

Supporting your child at the different colour levels

A guide for parents with children on Step 3 - Reading Challenge



WHITE

Children on White Level will be given a book by the teacher who leads their group. Sentences with two or three clauses and several verbs are common in White and the length of texts extends to help build reading stamina. Real-life problems are also introduced to encourage empathy.

How to support your child with White level books:

Your child is now reading longer books with fewer illustrations so they continue to need your help to ensure they are getting the full meaning and enjoyment from the text. They may prefer to read one chapter or section at a time, rather than reading the whole book in one session. You can support them by:

- Listening to them read some pages of the book aloud to you so that you can enjoy hearing them read with expression and pace.
- Asking them to find parts of the text, which describe a character or place and talking about the words used in the description.
- Asking for regular updates about what is happening in the book so that they and you know how the different chapters or sections link.
- Discussing how the synonyms of said (e.g joked, snarled, bellowed, mumbled) give us information about the character's personality as well as feelings.
- Identify similes (e.g blind as a bat or brave like a lion) and what these then show us about the person, setting or object being described.
- Talking about how much they enjoy a book, or a type of book, and encouraging them to look for more books of the type they enjoy.
- Looking in the thesaurus to find other words which mean the same thing as a word in the text.
- Discussing their favourite characters and their least favourite characters and why they are.
- Identifying titles, subheadings and captions in non-fiction books

LIME

Lime provides a variety of chapter books and non-fiction titles. Lime readers should be encouraged to explore different texts, writing styles and genres to develop their own reading tastes. This colour band also includes a variety of topics and issues to provoke discussion.

How to support your child with Lime level books:

Although your child is now taking off as a reader, it is still important that you read with them and talk to them about their reading. This reassures them that their reading is still important to you, as well as giving you an opportunity to share an enjoyment of books. You can still help them by:

- Listening to them to read aloud some parts of the text which they particularly enjoy. This may include action or description. Talk about how the writer made those parts so enjoyable.
- Talking about how characters develop or how they react to different people, places or events.
- Reading the book yourself so that you can talk together about the smaller details of the book.
- Looking for time adverbials (later that day, meanwhile, a few years later) and how these guide the reader through when things happened.
- Encouraging them to look for clues as to what is going on or what they character might be feeling (inferring information)
- Encouraging them to make links with other books they have read which are similar.
- Encouraging them to look for instructional language and features (such as: imperative verbs [pick, take, cut], how adverbs [carefully, quickly], time adverbs [first, then, next, after that] headings, subheadings, bullet points).

BROWN

Brown books will continue to give children a variety of texts they need to become confident and successful readers. A range of characters, topics and text styles help to keep children engaged and encourage discussion.

How to support your child with Brown level books:

Your child may not want to read aloud to you so often now, because they probably enjoy silent reading more. This is fine as long as your child continues to read actively when they are not reading aloud and does not just skim over the words and they still read to you at least 3 times a week. You can help them by:

- Continuing to make time available for regular quiet reading sessions and reading your book while your child reads.
- Prompt them to read fables, traditional tales and moralistic stories. Can they identify the moral of the story and can they discuss what makes the stories similar to other ones they have read?
- Asking them to identify the use of rhetorical questions? (a question that gets asked, which doesn't need a response).
- Having a conversation at the end of each independent reading session: can they tell you what's happening in their book?
- Asking them to choose a part of the text to read aloud to you, using expression and pausing in suitable places.
- Asking questions which make your child go back to the book to find answers - support them as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question.
- Asking your child to find example of apostrophes of contraction in speech (e.g can't, I'll) to make it more realistic.
- Discussing with your child, the use of sentence starters and pronouns (e.g he, she, me, us, we, it) to avoid repetition.
- Asking them to make predictions of what might happen next but based on evidence from the text.
- If possible, continue to read aloud to your child at bedtime. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of stories.

GREY

Children reading Grey banded books will be able to interpret more sophisticated word-play and understand a range of narration styles. Children should now be able to discuss the characters and narrator in much more detail.

How to support your child with Grey level books:

Your child may not want to read aloud to you so often now, because they probably enjoy silent reading more. This is fine as long as your child continues to read actively when they are not reading aloud and does not just skim over the words and they still read to you 3 times a week. You can help them by:

- Continuing to make time available for regular quiet reading sessions and reading your book while your child reads and having a conversation at the end of each independent reading session: can they tell you what's happening in their book?
- Asking them to choose a part of the text to read aloud, using different voices to show their understanding of different characters.
- Asking questions which make your child go back to the book to find answers - support them as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question.
- Asking them to identify the 4 stages in the story telling: introduction – build up – climax/ dilemma – resolution.
- Looking for examples of when the author shows a character's emotions rather than just telling us them so we have to infer what the person is feeling.
- Discussing setting descriptions with your child. How has the author used the 5 senses? How has the author used prepositions (where adverbs [over, under, by, next to).
- Looking for fronted adverbials (adverbs of time, place and manner) and discussing how these aid cohesion.
- Looking for examples of puns and word play together and discuss what these mean.
- Looking at persuasive texts and discussing how the author persuades you to do something.
- In non-fiction writing, looking at how the author has sequenced the text and structured the information to make the information easy to access.
- If possible, continue to read aloud to your child at bedtime. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of stories.

DARK BLUE

Dark Blue books provide a range of content, narrative styles and points of view. This level encourages readers to form opinions and discuss their own reading tastes. These books will have more complex text features, such as an overarching plot and deeper structures of character relationships and themes.

