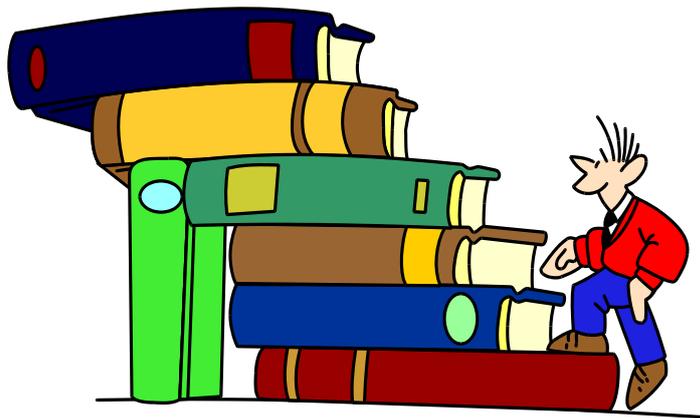




Literacy: *A Guide for Parents*



“The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.”

Dr. Seuss, "I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!"

What do we do in school to help improve the literacy level your child has?

- We look closely at national reading test results of pupils in Year 7.
- Those below a standardised score of 95 are re-tested on Accelerated Reader.
- We provide support for those children who struggle with literacy. *This may take the form of timetabled withdrawal from lessons for one-to-one support with a specially trained teacher or participation in a small reading group.*
- All Year 7 pupils have literacy and numeracy lessons, which focus on the key skills, **in addition** to Maths and English.
- All Year 7 pupils have a dedicated library reading lesson once a fortnight and complete a series of reading challenges.
- University students provide voluntary reading support for Year 8 pupils.
- Our teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils with the literacy demands of all subjects (for example key words are displayed in classrooms).
- Literacy is a compulsory component in all subject schemes of work, marking and reporting.



READING

Why is reading so important?

Secondary school students who have a low reading age could face significant setbacks in later life. Even those who don't plan to attend college or university will need strong vocabulary and comprehension skills. In fact, recent research has shown that a mechanic's manual requires better reading skills than a standard university text.

Throughout their adult life, they are likely to need to decode complex information such as mortgage forms and insurance documents. Your child needs to be a confident reader to function in today's world and you, as a parent, can encourage these skills.

Obviously, you want to make sure that your teenager grows into adulthood with all the skills he or she needs to succeed. There are many modern distractions that interrupt potential reading time and the following is a list of ways to encourage your teenager to turn off the television, stop playing video games, put their phone down and **read**.

What can you do to support your teenager's reading?

1. Set an example. Let your kids see you reading for pleasure. Boys, in particular, can be influenced greatly by seeing male role models reading and talking about reading.
2. Read some books written for teenagers. Young adult novels can give you valuable insights into the concerns and pressures felt by teenagers. You may find that these books provide a neutral ground on which to talk about sensitive subjects.
3. Furnish your home with a variety of reading materials. Leave books, magazines, and newspapers around.
4. Give teenagers an opportunity to choose their own books. When you and your teenager are out together, browse in a bookstore or library. The new Cardiff Central library is a fantastic place to start and books borrowed there can be returned to your local library. Go your separate ways and make your own selections.

5. Build on your teenager's interests. Look for books and articles that feature their favourite sports teams, rock stars, hobbies or TV shows. Give a gift subscription to a special interest magazine.

6. View pleasure reading as a value in itself. Almost anything your teenager reads - including comics, menus, football league tables, maps and T.V. guides - help to build reading skills. Ask them to find you real and specific information from non-fiction sources to get them to use skimming and scanning skills

7. Make reading aloud a natural part of family life. Share an article you clipped from the paper, a poem or a letter.

8. Visit and use local websites. www.thesprout.co.uk is a Cardiff based website for young people with the facility to comment on articles and get involved in discussions with other young people in Cardiff.

9. Use technology to your advantage. If you can afford to buy an e-reader or download books onto their mobile phone. This format appeals to many teenagers and is a readily available resource to use on public transport, in doctors' waiting rooms or on car journeys.

