

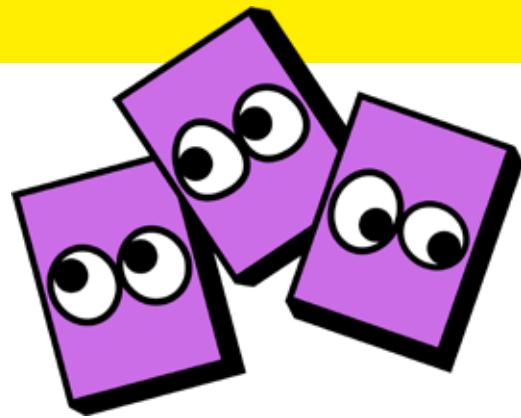
The reading for fun charity

Sponsored by



Our Impact 2025





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World Book Day's Vision and Mission

We champion reading for fun. That's because it seriously improves lives. In fact, it's the biggest indicator that a child will grow up to enjoy a happier and more successful future. Today, only one in three children likes reading. By changing this, we'll transform lives.

Young people are more likely to read if they see it as a fun, entertaining and social thing to do. That's what our work is all about; inspiring them to see reading differently. We'll next be celebrating World Book Day on 5th March 2026. It's going to be amazing! Join us, and let's help every child enjoy the life-changing benefits of reading for fun.



Welcome to our Impact Report 2025

Encouraging engaged, happy readers takes collaboration, commitment and creativity. Thank you to everyone – from partners and educators to families and supporters who worked with World Book Day in 2025 to reach more children with the life-changing benefits of choosing reading.

With the help of libraries, publishers, booksellers, schools and our partners, we distributed 169,000 books into underserved communities, reaching children who might otherwise have missed out on using their token and getting a World Book Day £1/€1.50 book. This year, World Book Day's fun-filled reading events reached communities and children across the country, with an emphasis in rural areas.

In addition, our partnership with Rubies, Every Child Deserves to Dream and Parentkind, meant that 100,000 costumes were donated to 1,600 schools in disadvantaged areas so that even more children could take part in the World Book Day celebrations.



Fiona Hickley
Executive Director

The ongoing decline in children and young people choosing to read is a serious societal issue.

When children don't find reading fun they stop doing it and it is proven that they then risk missing out on a wide range of positive life outcomes. We are on a mission to reverse this trend.

We want World Book Day to resonate and connect with children, as well as their families and carers and the educators, librarians, booksellers and others who support them.

We are here as the reading for fun charity, to unlock the joy of reading for as many children as we can.

Thank you to all our partners for your ongoing commitment, support and belief in the positive impact of reading for fun.



Anna Bond
Chair

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**I don't have
any books
at home so
I can't wait
to read this!**

Child, 2024 survey

”



Read Your Way: The 2025 campaign

Reading for Pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than family circumstances, parental education, or income (OECD). Its benefits are wide-ranging: from improved wellbeing and brain development to better learning outcomes, empathy, and creativity.

“I think World Book Day is doing a great job - my daughter has an intellectual disability and struggles to read as she thinks she can't do it but with the token she picked a free book and allowed me to read other books to her”

Parent

But, we face a crisis with serious implications. The number of children who enjoy reading is at its lowest since 2005, with only 1 in 3 saying they read for pleasure (National Literacy Trust, 2025).

And, it's becoming a generational problem. Many Gen Z parents view reading as a subject to learn, rather than an enjoyable activity to choose.

Around 1 million children don't own a book – rising to 1 in 8 for those on free school meals (National Literacy Trust). Less than half of parents frequently read to their young children, and just 40% say they enjoy doing so (NielsenIQ BookData's 2024 Understanding the Children's Book Consumer survey).

“World Book Day and its mantra ‘Read Your Way’ is helping children all over the UK to have the empowerment to pick up some reading material and read.”

Emma Boone, Children and Families Development Officer, Halton Libraries

Children tell us at World Book Day that they feel pressured about reading. They see it as something they have to do, rather than choose to do.

World Book Day's response is a behaviourally informed campaign tackling the motivation gap. We're reframing reading as something fun, personal, and full of possibility.

