

February 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

As a department, we have been absolutely amazed by the positive response we have had from most of our pupils regarding the reading homework this half-term. We are really enjoying seeing our pupils discuss and enjoy some challenging classic texts and are already beginning to see the impact all the reading our pupils are doing is having on their ability to read confidently and independently in class.

It is important that we continue to strive for excellence in all that we do, and a key feature of the new GCSE specification is the ability to read, understand and analyse 19th Century (or earlier) texts – our pupils are quickly developing the skills to tackle these texts and their reading homework is designed to help them practice these skills.

These texts have been chosen according to your child's current reading and chronological age; because they are classic stories that have engaged children and young adults for centuries; and because they are freely available to distribute **for reading for** pleasure, due to their age.

Now that our pupils have had a half term to establish a routine with their homework, we are going to push on with continuing to praise those who complete this work, whilst now building in opportunities for those who have missed their reading to catch up. As such, after the half term, any pupil who has not completed their homework will be asked to spend 20 minutes after school the following Monday catching up with the reading, in order to support them with not falling behind their peers in the stories they are working on.

I have re-attached the help sheet from www.booktrust.org.uk that was given out with the original homework letter, it has some suggested strategies for reading with older children.

We thank you with your ongoing support with this matter, if you have any further questions or need any support with this, please contact your child's English teacher in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

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Encouraging older children to read

As children get older, there's no need to stop enjoying sharing books and reading together.

Research has shown that children who enjoy reading and spend more time reading for pleasure have better reading and writing skills, a broader vocabulary, and an increased general knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

But with so many other activities competing for children's time as they get older, how can you continue to encourage your child to read for pleasure?

Here are some tips for promoting reading in your home with older children:

- **Ensure that your children see you reading.** It doesn't matter if it's the newspaper, a cookery book, romantic novel, detective mystery, short stories, computer manual, magazine - anything!
- **Encourage children to join in** - ask a child to read out a recipe for you as you cook, or the TV listings when you are watching TV.
- **Give books or book tokens as presents** (and encourage others to do so!)
- **Visit the local library together** on a regular basis, and enjoy spending time choosing new books.
- **Encourage children to carry a book at all times** so they can read on journeys or in spare moments – you can do this, too!
- **Keep reading together.** There are lots of books that both adults and young people can enjoy. Try *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon, the *Harry Potter* series, or *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. Read books you can all talk about but make the
- **Go to libraries or bookshops when authors are visiting.** Children and teenagers love meeting their favourite writers - Jacqueline Wilson and Anthony Horowitz always have signing queues that are miles long!
- **Make sure your home is a reading home** - have a family bookshelf and make sure there are shelves in your children's bedrooms as well.
- **Don't panic if your child reads the same book over** and over again - let's be honest, we've probably all done it!
- **Encourage your children and their friends to swap books** with each other. This will encourage them to talk and think about the books they are reading together.

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