

Renaissance



Turn eye-rolling teenagers into engaged readers





How can teachers convince reluctant readers to read for 15 minutes every day?

Every Christmas I buy my kids books and every Christmas they say to me, “Mum, you know we won’t read them...”. It can be dispiriting for teachers and parents who loved nothing better in adolescence than curling up with a book to accept that their children aren’t equally enthused. Pleas to try *Wuthering Heights* or *Lord of the Flies* are greeted with eye rolls, sighs and yawns.

It’s exasperating but we persist because we know that a child who learns to love reading will invariably read well. And a child that reads well will develop into an independent reader who becomes confident enough to see reading as a choice and something they want to do rather than have to do. It’s a virtuous circle. What’s more, research suggests it only requires 15 minutes reading a day to start making progress.

Yet despite our best efforts, reading isn’t something most children after Year 4 choose to do. It’s not ‘cool’, it requires too much effort, it can’t compete with the obvious online attractions. So what should we be doing differently? How can we help children enjoy reading when they seem so determined not to?

We start, Dear Reader, with ourselves. We need to ditch the romantic notion that most of our sons and daughters will eventually forsake TikTok and curl up with a Jane Austen. That doesn’t mean we succumb to pessimism, but it does mean accepting a healthy dose of realism. Just because children aren’t delirious about Dickens doesn’t mean they aren’t reading. They read text all the time – they just don’t see it as reading. And most will read books they find interesting in a format they find convenient... they just have to find it.

Which is why the National Literacy Trust’s recent [Go All In](#) campaign is so good, because it shifts the focus back to getting kids to read any book they like, how they like and not what we think is good for them.



Georgina Cook
Education Specialist – Language and Literacy
Renaissance

15 tips for 15 minutes

With that in mind these are my 15 tips that will help teachers help children find the book they want to read and how to propel them to that magic 15 minutes... and beyond. And the good news is that [Accelerated Reader](#) can help you with all of these!

- 1 Model high quality language** – read aloud to children of all ages or get them to listen to audiobooks or podcasts
- 2 Make reading cool again** – choose role models carefully and spread the load among several people
- 3 Make reading social** – talk about what people are reading, what’s in the news, who has seen it and what do they think about it
- 4 Make reading a whole school endeavour** – the EEF is emphatic about the importance of ‘developing a collective understanding of reading among staff’
- 5 Ask children what they enjoy** – take time to learn what interests them
- 6 Understand where children are and meet them there** – struggles with poor working memory or knowledge gaps are real and we need to take them into account
- 7 Don’t insist on persisting** – if children hate a text, don’t make them finish it
- 8 Use your local community** – so much free literature is available in sports and social clubs, churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and community centres
- 9 Reach out to publishers, booksellers, libraries and charities** – they often have amazing campaigns aimed at getting children to read
- 10 Involve parents** – most understand how important reading is but not always how to best support their children or how widely they should read
- 11 Talk about fake news** – and model how to interrogate, which can develop into a really useful life skill
- 12 Put language on show** – use word walls, key lists and ensure children are comfortable asking when they don’t know the meaning of a word
- 13 Make reading low stakes** – when children are used to instant access to information, don’t make reading the hard thing
- 14 Find time to talk about language** – I’ve seen so many great teachers stop a lesson to correct a misconception or imbed crucial knowledge
- 15 15 minutes is a great starting point** – but it has to be purposeful. It won’t work if all the children hear is ‘Drop everything and read’

Renaissance



Connect with us

Website : <http://cn.renaissance.com/>

Email : international@renaissance.com

WeChat Official Account : Renaissance_Learning

Hotline : 400-1515-021