At World Book Day we celebrate all kinds of reading – from comics to audiobooks – and we focus on choice, relevance, and enjoyment. We encourage reading that reflects children's interests and passions, showing that every way of reading counts.

And it's making a difference. 1 in 4 children receiving free school meals said their £1 World Book Day book was their first. 43% say they now make more time to read, and 48% find reading more fun (NLT ALS 2025).

These results show what is possible when children find reading that feels fun, relevant and truly their own.

“Loved the theme of Read your way.”
Librarian 2025



23% of pupils receiving Free School Meals said the £1 book they 'bought' with their £1 token was the first book of their own.

91% of 5–8-year-olds and **75%** of 8–16-year-olds took part in a World Book Day event.

42% of children make more time to read as a result of World Book Day.

47% of children find reading more fun as a result of World Book Day.

95% of children have heard of World Book Day.

Source: National Literacy Trust, Annual Literacy Survey 2025



Photo: Suzi Corker

2025 Headline facts



c.2 million

£1/€1.50 books gifted by booksellers and publishers gave children 15 exciting books to choose from and own.

360

children involved in choosing the £1 books

Our brilliant 2025 £1/€1.50 books



Over 23.5m

book tokens distributed through schools, magazines and partnerships, including on Happy Meal® boxes



227m

reach on social media from posts mentioning World Book Day (w/c 03.03.2025)

Over 4,000

booksellers played a vital role in championing reading for fun in their communities, hosting events, visiting schools, and creating brilliant displays to inspire a love of books and reading



Our £1/€1.50 book authors and illustrators joined in the celebrations with the World Book Day Bookshop Tour



Photo: Nick Andrews

80

World Book Day celebrations at National Trust properties



147k

resource pack downloads including our low-cost dressing up pack



6.9m

motorists reached through digital display advertising at motorway stations thanks to free digital advertising space from i-media



23k listens on our World of Stories free audiobooks hub thanks to publishers and our official audio partner Yoto. Plus a competition on the £1 book token to win Yoto Players and audio cards.



1,400

libraries joined in with events, displays and activities, sharing the joy of reading, choosing and book discovery in their communities.



Photo: Every Child Deserves to Dream Collective, supported by Rubies

49k

£1 books gifted to 40 libraries to act as community exchange hubs, thanks to support from Arts Council England, the Catherine Cookson Trust, the Foyle Foundation and the Julia Rausing Trust

Reception at 10 Downing Street and cross-party support from over

100 MPs

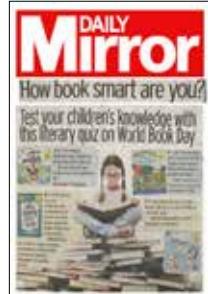


169k

£1/€1.50 books distributed to community projects including to every UK prison, National Literacy Trust programmes, libraries, the Scottish Book Trust, Magic Breakfast schools and the Black British Book Festival

72.5k

mentions of World Book Day across online and print media with positive sentiment rising to 60.1%



Rubies and Every Child Deserves to Dream in partnership with Parentkind donated 100k costumes to 1600 schools in disadvantaged areas ensuring children could dress-up and feel part of the celebrations.



Over a million children and young people took part in our online events with £1/€1.50 book author Benjamin Dean, and The Great World Book Day Footy and Booky Quiz, in partnership with the National Literacy Trust. Schools across the country tuned in to the World Book Day BBC Live Lesson and Pobble's live writing session.

46.5k

£1/€1.50 token packs sent to schools and nurseries



342k books gifted and 10.2 million World Book Day tokens on Happy Meal boxes via our partnership with McDonalds



Strategy and impact

1. Increase the reach and impact of the World Book Day annual campaign: giving every child the opportunity to be a reader by increasing reach and addressing behavioural and economic barriers.

World Book Day 2025 was our most ambitious campaign yet. We reached more children, families and communities, and deepened understanding of why reading for fun matters.

We placed children at the heart of our campaign, increasing our impact by letting their voices tell the story. A broadcast-first media strategy delivered widespread and resonant coverage, with World Book Day omnipresent across TV, radio, print, and online. From a BBC Breakfast feature and BBC News coverage to a Radio 2 takeover, children's media were central to the strategy, including a BBC Live Lesson and Sky Kids segment, helping make reading feel joyful, sociable and relevant.

