



So you have a reluctant reader...?

Here are some tactics to help:

- Find books with a connection to **something they love**. If they are football fans, look for footie fiction for teens – try *Booked* by Kwame Alexander; *Football School Star Players* by Bellos; Matt Oldfield; Dan Freedman or Tom Palmer's books. If they like military/action/war, then try the *Dog Tag* series by CA London or Andy McNab's teen books. If they like to watch Youtubers, try Humza Arshad's *Little Badman* or Zoella's book club . And if they are into gaming, try fast-paced chapter books or 'choose your own adventure' stories. (Tip: try teen/YA author Alex Scarrow's books – he was a professional video-game developer before he turned to writing; or Jeff Norton's *MetaWars* series, billed as 'a video game you can read').
- Any type of reading is helpful, so try **graphic novels**. Graphic novel versions of *The Recruit* by Muchamore, *Silverfin* by Higson and *Stormbreaker* by Horowitz are popular. Likewise, it is absolutely fine to read *Wimpy Kid* books if this is what sparks the interest of your reluctant reader.
- Try **Barrington Stoke** books: these are produced with tinted pages, special fonts and spacing, thicker paper and editing to reduce comprehension barriers and/or issues resulting from dyslexia. <https://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/>
- If your child is ready, you might **select a 'grittier' book**, then verbally hum-and-haw about whether or not they are old enough to read the book. Tell them maybe they should wait six months as 'there is some language and some blood'. Pretty soon they will be begging you for the book, and you can eventually give in, saying 'since you are now in Year ..., I guess it is okay'. Charlie Higson's *Enemy* series is a gritty series written for teens, as is *Zom-B* by Darren Shan; or try books from our 'difficult issues' list.
- Visit the **library** with your child when you go into town. Ask your child to meet you in the library and then take your time selecting a book to read yourself.
- Try a '**phone free**' hour. Lots of our young people are obsessed with YouTube and social media. Try it and eventually, out of boredom, they may just pick up a book.
- **Be enthusiastic** about what they are reading: ask them to describe a character or to read aloud an exciting bit. You might read a teen/YA book yourself; the plot-driven nature of many of these books means they are relatively easy reads – perfect after a day at work.
- **Let your children see you reading** for pleasure and talk about what you read and how you choose books.
- If you have younger children, ask your older (reluctant reader) child to **read aloud** to them. This is a big confidence booster and it helps with sibling bonding. Michael

Morpurgo is a particularly good shared read, as his books have something for everyone; I highly recommend *Kensuke's Kingdom* for sibling read-alouds.

- Children can also **read to pets**. Try asking your reluctant reader to read to your pet for 10 min a day. They may quickly switch back to being an enthusiastic reader and your pet will love it too!
- Continue to **read aloud to your children** (even if they are fluent readers). Keep up this wonderful reading routine we learn from primary school.
- **Offer incentives**. Of course, we don't want our children to only read for rewards but this may work when a 'breakthrough' is necessary. We often have reading competitions running throughout the school year so you could encourage your child to participate.
- Another idea is to find the **book version of a movie**: *Stormbreaker*, *Eragon*, *Harry Potter*, *The Book Thief*, *I am Number Four*, *The Princess Diaries*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Percy Jackson*, *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, *Maze Runner*, *Fault in Our Stars*, *Twilight* and *Inkheart* and *Wonder* are all films based on children/YA books. Both of you can read the book, watch the movie together -- then discuss the differences.
- Have them **pick up a device** – an e-reader! Then check with your local library about borrowing e-books or try the Kindle daily deal. Your school iPad has access to nearly 3000 eBooks for free.
- Try **audio books**. Libraries have free, downloadable audio books plus Audible has a wide range of teen books. Many teens like the idea of being able to do something active while listening to a book. By listening to an audio book, your teen will pick up new vocabulary, hear complex sentence structures and engage with stories. Your school iPad has access to nearly 3000 audiobooks for free. You could listen to an audiobook as a family, in the car, during dinner time etc.
- Visit a **bookstore** and allow your child to select a book of their choice. The visually appealing marketing and layout of best-selling books can attract even reluctant readers.
- Try **biographies/autobiographies** that interest your child. Recent student favourites have been *Maddie Diaries* by Ziegler & *The Greatest* (Muhammed Ali) by Walter Dean Myers.
- **Non-fiction books** linked to a child's interests are a great way to spark a desire to read.
- Gentle encouragement works best.