10. Buy into film adaptations. Some teenagers might feel more confident picking up a novel if they are already familiar with the plot.

Adapted from: www.cardiff.gov.uk/readingpower

WRITING

As learners develop as writers, they demonstrate that they can:

- use a range of sentence structures
- organise their writing by using paragraphs effectively
- use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- use punctuation to clarify meaning
- use a range of strategies to enable them to spell correctly
- present their writing neatly and appropriately

Writing Sentences

A **simple sentence** is the most basic type of sentence. All it requires is: a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. -

Joe waited for the train.
'Joe'=subject 'waited'=verb.

A **compound sentence** contains two independent sentences that are joined together by a **coordinating conjunction** or -
FANBOYS – For , and , nor, but, or, yet , so.

For example,

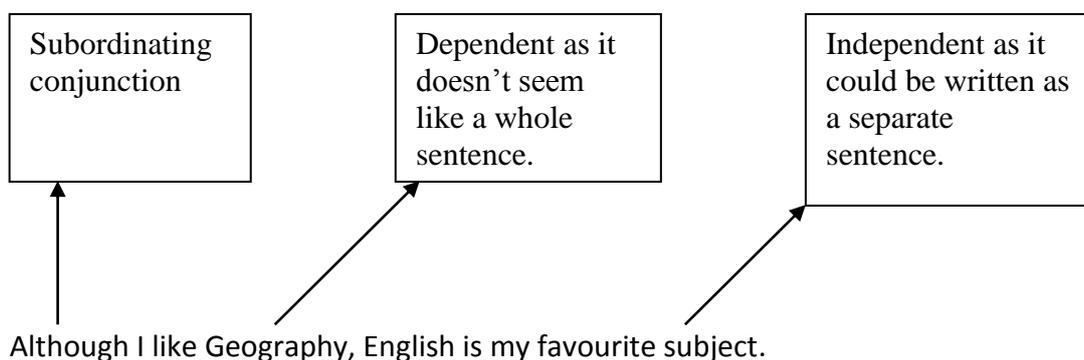
'I tried to speak Spanish. My friend laughed at me'.

Becomes -

'I tried to speak Spanish but my friend laughed at me'.

A **complex sentence** has two parts to it. A dependent part and an independent part.

A **complex sentence** always uses a **subordinating conjunction** such as *because, while, before, since, after, although, or when*
or
a relative pronoun such as *that, who, or which*.



Punctuation

The full stop (.)

The comma (,)

The colon (:)

The semi-colon (;)

The apostrophe (')

The full stop

The full stop is used at the end of a sentence. A sentence is a group of words which makes complete sense. E.g. John kicked the ball.

The comma

The comma is used to separate the main clause of a sentence from the subordinate clauses. The main clause is the section of the sentence which makes complete sense

by itself. The subordinate clauses do not make sense by themselves, e.g. *While the children were working quietly, the teacher was surfing the internet.*

The comma is also used to separate items in a list, e.g. *For lunch today I had: a cheese sandwich, a packet of crisps, a Fruit Shoot and an apple.*

The colon

The colon is used to introduce a list (*see example above*).

The colon is also used to add further explanation to a point previously made. For example: *Schools nowadays are much improved from previously: corporal punishment no longer exists, and teachers generally make more effort to involve and engage students in lessons.*

The semi-colon

One way to use the semi-colon is to separate items in a list in which each item is fairly long and complicated. For example:

'I did lots of things at the weekend: I went to the theatre with my friends; I cooked Sunday lunch; I did a huge pile of marking; I created a PowerPoint presentation.'

Semi-colons are used here to separate the items because they are each quite lengthy. This makes the sentence clearer.

Another way to use the semi-colon is to separate clauses in a sentence which have equal weight. For example:

Jane was a student at the local school; she was a hard-working and pleasant girl.