We secured 2,540 pieces of on-message coverage, including over 35 broadcast features and 25 children's media partnerships. Partnerships with publications like *The Week Junior* and *Beano*, and influencers with a combined organic reach of 6 million, helped reach new audiences, especially digitally.

"I used to dislike reading but when World Book Day happened, I LOVED IT."
Young participant

Our message – that every child should be encouraged to read their way – was amplified through high-profile partnerships and events. From the National Trust's family events to costume donations via Rubies and Parentkind, and a special initiative with Magic Breakfast in Salford, we brought books and reading joy to underserved communities.

Our social media strategy evolved too, with over 300 influencers engaged and 277 million combined reach across platforms. Toolkits helped partners, authors and illustrators create on-message content,



Photo: Suzi Carker

while social listening confirmed increasing positive sentiment and growing understanding of our mission.

We also delivered resonant real-life experiences – with author tours, school visits, and our Downing Street reception all helping spark connection and conversation. A *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* school event, and our partnership with BBC Tiny Happy People in Liverpool, brought the fun of reading into special and everyday spaces.

Together, this integrated approach helped us increase reach, shift attitudes, and strengthen World Book Day's position as a powerful force for change – making reading for fun a reality for more children than ever before.

2. Improve life chances for children through reading: activities meet the charity's purpose and the needs of beneficiaries – particularly those from lower socio-economic groups.

World Book Day's mission to change children's lives through reading continues to grow through deepening our engagement with libraries and communities.

In 2025, we supported 40 libraries to deliver World Book Day community reading festivals in areas where access to books is limited and book ownership is low. These libraries became vibrant hubs for celebrating books and reading, using our tried-and-tested model. We provided each library with £1 books, resources and training, enabling them to run inclusive events with author visits, family activities and book token exchanges.

The programme reached thousands of children who might otherwise have missed out on the World Book Day offer – helping many receive their first ever owned book, boosting library membership, and creating lasting connections between libraries, schools and families.

“We have given lots of children their very first book that is theirs... it's their very own to keep, forever.”

Redcar & Cleveland Library Service

Libraries reported strong impact: 93% of staff said the £1 books and tokens were extremely or very effective at engaging children and families. Nearly half welcomed new families into the library, many for the first time.

They also saw increased footfall, new junior members, and stronger relationships with local schools. Feedback from children and teachers

showed that the experience sparked greater enthusiasm for reading – building momentum that continues well beyond World Book Day itself.

We also partnered with all UK prisons, distributing 24,000 books for parents to gift to their children during family visits. The books created important shared reading moments.

“The men are always very grateful to receive their books on visits – it encourages dads to sit and read with their children.”
Prison Liaison Lead

“...my daughter stopped going to school because of bullying so she didn't get one of them things from the school like everyone else... so when you gives me one I was proper chuffed because it's made me the coolest dad ever. I didn't get nothing like this when I was at school... but then again, I did leave at fourteen like, so thank you.”

Prison Inmate, HMP Maidstone



We continued to extend into harder-to-reach communities, working with the National Literacy Trust and Premier League players who supported World Book Day by sharing their love of reading via social media, helping raise the profile of reading for pleasure with under-served audiences. Working with Book Trust Scotland, we reached children in some of the UK's most remote communities. And in Ireland, An Post supported the distribution of 42,000 World Book Day books directly to families, helping more children experience the joy of owning a book.

