



Welcome to the **Storytime** **Home Reading Pack**

STORYTIME is one of the world's leading story magazine, created to give parents, carers and teachers a quality magazine that helps to improve children's literacy - with no adverts and no plastic toys, just great stories.

The short story format and variety in each issue means it's perfect for reading together at home. Reading with children – even for just ten minutes a day – can make a huge difference to their literacy.

The Storytime team have put together a pack to help you get the best out of the time you spend reading with your child at home, whether you choose to read books, Storytime, or anything else!

Inside you'll find:

- ➡ Reading to your Children – Some Common Questions
- ➡ Five Different Reading Styles
- ➡ Knocking Down Barriers to Reading
- ➡ Reading Rewards
- ➡ More information about Storytime



12 REASONS WHY STORIES ARE IMPORTANT:

- 1.** They give you a uniquely special 'together time' as a family.
- 2.** They leave your children with happy childhood memories.
- 3.** They help develop early language skills.
- 4.** They boost vocabulary at all age levels.
- 5.** They improve literacy rates in children.
- 6.** They help kids fall in love with reading – something that lasts a lifetime.
- 7.** They expand minds and horizons, and explore difference.
- 8.** They promote imaginative thinking and creativity.
- 9.** They teach children positive values.
- 10.** They give children characters or situations they can relate to and learn from.
- 11.** They foster a greater understanding of the world and other people's needs.
- 12.** They bring happiness and laughter.

READING TO YOUR CHILDREN

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS



We're often asked for advice from our readers about how to read to their children successfully. Read on for our advice on the when, what and how of enjoying stories at home!

When is the best time to read to my child?

The best guide of all is your own child. If they're exhausted and can barely keep their eyes open, it's not wise to keep them awake any longer with a bedtime story.

The best time to share stories when your child is receptive enough to enjoy them. That could be before bath-time, before pyjamas, after pyjamas, in your special 'story chair' or tucked up in bed. The best advice is to keep trying until you find a time that works for everyone.

How Many Stories Should I Read?

This largely depends on the age of your children – and experts often look at the length of time you read, rather than the number of books. In the UK, the reading charity Booktrust recommends that you aim for 10 minutes of reading every day. We say, aim for 10 minutes when your children are very little and gradually increase the time as they get older, aiming for 20 to 30 minutes.

If you're really having fun, slot in extra reading sessions earlier in the day or at the weekend, but remember, you don't have to make story time a mammoth reading session.

How Do I Read Stories?

With enthusiasm, with pleasure and, most importantly, with everything that makes you who you are. The key to how to do stories is to be yourself, even if that means stumbling and tripping over words and avoiding silly voices. You're not a Hollywood actor; you're a parent.

What Are Best Stories to Read?

The best stories for children tend to have the following themes:

- ★ They're funny or downright silly.
- ★ They feature fears, problems or subjects children can relate to, such as being scared of monsters under the bed, learning to share, being brave, being naughty, starting school, or even disliking vegetables.
- ★ They star favourite characters, like pirates, dinosaurs and animals.
- ★ They allow kids to explore imaginary places or other worlds, such as outer space or under the sea.
- ★ They're tried and trusted classics, like fairy tales.

That's not a comprehensive list, by any means, but it's a good starting point if you're stuck and looking for good stories.

What Age Should I Stop Reading Stories?

As long as your child enjoys it, there's no reason to stop, and the longer you carry on reading stories, the more reading tips and strategies they'll pick up from you. By doing nothing more than reading, you're teaching them about tone, expression, creating tension, pronunciation, and sharing new words. They're learning without trying. What's more, you can use your bedtime stories as a springboard for all kinds of discussions or activities beyond the book or story. Read for as long as you can and enjoy it.

FIVE DIFFERENT READING STYLES TO TRY



Do you struggle to read with your child at home? The traditional way to share stories with your children is to sit beside them, book perched on your lap, and to read aloud. You put on your best funny voices (or not) and point at key words and pictures. Perhaps you speed up and slow down in all the right places.

But what if the traditional way isn't holding your child's attention? If this is the case, don't worry and certainly don't give up. There are other reading styles that might be the key to engaging your child with reading.

1 FILL-IN-THE-GAPS READING

This technique works best one-to-one. Simply read aloud, but stop every now and again, and ask your child to read out a single word. Start with words you know they're familiar with to build confidence, before asking them to 'fill in' more challenging words. Make sure your child feels like they're helping you to read, rather than being put on the spot.

2 TAKE-IT-IN-TURNS READING

Reading a book together can be just that, and this reading style works particularly well with more confident readers. The general idea is that you take it in turns to read out sections of a story. You can read alternate sentences, paragraphs or even pages – whatever works best for you. It's an effective way to keep kids engaged as they know that their turn is coming soon.

3 ECHO READING

The idea is that you read a sentence, and your child reads the same sentence back to you. It might sound repetitive but, by following your lead, your child will unknowingly pick up loads of tips from you on

spacing, pronunciation and where to place stress in a sentence. It's actually a really valuable technique for improving literacy and oracy (the ability to express yourself fluently).