The apostrophe

The first use of the apostrophe is to show possession (when something belongs to someone). The apostrophe always goes **after the last letter** of the word describing **the person to whom something belongs (the 'owner')**. If the 'owner' is singular, the apostrophe is followed by an 's'.

The book of the boy

becomes

The boy's book

When the 'owner' in a sentence (the person or thing to whom something belongs) is **plural AND** ends in an **s** (boys, babies) there is **NO 's'** after the apostrophe. For example:

The books of the boys

becomes

The boys' books

For plural nouns not ending in **s**, like men, for example, the rule is the same as for most singular nouns. The ball belonging to the men is *The men's ball*.

The apostrophe is also used when letters are **omitted** (left out) from a word or words. The apostrophe always goes in the place where letters are missing. For example: *have not* becomes *haven't* because the 'o' is omitted.

SPELLING

Spelling has always caused problems for people who speak English. There can be very few adults who can claim to spell perfectly. Problems can clearly be seen when you look at a selection of school exercise books. English is more difficult than many languages because the way we spell words often has very little connection with the way we pronounce them.

Tips to improve Spelling:

There are many ways to encourage your child to become better at spelling. Some of these are listed below.

However, by far the best way is to encourage them to read more as the more often they see the correct spelling of a word in context, the more likely they are to replicate this spelling in their own writing.

Above all, children need to be shown how to identify the *types* of spelling that they struggle with and **set targets for themselves** to learn to spell these words.

Spelling Strategies:

- ◆ Break it into sounds (*u-n-i-o-n*)
- ◆ Break it into syllables (*con-tin-ent*)
- ◆ Break it into affixes (*dis + satisfy*)
- ◆ Use a mnemonic (*Never Eat Chips Eat Salad Sandwiches And Remain Young!*)
- ◆ Refer to a word in the same family (*chemical, chemist, chemistry*)
- ◆ Over-articulate it (*Wed-nes-day*)
- ◆ Words within words (*GUM in argument*)
- ◆ Refer to word history (*bi = two, cycle = wheels*)
- ◆ Use analogy (*tough, rough, enough*)
- ◆ Use a key word (*I'm – to remember a apostrophe can replace a missing letter*)
- ◆ Apply spelling rules (*hop**pp**ing = short vowel sound, hop**ing** = long vowel*)
- ◆ Learn by sight (*look-say-cover-write check*)
- ◆ Visual memory (*recall images, colour, font*)

Encourage your child to use the 'LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK' method to learn to spell unfamiliar words.

LOOK

Look at the correct spelling of the word, trying to 'photograph' it in your mind. Pay particular attention to the difficult bits of the word.

SAY

Say the word out loud, pronouncing it to emphasise the spelling if necessary e.g.

Wed – nes - day

COVER

Cover the word up and try to visualise it.

WRITE

Write the word out without looking at the correct version.

Wednesday

CHECK

Compare your version carefully with the original. If a mistake is made, repeat the process from the beginning.

Commonly mis-spelt words:

Encourage your child to learn how to spell these words.

accelerated	accidentally	address	athletics
beginning	believe	business	cancelled
clothes	collection	computer	conscious
definite	describe	description	dictionary
disappear	during	ecstasy	embarrass
exaggerate	experience	finally	forty
friend	fulfil	government	hoping
humorous	hurriedly	illustration	immediately
inspector	later	license (noun)	license (verb)
necessary	niece	occasion	parallel
pleasant	possession	potatoes	professional
receipt	receive	rhythm	sandwich
sentence	separate	shining	similar
studying	success	surprise	together
tomorrow	truly	vicious	weird
writing			

Homophones

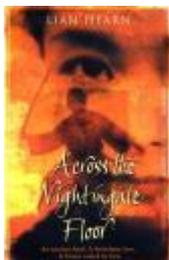
Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings. Here are some commonly confused words.

