

Reading for pleasure activities: choice and voice

A National Literacy Trust membership resource

A child's right to choose what they read plays a key role in developing their love of reading. Book choice involves giving children and young readers agency in making choices about what to read. As explored in our 2008 report, [The \(relative\) importance of choice and interest in reader engagement](#), we know



that personal interest, agency and choice are important elements in supporting reader engagement. Research has shown that children who are able to choose their own reading material are more likely to read (Fisher & Frey, 2018). Allowing children to choose books for themselves can increase their motivation to read (Pachtman & Wilson, 2006) and lead to children investing more time and effort into reading (Reynolds & Symons, 2001). Furthermore, choice can empower children, enabling even reluctant readers to maintain persistence and effort in their reading (Clark & Phythian-Sence, 2008).

As well as ensuring that pupils have access to a diverse and wide range of texts, young readers need support with choosing the right text: one that is suited to their reading ability as well as one that they'll enjoy. Prioritising time for book choice is key in empowering pupils, developing their motivation to read, and helping them to discover the power of reading for enjoyment. ¹

In this resource, you'll find a wide range of ideas that focus on developing reading for pleasure in your school both on World Book Day and beyond, all while aiming to empower young people to take an active role in their reading journey.

¹ [Young Readers Programme: Developing a Love of Reading in Primary Schools](#), Anne Teravainen-Goff, Christina Clark and Ariadne Brown, National Literacy Trust, January 2023
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Choice and voice activity ideas for World Book Day

Celebrating with



Whole-school storytelling: Invite staff from across the school (from lunchtime staff to senior leaders) to choose a favourite story to read aloud to



pupils. Choose a 30-minute time slot during the day to run the story sessions and assign each staff member a storytelling space in the school. Invite all pupils from across the school to **choose** which story they'd like to hear. You might need to allocate first and second choices to ensure manageable numbers of pupils in each session. The focus here is simply on enjoyment and choice – don't worry about matching books to pupils' ages.

Book choice cafe: World Book Day is a great opportunity to try out something new and why not start with a book tasting cafe to teach children **book choice strategies**, as well as giving them a chance to try out new books? Running a book tasting event is a fun way to empower pupils to practise their book choice skills, and choose a book based on their interests. By openly teaching book-choice strategies, and regulating the number of books on offer you can help pupils who are easily overwhelmed, and avoid children choosing a book just to 'get the job done'! See our session guide and classroom PowerPoint for more details on how to run a [book tasting cafe in your classroom](#).



'Masked Reader' competition: Invite members of staff to record videos of themselves reading an extract from their favourite book, but with their appearance hidden via a mask or costume. Watch the videos with your pupils and invite them to guess who they think each person is by listening carefully to the voices or looking for clues. After each staff member reveals who they are in the videos, invite them to explain to children what story they chosen to read from and why. This could provide a good opportunity to introduce new texts to the pupils and to get them thinking about which one they'd like to try themselves.



Explore the World Book Day reads: The £1/€1.50 books are an important part of World Book Day's [mission](#) to promote reading for pleasure by offering every child and young person the opportunity to choose and own a book. To help your pupils to spend their £1 token and choose the book they'll enjoy, spend some time exploring the reads as a class.

Visit the World Book Day page [here](#) to find out more about the books on offer and to watch videos from the authors introducing their books.

Invite your pupils to discuss the books that they



are most intrigued about and why: *Are they a fan of the author already? Have they read something similar before? Is it something completely new to them that they'd like to try? Has a friend recommended this author or series?* <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/how-to-choose-books/>

Choice and voice ideas throughout the year

We know that World Book Day is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate reading, but we also know that reading for pleasure needs to be embedded throughout the school all year round. Take a look at some of the ideas below to build on the World Book Day fun throughout the rest of the year. All of these activities aim to promote reading for pleasure whilst championing pupils' voice and supporting them with making choices. You might choose to use the World Day moment to launch one of these new initiatives.