4 CHORAL READING

This truly is reading together. You read aloud and your child reads along with you at the same time. It's a lot easier to do with rhymes, short stories and picture books that your child knows and loves. You don't have to choral read for a whole story or book, but it's worth a try for short sections at a time, and it can really help engage young readers and improve pronunciation and reading skills.

5 PICTURE READING

This is a fun approach to try. Ask your child to guess at how a story unfolds simply by looking at the pictures. Use some question prompts to help them along, such as "Who do you think the hero is?", "What's happening in this picture?", "How does it end?". When your child has finished their picture-only version, read the story together and compare it to the printed version. It's a sure-fire way to get them engaged with the text.



10 TOP TIPS FOR HOME READING



1. Be Diverse

Show your child what a wonderful, varied and exciting place the world is by reading stories from different countries and featuring children of all cultures, races and abilities. Have an armchair adventure!

2. Make a Story Sack Fill a bag with materials related to the story you're reading. Add toys to represent characters; objects from the story, e.g. a bowl and spoon; instruments to make sounds; or activities, like paper and crayons.

3. Get Personal

Been to the zoo? Read a story with zoo animals in it. Starting school soon? Look for books on the same theme. Choosing stories your child can relate to helps them realise how special reading can be.

4. Give a Choice

Stuck in a rut or bored with a book? Grab a pile of Storytime magazines and let your child choose tonight's story. Remember: **reading should be fun, never a chore.**

5. Use Facial Expressions

Don't forget to put expression into your face as well as your voice when reading stories – your child will be wide-eyed with delight to see you acting out the part, even if it's in a small way.

6. Make Them Laugh Funny books, stories and poems are one of the best ways to hook reluctant readers, so look out for laughs, nonsense and silliness galore. Serious readers don't necessarily read serious books!

7. Guess It!

Get your children involved right at the start. Can they guess what the story is about from the title and cover art? Who's in it? What will happen? Read on to find out if they're right.

8. Review It To develop your child's critical thinking, ask them to review a story after they've read it. Can they write down or tell you in a sentence what they thought of it? Why did they like it or dislike it? Give it marks out of 10.

9. Listen to Your Audience Kids love it when they can relate to an event in a story and will be eager to tell you about their similar experience. It means they're evaluating the story and connecting it to real life. Let them speak, then ease them gently back into the story.

10. Praise Them

Are your children starting to read to you? Shower them with praise every time they read a long, new or complicated word correctly. They will swell with pride and be truly encouraged to read more.



4 BARRIERS TO READING TO YOUR KIDS... AND HOW TO KNOCK THEM DOWN



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So what exactly do you need to do? It's simple. Just read to your child for 10 minutes every day. On paper, reading to your child for 10 minutes every day seems totally doable, doesn't it? But if it were so easy, we'd all be doing it and reading charities all over the world wouldn't be imploring us to read to our children more.

There's overwhelming evidence now that reading to your children is one of the best things you can do for them educationally and on an emotional level. It's an incredible time for bonding and we all know it! So what's stopping us and how do we overcome the barriers that life puts in the way? We have some solutions for you.

1. TIREDNESS. This is perhaps one of the most common reasons given for not reading to your child for 10 minutes every day. Either you or your child is too exhausted. It's understandable, but with a little attitude shift and some clever timing, you can make a positive difference.

Your solution: *The saying goes that if you keep doing the same thing, you'll get the same results. So stop promising yourself that you'll read for 10 minutes every night and then feeling guilty when you're too tired to see it through. Instead, commit to read for 10 minutes every day at a time when you've both got enough energy to enjoy it. There is no right time – keep changing it until you get it right. You'll know when that is as you'll be reading for pleasure and not as a chore.*

2. BUSYNESS. With so many demands on modern life, it's hard not to fall into the busyness trap. But 10 minutes takes up less than 1% of your day. And that 10 minutes of reading has been proven to have such a positive impact on your child's wellbeing and educational attainment, it's worth making it a priority.

Your solution: *Treat 10 minutes of reading to your child like you would any other daily task. Schedule it in and add it to your to-do list. You could put it in a wall chart for you or your child to tick off. If you make it a daily goal, you'll have a sense of achievement every time you complete it – and it will soon turn into a good habit.*

3. NOT-IN-THE-MOOD-NESS We've all been here – and kids use this reason as often as adults. The problem is that taking one day off because you don't feel 'in the mood' can easily escalate into a permanent state of being (think gym memberships). It's a slippery slope, but you can tackle it with a change of approach.