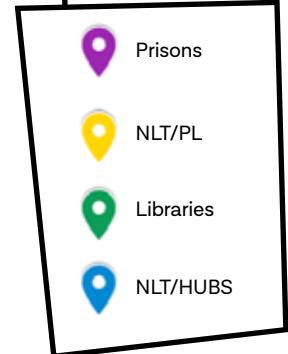
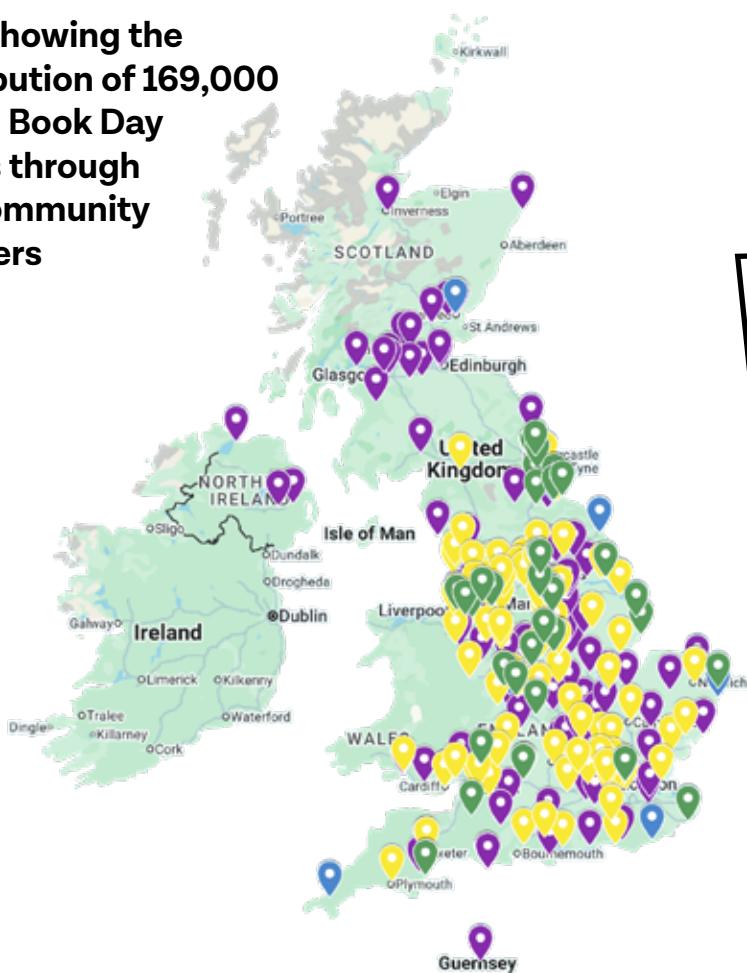
World Book Day acts as a catalyst – setting a tone of fun and excitement that encourages children to choose books that reflect their interests, and choose to keep reading.

We know that for 77% of schools, World Book Day is effective as one of several moments in the year where reading for pleasure is highlighted.

Together with our partners, we're creating joyful reading experiences that inspire children to be readers , and improve life chances.



Map showing the distribution of 169,000 World Book Day books through our community partners



“World Book Day fun sets the tone – then finding the right book for the child sustains it all year round.”
Teacher

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We LOVED being part of World Book Day's selection process! It has worked so well to help promote reading for pleasure with some of our more reluctant readers. The children have really enjoyed being part of the process and loved talking to 'important adults' about books they liked!

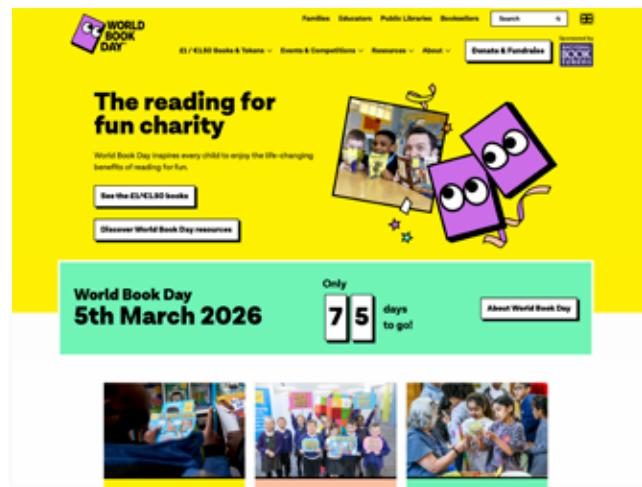
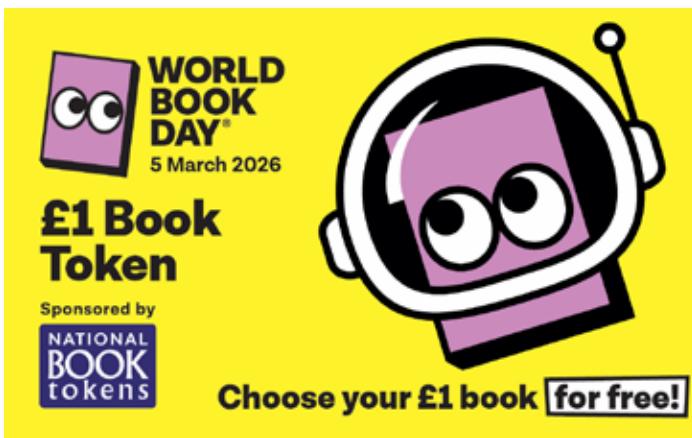
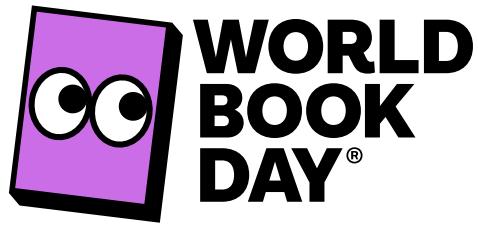
Teacher

