enjoyed hearing about ideas that provoked the same conversations:

- Creating puppet theatres of favourite books/scenes



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- Bringing in an object from a book
- Bringing a book in from home
- Creating book trailers
- Reading aloud from children's favourite books

And, in one school library:

“We had a photo booth in the library where students could dress up and take photos - it got groups involved and was real fun.”

Reluctant Readers: Engaging all children in celebration

We had some great ideas and suggestions for encouraging reluctant readers to be more involved with World Book Day. Key themes which emerged were decoupling reading comprehension from reading skill and connecting reading to the wider world and popular cultural activity. This quote from a teacher summarises the majority of comments we had:

“I think just the fact it's World Book Day creates its own buzz with them [children]. Activities make it fun and reading excerpts from books open them up to different books they may never have considered. The fact the whole school get involved makes it feel like it's okay for students to get involved and they enjoy it more.”

The following activities were also seen as being the most engaging for the EYFS and Primary School reluctant readers:

- Dressing up
- Interacting with physical props
- Re-enactment of the stories
- £1 book tokens
- Author/illustrator content
- World Book Day as a school/national moment
- Time being spent with books and adults e.g. being read to
- Important value placed on the child's home reading preferences e.g. bringing their own book in or dressing up as their preferred character

“This year, we were engaged in Google Classroom during World Book Day. We had story time every day during Literacy class. On WBD, pupils chose a book they had at home and created a little home theatre with puppets, using cardboard boxes, paper/card, straws and tape. They then recorded themselves and acted out the whole book as a ‘play’.”

For Secondary Schools, the most important aspect for reaching these readers was the book choice and ownership the £1 books offer:

“So [reluctant readers] like the £1 books as they are super slim but are general fiction but on a smaller scale. Sometimes the £1 books are the only book they will read to the end in the whole year.”

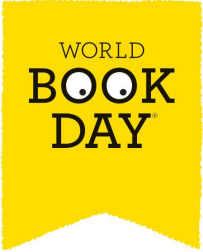
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Share a Story for 10 Minutes: Spending quality time together

An amazing 77% of parents who took part in the parents' survey took part in reading a book of their child's choice for 10 minutes (or more) on World Book Day.

Another way that this concept was implemented during school time was by reading extracts of the same book throughout the day in small increments. One teacher explains how they managed to keep students engaged and hooked using suspense:

"Staff reading of a short extract from a short story so by the end of the day after watching the staff video in each lesson the final plot and twist in the tale was revealed. It kept the students on tenterhooks to find out what would happen next."

We were also struck by the numbers of you who responded that reading aloud more to your children on World Book Day created high levels of engagement and enthusiasm.

No-Screen-Days: A change of emphasis in Home Learning

We also had some brilliant creative ideas that involved time away from screens for World Book Day, so that the children could focus more on the books in front of them.

"We had a largely screen free day, with the girls being encouraged to participate in a wide range of book related activities from home. Each activity had points allocated to it, which led to a house competition. Girls were encouraged to send pictures of their activities into school, with Senior teachers monitoring what was happening during the day. We had bedroom doors being turned into book covers, dinner parties being imagined for favourite authors, music playlists being developed for a book character, zoom storytelling to younger pupils... the list goes on, we had an amazing list of activities they could choose from."

"We had a whole day 'off timetable' for our students at home, with a set of challenges to choose from throughout the day instead of lessons, with points for each one. 'Join the public library - 30 points', 'Enter the book token design competition - 10 points', 'Read with a family member (or pet!) - 20 points' etc."

Competitions: Getting creative with motivations

Many teachers spoke about implementing competitions into World Book Day activities to help encourage and motivate the children to get more involved and have important book discussions with friends, family, and teachers!

"We also held a writing competition, asking students to say which three book characters they would invite to dinner and why. We asked them to imagine the conversations and possible conflicts amongst the group. We did this as a starting point to get students talking about the characters they like and the books that those characters came from. We supported parents and shared resources through our email system and social media."

