

The importance and benefits of reading

Research shows that reading helps to improve vocabulary, communication skills and also makes us better writers. We all need these skills in life and in our workplace. Consider talking to your child about when you use these skills in your own life and work.

The increase in screen-time and social media has been shown to have decreased our focus and concentration levels as people are so used to flicking between apps and scrolling through various websites. Reading can help counter this by providing one thing to focus on.

Did you know that reading has been proven to reduce stress? In today's world, helping our children with this is so important. If you'd like support choosing a book for your child, do get in touch with the librarian or visit a website such as www.booktrust.org.uk.

Did you know that research shows children who read for pleasure achieve better, regardless of whether their reading material of choice is a novel or magazine? Please do encourage your child to read a variety of texts that they are interested in.

Research shows that a child who reads/is read to for 5 minutes a day will expose them to around 400,000 words a year? Increasing that to 21 minutes exposes them to 1,823,000 words a year. 40 minutes results in 3,646,000 words a year.

Ways to encourage reading

Research shows that parents have an important role to play in developing a love of reading. One way you can help with this is to explore different texts with your child: magazines, blog posts, novels, online articles.

Did you know that parents who talk to their children about books, TV programmes and films help their child to develop an interest in reading? Consider when might be a good time in your day/week to ask your child about what they've watched or read recently.

Having books, magazines and other texts at home makes a difference to children's interest in reading and their achievement. Exploring your local library is a great way to bring new texts into the home at no cost to you and it allows your child to encounter a variety of text types.

None of us like everything we read; it's important for us to be open about that with our children. We can help them to find texts they're interested in by talking about the passions, their hobbies and what they're interested in doing in the future.

You are probably aware that research shows reading is a key factor for academic success. But did you know that this could be the reading of fiction or non-fiction? Many students prefer reading non-fiction, such as autobiographies, magazine articles or blog posts.

Reading isn't confined to the pages of a book. Remember that when your child reads the internet, instructions, recipes etc they are still reading – in fact they're reading purposefully.

Are your family members of a local library? Merton hosts a number of libraries including: Colliers Wood Library, Mitcham Library, Morden Library, Pollards Hill Library, Raynes Park Library, West Barnes Library and Wimbledon Library. By joining, you can have access not only to a variety of books, but also audiobooks, DVDs and magazines.

At secondary school, students read many different text types from different time periods and about different topics. These could be scientific instructions, newspaper articles, adverts, poems and much more. Have you asked them which they prefer and why?

How does your child learn new vocabulary for their subjects? You could ask them about what strategies they could be using and offer to support them with this at home.

Reading the text that your child is studying in English can be a great way to discuss characters, plot lines and themes together to support your child at home. Interpretation is an important skill for students to develop and talking about your thoughts with your child can help them with this.

Reading isn't just important for English lessons; it's important for every subject. If you know your child is interested in a particular subject or topic area, you could find articles about this to share with them and ask their view on what they've read.

If you have a computer at home, you could set the homepage to a website your child might be interested in. For example, a website about jazz music, race cars or kite boarding. You could ask them about what they've read or even read some together.

Have you seen the 'Turn the Subtitles On' campaign? Research shows that turning the subtitles on the TV can have a significant impact on young people's reading skills.

If you think your child is struggling with reading, please feel free to contact the school via school@raynespark.merton.sch.uk. We are more than happy to help.

Did you know that research shows talking to children about what they're reading and having reading material at home has an impact on their reading progress regardless of their parents' reading ability?

Some parents worry that their child likes re-reading a particular book or author. Although reading a variety of texts and authors is important, reading similar styles can help to increase students' confidence with reading. Perhaps you could talk to the librarian to find similar books by different authors?

If you'd like to help your child select a book to read, you could speak to the librarian about their interests so that they could recommend a book based on that or wander round a book shop and read the back of a selection of books to see what captures their interest.

If you're looking for book suggestions, you may like to explore www.booktrust.org.uk for booklists, or visit a site like www.barringtonstoke.co.uk which produces books for reluctant, under-confident and dyslexic readers.

The use of audiobooks

Research has found that audiobooks can improve children's reading skills and enjoyment of reading as well as their mental wellbeing. If your child is reluctant to read a book, you could offer them an audiobook. These are available online or through the library.

Did you know that half of young people have said that listening to audiobooks has increased their interest in reading? Audiobooks are readily available online through platforms such as Audible. Alternatively, you can borrow some through the library.

By joining your local library, you can have access to a wide variety of audiobooks, which are proven to help young readers in several ways, particularly those who are reluctant to read in print.