

Using dressing up to encourage reading

This resource outlines some of the ways that dressing up can be used on World Book day. Our research has shown that children see other's costumes as a book recommendation tool so we've created these suggestions to help you get the most out of this opportunity.

Top tips from teachers:

- Explain to parents the purpose of dressing up and what you are trying to get from the children. Be clear about whether you want full costumes or simpler accessories or props that will help their children share their favourite books.
- Ask the children in advance of the day who they are thinking of dressing up as and bring forward titles in your reading area that support their costumes.
- Dressing up supported by talk, reading of the books or drama has the most impact.
- Bringing in the book as well as being in costume promotes better discussion.
- Consider the children who like non-fiction – tabards or t-shirts with top facts or illustrations from the books are good alternatives as well as dressing up as the subject of the book.

Young children naturally respond to being in costume - changing their behaviour to match the costume. It is also possible to achieve this with older children but they may need a little more scaffolding. We have shared some ideas here.

Activity		Non-fiction alternative
Introducing their books	Get the children in pairs to describe their book - give them 2 minutes to start with then swap partners, drop the time by 30 seconds and repeat until each child has a 30 second summary.	
Hot seating	Provide a special chair. Invite the class to ask children questions in character - perhaps model some questions to begin with.	Depending on the book this could be a straight interview or the child could be in role as the author or subject of the book.
Create a human library	Divide the class in half and create an inner and outer circle - invite the children in the inner circle to present their 30 second book introduction before the outer ring moves round one place. Repeat this several times. Ask the children which books they would like to take out of the library - you could move on to reading aloud the early pages of popular titles.	

Talking statues	Clothes have a big impact on the way that we move, stand and engage with the world. Next invite the children to stand up as their character and then exaggerate each element of the way they are standing to create a statue. You could then move round tapping children on the shoulder asking them to explain their pose.	Invite children to create statues of the most important piece of information or person profiled in their books.
A World Book Day party	Create a party set up (food table, dance floor, seating area) put some music on- invite your children to enter the party as their character/book - where would they go? Who would they talk to? Who might they try and avoid? You might want to be the host to begin with supporting the children with introductions - and asking them questions. At various moments stop the music to freeze the party and ask the children what they are doing and why.	Children might need some additional prompting but you could encourage them to consider the fictional characters that would most like their book or would need it.
Dressing up rail	A rail stocked with various hats, capes, coats, tails can be used to provide key elements of costume to support children's understanding of character not just on World Book Day but across the year. Parents or PTAs might be able to help source costumes on your behalf.	Hats can also be used to create the job roles of the experts who write non-fiction - going into role as the expert is just as powerful.
Focus on the habit	Instead of inviting children to dress up as a character instead ask them to come in pyjamas and bring their favourite bedtime reading. This is an opportunity to share the benefits of reading as a pre-bed activity and for the children to get some recommendations from their friends.	