

Summer Reading Challenge

THE
READING
AGENCY

Story Garden



Keep up your classes' reading habits this term!

We are facing a national crisis in children's reading. Recent research shows that only 1 in 3 children and young people now enjoy reading, a drop of 33% since 2005 (Clark, et al., 2024) and **1 in 4 children in the UK cannot read well by age 11.**

This crisis is impacting on classrooms, communities and families. Research shows that reading by choice is the single biggest indicator of a child's opportunity and future success; it can mediate socio-economic status and may help **address endemic inequalities**. (OECD, 2002, 2021). When children and young people enjoy reading, they read more often, helping to build vital reading skills and bringing **wider benefits for mental wellbeing**, self-confidence and learning (Sullivan and Brown, 2013; Sun, et al., 2023).

The Reading Agency and public libraries are working to change this with the Summer Reading Challenge - a free, UK-wide programme. By encouraging your pupils to join in, you'll help make reading a fun and rewarding part of their summer. In 2024, nearly **600,000** children took part. Together, we can make 2025 even bigger and get even more children fired up about reading!

Read on for easy next steps & helpful resources:

1. Assembly presentation for children, parents evening or other events
2. Summer Reading Challenge promotional video
3. Invite to Summer Reading Challenge to share with parents or carers
4. Copy template for newsletter, website, WhatsApp groups, emails



Benefits for pupils, families, and your school



Significantly **improves** children's reading **skills and confidence**



During last year's Challenge, children read **over 13 million books**



Prevents the summer 'dip' in reading and aids the **successful transition** to new year groups and key stages

FREE

It's simple and **free for every child** to take part, and libraries run **free activities** for families throughout the holidays

Easy steps to get your class reading this summer

Get parents and pupils engaged in the Challenge before the holidays start!



Talk about the Challenge in your school

- Put up [posters](#) in your classroom and around school.
- Use our [assembly presentation](#) for children, parents' evening or other events and why not play our short animated video to grab children's attention!
- Discover new books to share with your class with our [official book collection](#).
- Print out our [designed flyer for parents](#) and our [nature spotting activity](#) for children to take home and tell their parents about Summer Reading Challenge.



Get in touch with the library

Contact your local library service to find out what's on offer to your pupils. You can **book a librarian visit** for your class or special assembly for the whole school!



Tell parents and colleagues

Download our [handy copy templates](#) to tell parents & carers about the Challenge and encourage them to take their children to the library over the holidays. Use the templates for newsletters/emails, the school website or even class Whatsapp groups. Tell other school staff about the Challenge with our other ready-made template!

Get your whole school involved!

Can your school top last year's number of Challenge completers? Many libraries offer **prizes to schools** with the highest participation!



Celebrate your pupils' summer achievements!

Ideas for what to do in September:



- Host a **special assembly** to present Summer Reading Challenge certificates!
- Download or **collect certificates for free** from your local library.
- Recognise participants in your school newsletter or display their photos/work.
- Celebrate in the classroom and have a book talk - children can share new favourite books, fun events they've been to and what they're looking forward to reading.





Story Garden

2025 is all about the magic of nature!

This year's Challenge is about nature, the outdoors, storytelling - and reading! Children can collect their own **sticker booklet** (full of fantastical artwork by award-winning illustrator Dapo Adeola) to start their Challenge from the library. Libraries will be hosting themed events and activities over the holidays for children and families taking part, with lots of opportunities to find new books and have fun learning about nature.



Start dates*

Scotland & Online: **Saturday 21 June**

England & Wales: **Saturday 5 July**

*Start and finish dates may vary. Please confirm with your local library service.

Super Sign-Up Saturday!

Ask your local library if they are running a launch event for children & families - fun and easy. Let's get as many children reading as possible!





About the Challenge

80%
of children taking part
read more
over the holidays

● What is the Summer Reading Challenge?

The UK's **biggest reading for pleasure programme** for primary school children in libraries, encouraging children to **read for fun** during the school holidays.

● Who can take part?

The Challenge is open to all **children aged 4–11**, and it's designed to be **accessible for all** reading levels. Some library services also offer activities for younger children.

● When does it start and how can children sign up?

The Challenge takes place during the summer holidays in most UK public libraries.

Children can **sign up in-person at their library** or **online** at summerreadingchallenge.org.uk at any time during the Challenge. Check local start and end dates with your library service.

● What does the Challenge involve?

At the library:

- A child visits their library to sign up and pick up a Summer Reading Challenge booklet.
- They set a reading goal and borrow books of their choice.
- They collect bespoke stickers and incentives from the library for their reading, including a certificate for reaching their reading goal.

Online:

Alternatively, children can take part in the Challenge online at summerreadingchallenge.org.uk where they will set a reading goal and unlock digital rewards including a PDF certificate. They'll get book recommendations and tips for accessing books for free at home.

● What can children read for their Challenge?

Anything they enjoy! The Challenge is all about reading for fun, so all reading counts, from fiction and non-fiction to audiobooks, comics, joke books, graphic novels, e-books, and poetry. Library staff and volunteers are on hand to help each child find books that match their interests and reading level. Why not use the [Story Garden Book Collection](#) as a start?



More from The Reading Agency

[The Reading Agency](#) is a UK charity that inspires social and personal change through the proven power of reading. We work with individuals of all ages, communities and trusted partners to share the transformative benefits of reading for happy, healthy and thriving lives.

Did you know?

- We regularly have **free display materials**, **activity packs** and **sets of reading group books** available to schools throughout the year. [Sign up to our newsletter](#) to check these out!
- You can find thousands of book resources for primary school children through us - from fun activity sheets and classroom guides on the Summer Reading Challenge [website](#) to all sorts of reading activity packs on the [Chatterbooks page](#).



Other programmes

[Find out more](#) 

A winter version of the Summer Reading Challenge! This is an online reading challenge running between **December-February**, encouraging children to keep up their reading through the winter break and into the new term. It's free to take part at wintermini.org.uk, where children can log and review books and earn rewards, e.g., a certificate & limited-edition digital badge.



teachers' **reading** challenge

The Teachers' Reading Challenge is an opportunity for school staff to expand their knowledge of contemporary children's books and develop their skills in teaching children to read for pleasure. Run in partnership with [The Open University](#), the Challenge invites participants to join a supportive and inspired community of educators and readers, set their own reading goals, share recommendations, discuss best practice, access resources, and record their knowledge.

[Browse the book list and download resources](#) 

Reading Well for children provides quality-assured information, stories and advice to support children's mental health and wellbeing. Books have been chosen and recommended by leading health professionals and co-produced with children and families. The booklist is targeted at Key Stage 2, and includes titles aimed at a wide range of reading levels.