Homophones	Examples
allowed aloud	You are not <u>allowed</u> to smoke until you are 16. She spoke her thoughts <u>aloud</u> (to say something so it can be heard).
break brake	If you <u>break</u> something you damage it. When you <u>brake</u> the car slows down.
caught court	He <u>caught</u> a large fish. You play tennis on a tennis <u>court</u> .
check cheque	Did you <u>check</u> that the door is locked? You can write a <u>cheque</u> to pay your bills.
flower flour	A daffodil or a rose is a <u>flower</u> . You need some <u>flour</u> to make the birthday cake.
here hear	Please come over <u>here</u> . Can you <u>hear</u> that noise?
hour our	There are 60 minutes in an <u>hour</u> . This is <u>our</u> house.

Homophones	Examples
new knew	I spilt ketchup on my brand new shirt. I knew the answers to all the questions.
one won	There was only one piece of birthday cake left. She won the running race.
plain plane	I painted over the wallpaper in a plain colour. The plane landed late because of heavy fog.
sight site	Don't let the children out of your sight. There were four cranes on the building site.
they're their there	They're is a shorter way to say they are. It was their dog that bit the postman. The supermarket is over there.
through threw	I walked through the door into the room. She threw the ball a long way.
to too two	He isn't going to work today. Too is another way to say as well. Two is the number between one and three.
week weak	A week is seven days long. He was too weak to lift the heavy box.
where wear	Where are you going tonight? Which tee-shirt are you going to wear out?
whether weather	I'm not sure whether to phone her or not. Sun, rain, wind and snow are types of weather.
which witch	Which ice cream would you like? The witch was seen flying on a broomstick.
whole hole	Two halves make a whole. There was a hole in his sock.
would wood	Would you like a drink? Wood comes from trees.
write right	I must write a letter to my friend soon. Right is the opposite of left.

Books to encourage reluctant readers:

The list below was created by the National Literacy Trust from a survey run on LoveReading4schools where Teachers and Parents were asked to recommend books that they have found helpful in encouraging reluctant readers.



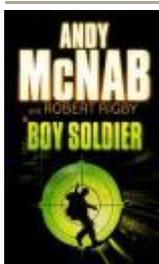
Across The Nightingale Floor **Lian Hearn**

In his palace, Lord Iida Sadamu, warlord of the Tohan clan, surveys his famous nightingale floor. Constructed with exquisite skill, it sings at the tread of each human foot. No assassin can cross it unheard.



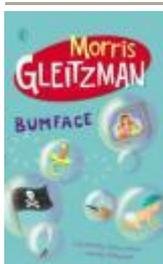
Animal Farm **George Orwell**

Having got rid of their human master, the animals of Manor Farm look forward to a life of freedom. But as a clever, ruthless elite among them takes control, the other animals find themselves hopelessly ensnared in the old ways.



Boy Soldier **Andy McNab, Robert Rigby**

Danny Watts is determined to track down the man who has ruined his life. But how can he find an expert in covert operations who is trained to avoid capture?



Bumface **Morris Gleitzman**

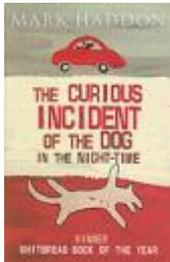
Angus is forced to be much more grown up than he wants to be - he has to look after his sister and baby brother and he's only eleven. He dreams of being wild and free like the pirate in a story he tells Imogen and Leo but instead he spends lots of time changing nappies and cleaning up.



Cirque Du Freak, Complete & Unabridged

Darren Shan

This book will have you screaming out in revulsion and horror. Wrap yourself up in your duvets and get prepared to be scared. This is outrageously gruesome:



Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time

Mark Haddon

A murder mystery like no other, this novel features Christopher Boone, a 15 year-old who suffers from Asperger's syndrome.



Fat Boy Swim

Catherine Forde

Fourteen-year-old Jimmy Kelly is Fat Boy Fat, the largest kid in his Scottish community, who's made to feel useless at everything. Only his family knows he's a whiz in the kitchen, and Jimmy is determined to keep it that way. So when GI Joe, the toughest coach at school, finds out his secret, Jimmy is sure he's doomed.