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3. Nurture and strengthen the World Book Day brand for the long-term benefit of our beneficiaries, stakeholders and partners.

Late in 2025, ready for World Book Day 2026, we refreshed World Book Day's brand positioning and identity as the reading for fun charity, to resonate and connect with children and families, as well as the educators, librarians, booksellers and others who support them to enjoy reading. This work has clarified World Book Day's vision and mission and proudly identifies our charitable status and place in the UK literacy ecosystem.

Our new look reflects our core values, of driving behaviour change, motivating children and inviting everyone to be part of the reading for fun movement.



4. Build operational capacity and revenue to support the development of the charity

We continue to grow World Book Day's income to support our mission. Since 2021, revenue has increased by 71%, with a greater diversity of income sources contributing to long-term sustainability.

This year we launched new partnerships with the National Trust and Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, helping us reach new audiences through shared activity and storytelling. We also introduced a sustainable merchandise shop on Teemill, with proceeds supporting our work to improve children's access to books and reading for pleasure.

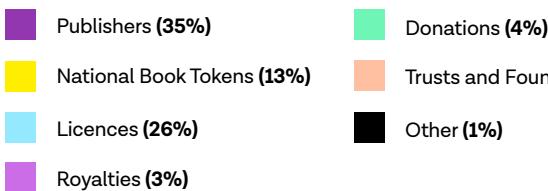
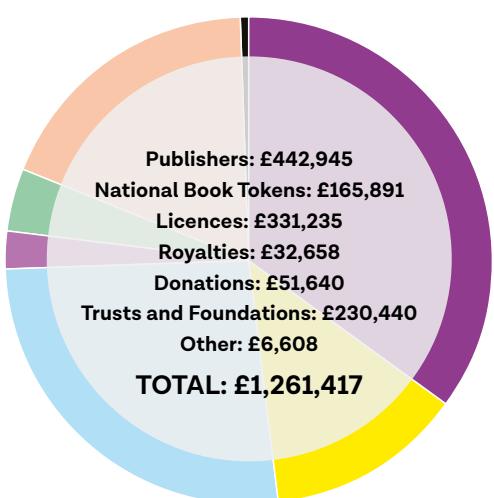
We are investing in systems, data, and team capacity to deliver greater reach and impact year-round.



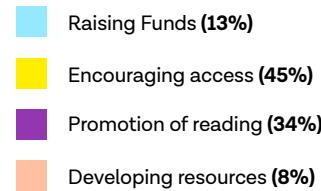
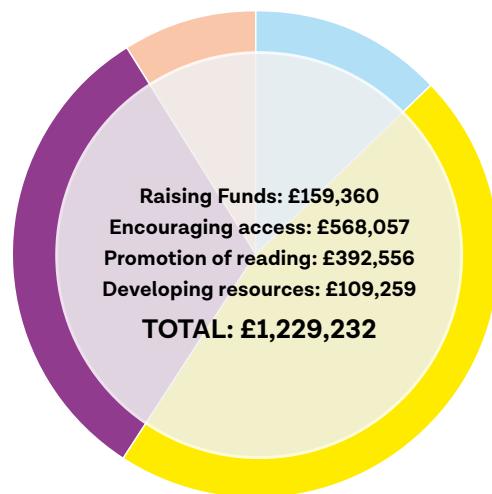
"I just wanted to thank you all for the amazing work you do to motivate and excite our children to read...your work gives me faith... Big huge thank you."