One idea that we thought would be particularly exciting was the idea of a "Golden Ticket" inserted into one of the books, to help encourage reluctant readers:

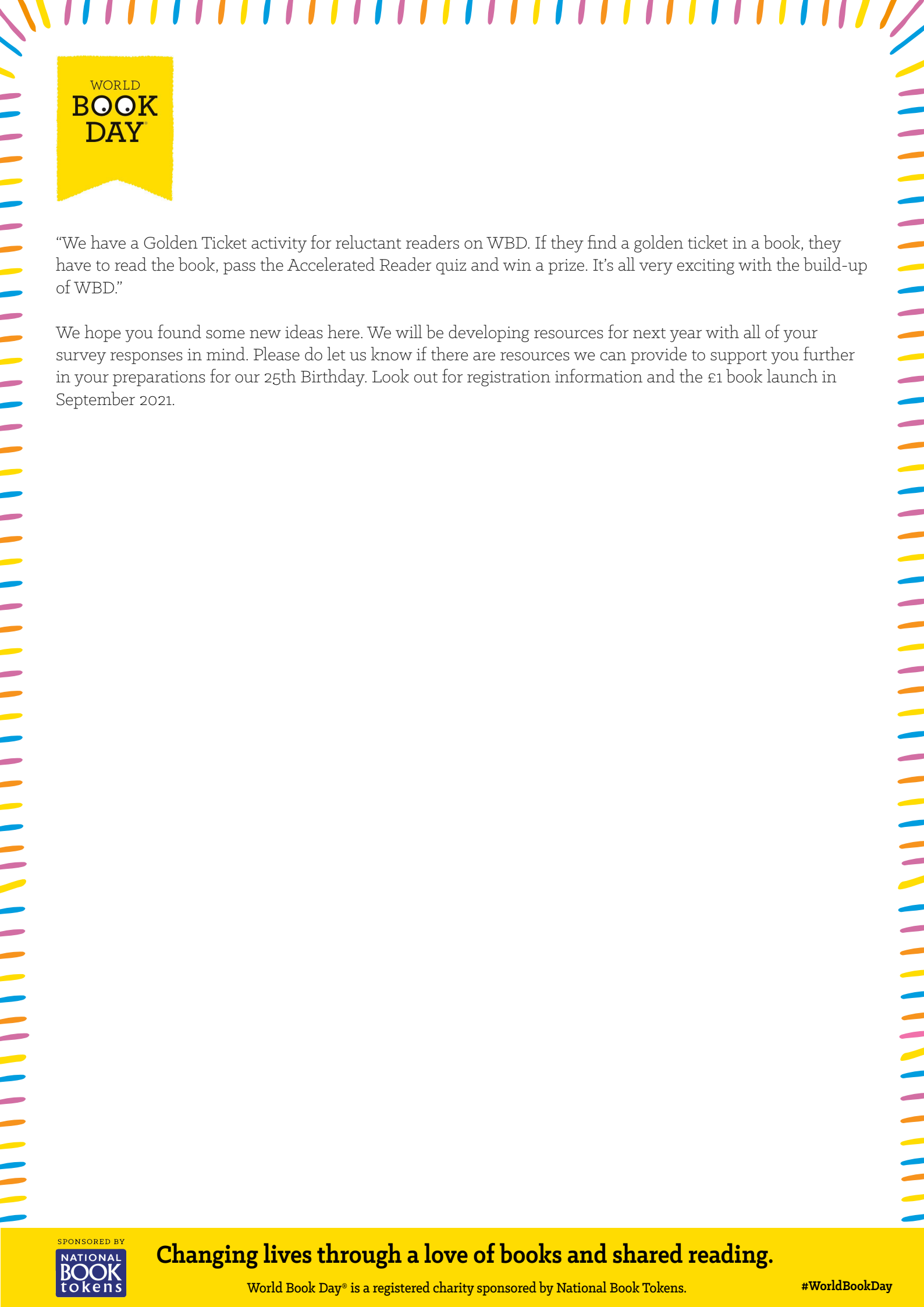
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“We have a Golden Ticket activity for reluctant readers on WBD. If they find a golden ticket in a book, they have to read the book, pass the Accelerated Reader quiz and win a prize. It’s all very exciting with the build-up of WBD.”

We hope you found some new ideas here. We will be developing resources for next year with all of your survey responses in mind. Please do let us know if there are resources we can provide to support you further in your preparations for our 25th Birthday. Look out for registration information and the £1 book launch in September 2021.