Hatchet

Gary Paulsen

Headed for Canada to visit his father for the first time since his parents' divorce, thirteen-year-old Brian is the sole survivor of a plane crash, with only the clothes he has on and a hatchet to help him shape a life for himself in the wilderness.



Holes

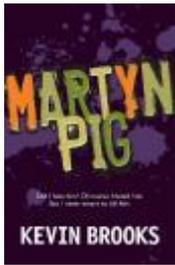
Louis Sachar

Stanley Yelnat's family has a history of bad luck going back generations, so he is not surprised when a miscarriage of justice leads to him being sent to 'Camp Green Lake' detention centre.



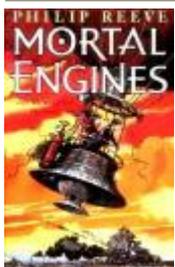
Little Soldier
Bernard Ashley

Kaninda is an ex-child soldier from East Africa, orphaned and living in London. When a child from a nearby estate is hit by a car he is drawn into an inter-estate conflict. The story combines current conflicts in London with real war in Africa.



Martyn Pig
Kevin Brooks

"Did I hate him? Of course I hated him. But I never meant to kill him..." Meet Martyn Pig, a boy caught in a miserable world whose life just got worse. Trapped by events following a single, shocking accident, he makes a decision with breathtaking consequences.



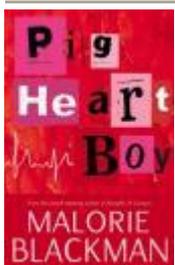
Mortal Engines
Philip Reeve

In a world where moving cities trawl the globe, Tom and Hester have been thrown together. Truly-thrown out of a city on wheels that's left them stranded and starving in the middle of nowhere while it hares off after its prey. Hester is desperate for revenge, and Tom is only desperate to get back on board his beloved London.



Noughts and Crosses
Malorie Blackman

Sephy is a Cross - a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a nought - a 'colourless' member of the underclass. This thought-provoking book is about the barriers they have to cross to be together.



Pig Heart Boy
Malorie Blackman

Cameron is thirteen and in need of a heart transplant when a pioneering doctor approaches his family with a startling idea ...



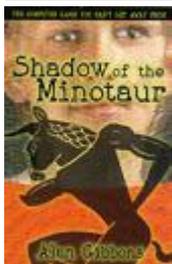
Private Peaceful
Michael Morpurgo

"Tommo" Peaceful is recalling his childhood from the terrible battlefields of the First World War. Bullets, bombs, death. Shells, noise, dirt. Disease, rats, stench. Tommo and his brother Charlie fight for their lives and to stay together--facing certain death every time they try to advance the British lines.



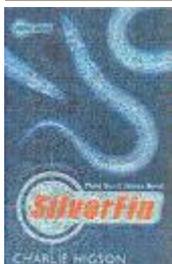
Refugee Boy
Benjamin Zephaniah

Alem is on holiday with his father for a few days in London. He has never been out of Ethiopia before and is very excited. One morning Alem wakes up in the bed and breakfast they are staying at to find that he is alone. A letter from his father reveals that because of the political problems in Ethiopia both he and Alem's mother felt Alem would be safer in London - even though it is breaking their hearts to do this. He has to face the future as a refugee boy.



Shadow of the Minotaur
Alan Gibbons

Real life or the death defying adventures of the Greek myths, with their heroes and monsters, daring deeds and narrow escapes - which would you choose? For Phoenix it's easy. He hates his new home and the new school where he is bullied. He's embarrassed by his computer geek dad. But when he logs on to The Legendeer, the game his dad is working on, he can be a hero.



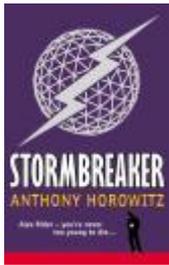
Silverfin
Charlie Higson

James Bond is back, aged 13 years. The original superspy, Bond's early days at Eton in the 30's as a thirteen-year-old are the focus for the first part of the book. It is, however, when James is in Scotland at the remote home of his Aunt Charmian and Uncle Max, that his first great adventure, and mystery to solve, takes shape.