School Librarian

How World Book Day was funded in 2024/25



How funds were spent



Governance

World Book Day is a registered charity (no. 296072) and a company limited by guarantee (no. 00580128). It has two Founder Members (Booksellers Association and Publishers Association) who are each entitled to nominate one individual or organisation as an additional member and have duly exercised this right. There are currently four members. There are currently eleven Trustees, made up of three people appointed by the BA as a Founder Member, three people appointed by the PA as a Founder Member and five others appointed by the Board. In November 2025 Emma Scott stood down as Chair, and existing Trustee Anna Bond, took up this position.

The role of World Book Day's Trustees is to govern the organisation and provide overall direction to achieve the charity's aims. Trustees have legal responsibility for the charity's management and administration.

In 2024/2025 we:

- Appointed an additional Trustee as our Vice Chair; Kathryn Davis
- Renewed the charity's brand positioning and visual identity through a brand development project to clarify our charity's purpose, values, and impact.
- Further developed Trustee leadership and engagement on income generation.
- Engaged positively with our beneficiaries, audiences and stakeholders.



Photo: Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

With thanks

Thank you to all involved in World Book Day from publishers, booksellers, librarians, educators, authors and illustrators to commercial partners, funders and everyone who generously gives their support to help change children's lives through books and reading.

Come and talk to us about working together!

worldbookday.com

hi@worldbookday.com

Sign up for the World Book Day newsletter:
www.worldbookday.com/newsletter-sign-up/

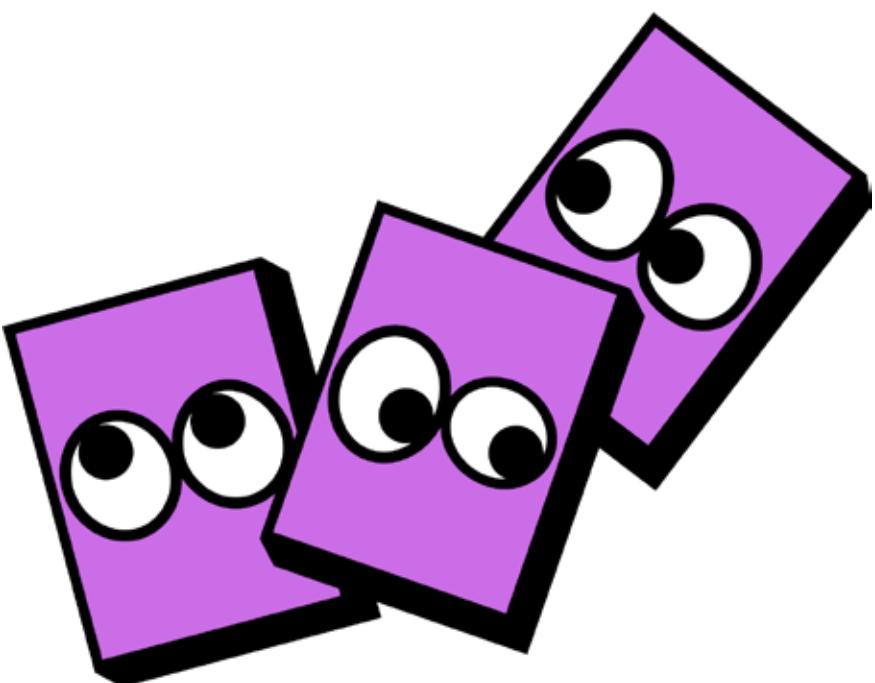
For commercial partnerships get in touch with
Maya Maraj, Head of Commercial Partnerships:
partnerships@worldbookday.com

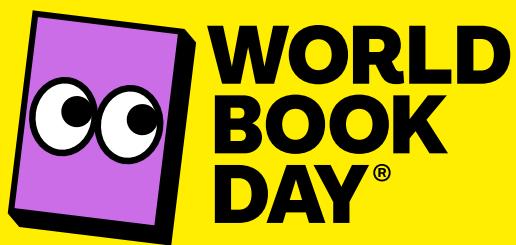
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The reading for fun charity