

Tips for Reluctant Readers

A reluctant reader is a child who prefers not to read for pleasure. This could be for a number of reasons, including struggling with reading or preferring to do something else at that moment.

Below are some tips for engaging a reluctant reader. Please note that each child is unique, and what works with one child may not with another. You might want to use a variety of strategies with the same child to maintain their interest.

Please consult with the class teacher or school contact before bringing in any reading materials, props or if you have any concerns with how a child is engaging.

Child's Choice



Is this book interesting to the child? If not:

- Find out about their own interests.
- Can they link the book to their own experience(s)?
- At the end of the session, could the child share a text that they find engaging- such as a magazine, comic, joke book – even try reading a tongue twister!

Book Talk



Engage in meaningful discussions about the text to develop a positive attitude towards reading.

Ask them about:

- Characters, setting, situations/events, pictures.
- Language choices: thinking about why the author has used a specific word/phrase. How does it make you feel as a reader? Can you find the word in a dictionary?

Turn Taking

It can be daunting for a reluctant reader to see a large chunk of text on the page.



Could you:

- Take it in turns, reading a line/paragraph each. If there is dialogue, take a narrator/speaker role each.
- Model good practice: emphasise punctuation, expression, intonation. Bring the text to life! All children, regardless of age, can benefit from being read to in this way.

Creative Strategies



If the child is not engaging well with the text, think about what you can do to make it more engaging for them.

- Emphasising emotive language with a focus on expression. If the character is angry, could the child reflect this in their tone?
- Act it out.
- Play word games. Can the child find a word that rhymes with or means the same as...?

Reading Environment

Think about utilising the space you have been given in the best way possible to establish an enjoyable, positive environment for reading.



- Is the child comfortable? Would they prefer to read with or to a soft toy? Could the child sit on a bean bag/sofa? Think about the positioning of the chairs- do they make the child feel relaxed?
- Is there a quieter area of the school available for that child?

Finish on a High

End each session positively for both yourself and the child.



- Be adaptable to ensure the session is a success and by creating a positive attitude towards texts and language
- Remember the quality of the session is more important than the number of pages that they read
- Have fun! Volunteers should enjoy the session as much as the child. What you are doing is worthwhile and making a difference.

Please report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If you require any advice regarding a specific child, please consult the class teacher or main school contact.

Schoolreaders remain to here to support you throughout your volunteering journey and can be contacted by email at admin@schoolreaders.org or by calling 01234 924111.