Skulduggery Pleasant
Derek Landy

”Who is Skulduggery Pleasant? He’s a wise-cracking detective, powerful magician, master of dirty tricks and burglary (in the name of the greater good of course). He’s also the ally, protector and mentor of Stephanie Edgley, a very unusual and darkly talented 12 year old. And, oh yeah ... he’s dead!”



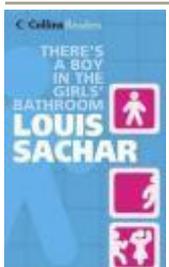
Stormbreaker
Anthony Horowitz

When his guardian dies in suspicious circumstances, fourteen-year-old Alex Rider finds his world turned upside down. Forcibly recruited into MI6, this book follows his thrilling adventures.



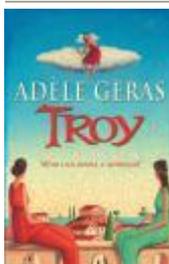
A Swift Pure Cry
Siobhan Dowd

After Shell's mother dies, her religious father descends into alcoholic mourning and Shell is left to care for her younger brother and sister.



There's A Boy in the Girl's Bathroom
Louis Sachar

A boy who fights with his school mates, and makes it difficult for anyone to like him, learns how to change and trust people.



Troy
Adele Geras

Marpessa is gifted with God-sight, Xanthe has the healing touch. But then, Aphrodite, Goddess of Love, decides to play with their hearts.

Useful websites:

Here are some examples of websites to help improve your child's reading and writing skills:

www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar

Practise and enhance your written skills through:

- Information sheets
- Printable worksheets
- Quizzes

www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips

An amazing 'education through entertainment' resource, simply select the Literacy subject link and view the related topics for teaching ideas.

www.snappywords.com

The new way to look up a word in a dictionary, with brilliant graphics to make learning new words fun.

www.comicmaster.org.uk

An amazing website that lets you design and write your own comic, highly recommended for girls as well as boys.

www.greatbookstoreadaloud.co.uk

Handy advice about what books to buy and borrow for a particular age group.

www.thesprout.co.uk

A fantastic Cardiff based youth resource that will inspire those who like to have their opinion heard. Write a review, article or point of view on whatever you like and see your work published on the site, on line, within 24 hours. Read others' work and post comments.

www.literacytrust.org.uk/resources/practical_resources_info

A superb source of information on reading, writing and spelling. This website also has a wealth of boys' resources by football author, Tom Palmer. Type in his name in the search bar for crosswords, short stories and football writing opportunities.

www.readingforlife.org.uk

For younger children, this website offers advice, recommendations and freebies to encourage reading as a family.

www.boysliteracywales.co.uk

Advice and book recommendations with a Welsh flavour that includes links to the recent BBC2 education week programmes.

<http://acce.cardiffschools.net/>

Links to the Cardiff Moodle. Courses posted by Cardiff teachers, advisory teachers and advisers. Try the Birchfield VLE course, your child should have an account from their school.

[www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/eng/vtc-home/vtc-ks4-home/vtc-ks4-eng\(2\)](http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/eng/vtc-home/vtc-ks4-home/vtc-ks4-eng(2))

The National Grid for Learning that contains revision resources for exam texts, along with lessons on fiction and non-fiction reading skills, speaking and writing skills.

www.earlylearninghq.org.uk

Early Learning HQ has hundreds of free foundation stage and key stage one teaching resources. They have a large selection of display posters, flash cards, alphabets, number lines as well as many other innovative resources to help with class management and to promote numeracy and literacy skills.

www.storysnoops.com/index.php

Need a book for a particular child? It's easy to find just what you need with Suggested Reading lists, a great website for choosing books for children

www.guardian.co.uk/childrens-books-site

A child focused children's book site from the Guardian Online

[Families Learning Together](#)

A team of dedicated teachers who visit schools to offer quality provision empowering parents to help their children with their learning.