Reading Champions: Involve your pupils in deciding how reading for enjoyment could be championed in your school. Ask pupils from each class to put themselves forward (you might like to run this as an election style vote, like the way you would select a Student Council). Pupils who wish to become a Reading Champion should explain why they are suited for the role, what ideas they have for promoting reading in the school and what



reading means to them. Once you have selected your Reading Champions, meet regularly to plan how to promote reading across the school. Your Reading Champions can help organise celebration days such as

World Book Day or parent events, or do things like help reading become visible throughout the school.

Create your own schoolbook award: Launch your own annual book award, where pupils vote for the book they've enjoyed the most over a designated period of time. You could have categories based on age-range or genres such as picture books, comics and



graphic novels, non-fiction, or chapter books. Each class could generate a longlist of titles for the chosen categories, and then put forward one or two titles for the school shortlist. Once the shortlist has been decided, make titles accessible in school reading spaces and spend some time in classes exploring the titles before voting for a winner and holding an awards ceremony. You may even be able to get the winning author or illustrator to visit the school or send a video message!

Class or assembly read-aloud: Prioritise time for reading aloud to your pupils daily and involve them in helping to choose the current class text. Over the course of a week, display three options and invite pupils to vote using a counter, for the one they'd like to become the next class reader. Before they vote, encourage pupils to use their book choice strategies



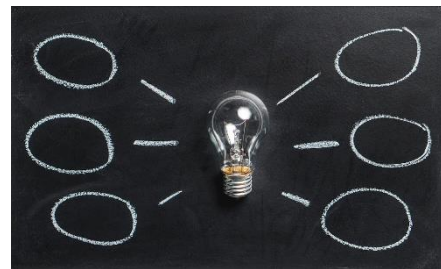
to consider which one they'd most like to read. To help pupils with their choice, you might like to read them the first chapter of each book over the week or even try out the 'p.99' method where you read them page 99 of each book to provide a taster.

Peer-to-peer recommendations: Create opportunities in your classroom for pupils to take an active role in recommending books to each other, not only does this help to empower you pupils, but it also has the potential to ignite book talk and support with book choice.

1. **Create pupil-led recommendation shelves:** Each week, invite two pupils to pick a selection of their favourite books for a recommended reads section in the class reading space. Try to get them to include a range of text types, that alongside fiction, could also include poetry, non-fiction and graphic novels. Invite the pupils to attach a post-it note to each selection that explains why they have chosen it and who might enjoy it. Repeat this cycle so that different pupils take on the role.



2. **Graffiti recommendation walls:** Use blackboard paint on a wall outside or a dedicated changeable display area with a variety of different chalks, pens, colours and post-it notes to provide a graffiti style space for pupils to recommend and discuss books. If you want to be more focussed with your graffiti wall, you can create a different type of interactive display which changes week by week. Each week a different theme is given and pupils are invited to comment and recommend books on that theme. Everything from dystopian epics to books that make you laugh out loud – a great way to encourage list mania around themes and broaden pupil's reading diets.



3. **Class reading scrapbook:** Create a class scrapbook for pupils to document their



reading journey together as well as provide a space for pupils to discover peer-recommended texts. Each week, assign the journal to one pupil to create a double page spread page that documents something they have recently read and enjoyed. You might like to send the journal home along with some basic craft materials and colouring pens, as well as a print-out image of the front cover of their chosen text to stick-in to the scrapbook. Encourage pupils to get creative and present their recent reading experience in any way they wish, scrapbook style. For example, they may create their own version of

the front cover or draw favourite characters or scenes. Provide an age-appropriate criteria for the information they must include, for example:

- Favourite/most interesting characters
- What they enjoyed about the text/favourite scenes or moments/favourite facts
- Who else might enjoy reading it and why
- Genres, themes

Before beginning the scrapbook, support pupils by modelling how to complete it with your own choice of a recommended read.

Run a reading challenge: As part of our ongoing work to support schools, we run Reading



Champions Challenges. These bite sized challenges are designed to help build a reading culture in schools by encouraging reading for pleasure, reading diversely, and supporting development of reading stamina. Reading Champions Challenges are for students aged 5 to 14. They are completely free and open to all UK schools. Each challenge will have its own engaging theme, and will be supported by a suite of resources that will include teacher guidance notes along with additional elements such as posters, templates, and video clips to make the challenge fun. Visit our webpage for more information:

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/competitions/>