Your solution: *If neither of you are in the mood, chances are you're bored. You need to change things up. You can change your reading material. Try non-fiction or a myth instead of a fairy tale. Change where and how you read – go outside, read in a blanket tent, read by torchlight. Change when you read – do it at a completely different time. Simple actions can banish boredom and ensure that your 10 minutes of reading is something you look forward to.*

4. FIDGETINESS. Some children have supernova-levels of energy. Some have short attention spans. They'd rather be charging up and down the living room than cosying up for a story. Though getting them to settle might seem like an impossible feat, a story session might be the very thing you need. It's all in the timing

Your solution: *Use reading to help your child transition from fully alert to that relaxed twilight state before sleep. Think of your 10 minutes as a cool-down. Now take a deep calming breath (ask your child to take one too) and read for 10 minutes. There's no more powerful relaxant for a restless child than a bedtime story.*

READING REWARDS



For some children who just don't readily engage with books, reading can feel like climbing Mount Everest. That's when the right reading rewards can be just the thing you need to help them reach the peak. So here are five suggestions for reading rewards that might make your little one read happily ever after...

1 STICKER REWARD CHART

Stickers on their own are cool but using them to fill in a blank reading rewards chart is a great way to encourage reading. Try this: use ordinary dot stickers for each day of the week. At the end of the week, add a column for a big puffy or sparkly sticker. Make it your child's favourite character or something they love. They only get the special sticker if they read for the agreed number of times or length of time.

2 DESTINATION CHART

Destination or track charts are just like the stepping stone pathways you get in dice board games. The aim is to get to the 'finish' line. You start at one end and, for every day or time your child reads, you move forward one step. Sticker, tick or colour each step as you go. When your child reaches the finish line they get a reward. This could be something like a book or a toy. Alternatively, in-keeping with the idea of a destination chart, why not make your reward a fun day out or experience?

3 REWARD JAR

This is much like the reading rewards chart, but instead of stickers, you fill a jar with something your child likes. It can be coins, marbles or sweets, such as jellybeans. Every time your child reads the agreed

amount of pages or for the agreed amount of time, you pop one of the above into the jar. When the jar is full, they get the whole lot as a reward.

4 READING REWARD ART

If you're creative, you might like this idea – a piece of art that's created one section at a time. You add to it every time your child reads. This works best using themes you can easily build up and add to, such as adding leaves to a tree, flowers to a garden or circles to a caterpillar. Start with a big blank piece of card and watch your child's art grow.

It's really effective if you write some praise on each new section, e.g. Great Job! As reading rewards go, this gives your child two reasons to be proud – they've done great reading and great art. Plus they're reminded of how well they did every time they look at it.

5 WEARABLE REWARDS

Kids love collecting – especially stuff they can hang from their school bags or wear with pride, so why not make your reading rewards wearable? If your child reads the agreed amount for a week/fortnight/month, they get their favourite character badges to add to a jacket. Or it could be charms to add to a keyring or bracelet – or patches to sew on. Every time your kids see their reading rewards, they're reminded of what they did to get it and feel motivated to do more reading.



STORYTIME HOME READING CHART

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| | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|--|---|
| Tick a square for each Home Reading Session you complete! | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 Well Done! Bronze Badge Sticker | 11 | 12 | |
| 13 | 14 | 15 Happy Reading! Reading Star Badge Sticker | 16 | 17 | 18 | |
| 19 | 20 | 21 Top Work! Silver Badge Sticker | 22 | 23 | 24 | |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 Awesome Work! Gold Badge Sticker | |

↑ You get a special reward Storytime badge to cut and stick in when you complete **10, 20 and 30 Home Reading sessions!**

READING STAR BADGES

Cut them out and stick on your chart month after month every time you complete your home reading sessions! Make it colourful and fun!



WHY NOT DRAW A
PICTURE OF YOUR
FAVOURITE CHARACTER
FROM TODAY'S STORY?



ABOUT STORYTIME

STORYTIME is one of the world's leading story magazine read by thousands of children all over the world.

It was created to give parents and teachers a quality magazine that helps to **improve children's literacy** - with no adverts and no plastic toys, just great stories.

It's a fact that many **children prefer to read magazines than books**, particularly reluctant readers, so with Storytime children can enjoy stories in a format that is accessible for them. But the high quality of illustration and storytelling means that it's perfect for avid book readers too.

The short story format and variety in each issue means it's **perfect for reading together at home**. Reading with children – even for just ten minutes a day – can make a huge difference to their literacy.

MORE ABOUT STORYTIME

➡ There are six short stories and one or two poems in every issue, including famous fairy tales, myths & legends, tales from other cultures to give children an appreciation of the world around them, fables, folk tales, and new stories from up and coming authors.

➡ Stories with different levels of reading difficulty, plus puzzles, games and activities and colourful illustrations to bring it all to life.

➡ Storytime supports the National Curriculum in reading, writing and comprehension

➡ Younger children will typically read Storytime with an adult, and children aged 7 and upwards may wish to read independently.

➡ It's a wonderful resource for children who have English as a second language.

➡ It's printed on high quality paper, so each issue lasts a long time.

➡ Each issue arrives in a special envelope, so children have the excitement of receiving their own post!