How to support your child with Dark Blue level books:

Books at Dark Blue level are more complex, which means that it is important that the reader is conscious of the structure,

language and vocabulary the writer is using. Although your child should enjoy them, the books will provide a challenge and need the reader to be alert and willing to learn. They still need to be heard 3 times a week but these can be shorter passages of the text. You can support them by:

- Continuing to make time available for regular quiet reading sessions and reading your book while your child reads.
- Sometimes asking them to choose a part of the text to read aloud, showing their understanding by using expression, tone and pace.
- Looking out for words which have unstressed letters (such as thumb, thistle).
- Helping them apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes including: -sion, -tion, -cial, -tial, -ant/-ance/-ancy, -ent/-ence/-ency, -able/-ably and -ible/ibly, to read aloud fluently.
- Discussing the use of metaphors (when it claims it's something it's not [the storm raged, the moon was a ghostly galleon]) and what image this creates.
- Discussing the atmosphere of the section. Is it happy? Is it tense? Is it sad? What techniques has the author used to create this feeling?
- Discussing why the author has used a short simple dramatic sentence or a longer complex sentence to give more detail.
- Discussing how the use of modal verbs (can/could, may/might, shall/should, will/ would) or adverbs of possibility (maybe, surely, probably, definitely) affect how definite something is.
- Helping them to differentiate between fact and opinion. Helping them to identify when a text is bias or impartial.
- Asking them to predict, in a story, what might happen next but they must give evidence from the text to back up their opinions.
- In a story asking them to identify the 5 part story structure: The introduction, the build-up, the climax, the resolution and the end.
- Before a reading session, ask your child to find and note down some particular information. It could relate to the plot or it could be something like: a really good descriptive passage; three words which are adventurous; two words you want to use in your next piece of writing; an example of something typical a character does or says; how one character's reaction towards another shows their relationship. Don't forget to discuss what they found.

Burgundy

Burgundy books encourage children to synthesise information from different places in a text. Children are beginning to recognise how layers of meaning allow for the build-up of humour, or tension, and can discuss how the author has achieved the effects. Books at this level are written in a much subtler way, meaning that the reader will need to fully engage with a book in order to understand it.

How to support your child with Burgundy level books:

The books at this level will provide a level of challenge which means that it is important that your child is fully engaged with the process of reading and conscious of the structure, language and vocabulary the writer is using and the impact that this has on the reader. Their understanding will be deepened through not only reading aloud 3 times a week but also through opportunities to discuss what they have read. You can help them by:

- Continuing to make time available for regular quiet reading sessions and reading your book while your child reads.
- Discussing the use of figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole [purposeful exaggeration: I could eat a horse!], idioms [a saying e.g It's raining cats & dogs], alliteration) and evaluate the impact on the reader.
- Discussing why different text types are structured in different ways.
- Discussing why different types of sentences (simple, compound & complex) have been used and the effect of these.
- Discussing different levels of formality; why has the author chosen to write that way?
- Asking for a summary of the information or what has happened so far. Ensuring the children give evidence from the text to back up their point but then explain why it does; how does it prove they're right?
- Before a reading session, ask your child to find and note down some particular information. It could relate to the plot or it could be something like: a really good descriptive passage; figurative language that was really effective; three words you want to use in your next piece of writing; an example of something typical a character does or says. There are lots of questions you can ask which don't mean you have to read the book yourself, but help to alert your child to its possibilities. Don't forget to discuss what they found!
- Suggesting that your child invites friends to a 'Book Group'. If they are all reading the same book, you could skim-read the book first and prepare some questions for the book group to discuss or perhaps the Book Group could be an opportunity for them to recommend and share new books with each other.

BLACK & BLACK+

Black banded books are the final level of the Book Band grading system. Children reading at this level are strong, confident readers. They select a book by personal preference and often read for pleasure. Black books will have very few, or no illustrations, and have complex text features. Black+ books tackle subject content which is only suitable for older readers.

How to support your child with Black level books:

The books at this level will provide a level of challenge, which means that it is important that your child is fully engaged with the process of reading and conscious of the structure, language and vocabulary the writer is using and the impact that this has on the reader. Their understanding will be deepened through, not only reading out loud 3 times a week but also having opportunities to discuss what they have read. You can help them by:

- Continuing to make time available for regular quiet reading sessions and reading your book while your child reads.
- Discussing why the author has used complex punctuation (brackets (), semi-colons:, colons:, hyphens-, dashes - -, ellipses ...).
- Presenting a contrasting point of view and asking your child to argue against it using evidence from the text.
- Asking your child to identify techniques the author has used for impact and how they achieve the desired effect.
- Looking for different story writing techniques such as: flashbacks or flash forwards, cliff hangers, epiphanies, foreshadowing and plot twists.
- Identifying where the author has used dialect in speech (e.g “ello ‘arry”)
- Discussing persuasive devices such as: hyperbole, flattery, bribery and blackmail and how these persuade the reader to act.
- When looking at persuasive texts, discussing why the author has chosen either to be formal or informal and why.
- Asking them to summarise the main ideas from a paragraph.
- Looking at different accounts of the same event and discuss the different viewpoints.
- Discussing how characters develop across a text or across a series.
- Comparing different versions of a text.
- Suggesting that your child invites friends to a ‘Book Group’. If they are all reading the same book, you could skim-read the book first and prepare some questions for the book group to discuss or perhaps the Book Group could be an opportunity for them to recommend and share new books with each other.