

## Ideas to help primary schools celebrate the Year of Reading!

### Whole-school activities

- Invite the children to dress as characters from books – this idea could be developed further to include character role-play or by creating a short play around the characters. A special corner could be created as a backdrop for the role-play or drama.
- Releasing hundreds of balloons from the school's playing fields, with the names of books tied to some of them. Should anyone find one of these, the school would give them a copy of the named book. This idea might possibly appeal to the PTA.
- Reading assembly – members of staff to read gripping extracts from books to link in with the assembly's theme.
- Book swap-shop – exchanging books can be great fun!
- Drop Everything and Read – why not set aside a specific time so that everyone in your school, both staff and pupils, can enjoy reading at the same time?
- Non-stop read – why not aim for a new record?
- Book fair.
- Visit by author or illustrator of children's books.
- Book quiz for individuals or teams.
- Reading sleepover – both pupils and staff would surely love to stay in school overnight to read?!
- Organise a story-writing competition.
- Lunchtime book-based discussion sessions. Peer recommendation can be a powerful force!
- Competition to create posters which advertise books; offer books as prizes to the best entry from each school year.
- Open the Door to Reading – decorate each classroom door to look like book covers; the classes in turn to take a 'book trip' to view the doors; a prize for the best door.
- Your visitors' favourite book – when visitors to your school sign the register on their way in, ask them to note in the visitors' book their favourite book as a child.
- Your school's Oscars – with the children's help, decide on categories, e.g. funniest, saddest, most spooky book, and collect their nominations for each category. When all the votes have been counted, organise an event to announce the winning titles and read extracts from them.
- Take photographs of members of staff or pupils reading, and display them in strategic places around the school.
- 'Who's Reading What?' competition. Create a list of 10 people – they could be members of the school's staff, individuals from the community or pupils – and 10 book titles. The task will be to link the reader to the book he or she is currently reading. Why not reward the winner with a book as a prize?

### Classroom activities

- 'Guess the Character' is an easily organised classroom game. Two pupils secretly agree which book characters they are pretending to be, and the rest of the class have to guess who they are by asking them questions. The only answers permitted are 'yes' and 'no'!
- Create a collage based on a book.
- Creative activity, such as painting or model-making, based on a story or a character from a book.
- Story-reading session — perhaps teachers would like to exchange classes?
- Sponsored spelling/reading.
- Record breakers – invite the children to search for the oldest, thickest, heaviest, widest, deepest, tallest books, those with the largest area etc. – both in school and at home. A ready-made numeracy activity!
- Design book covers or bookmarks.
- Create a chain story either within classes or involving the whole school – perhaps each class could add to the story in turn.
- Book treasure hunt.
- Most loved book/most hated book – an opportunity for individual oral presentations, group discussions etc.

- A book tree – the 'leaves' could contain one of the following: titles and authors, short blurbs, short reviews, marks out of ten for specific titles.
- Pupils of older classes could create books for the younger classes. An opportunity to increase IT skills, possibly.
- Author profiles – each pupil could create a profile on the author of his or her choice, glean information from books and magazine articles as well as the blurbs on book covers. These profiles could become the basis for a display or class book of favourite authors.
- Charades – mime or act the title of a book or a character from a book; children to guess the answers either as two teams in competition or first to answer as individuals.
- Pictionary – similar to charades but giving the clues by drawing pictures.
- Alphabet game – first to think of book titles that begin with each letter of the alphabet in sequence.
- Musical chairs – teacher to read from a book or tell a story, with the children sitting when the teacher stops reading.
- Character jigsaws – the children to draw their favourite book characters onto card, colour them, and cut them into pieces. Each child to swap his/her pieces with another child, who then has to put the pieces together and guess the character.
- The teacher to read a description of a scene or character from a book, and ask the children to draw a picture as he/she reads.
- The teacher to read the beginning of a short story, ask the children to imagine how the story would continue and then write their own ending.
- Erect a few tents in the classroom and invite the children to bring sleeping bags to school; hold a torchlight reading session!
- Pyjama party – why not hold a reading session with the children dressed in their pyjamas and slippers? A seaside party would be an interesting variation!
- Reading-round-the-world – for each page that is read, the children will collect miles towards their journey around the world; a map of the world could be put up on the classroom wall, showing the miles collected as the children read over a period of time.
- Book bingo – the names of authors or book titles can be used, and the game played either within the class or between classes.
- Lucky dip – place around 30 authors' names in a box. Each child chooses a name and must then select and read a book by that author, and write a short review. The reviews to be displayed along with author photos and profiles, and book jackets.
- Class's top ten – 10 authors, 10 titles, 10 book characters etc. Display the results on the walls using pictures of covers and authors.

#### **Activities involving parents or external agencies**

- Arrange for parents to visit the school to help children with their reading.
- Invite a storyteller or librarian to hold a story session.
- If you know of a puppet company that presents shows based on books or characters from a book, perhaps they could be invited to perform at the school. It may also be possible to invite other schools to the event.
- Ask your parents whether they are willing to get together to create story sacks for your nursery or reception classes.
- Invite an expert from the field of education, or a librarian, to hold a session with parents on ways of encouraging children to enjoy books and, later on, to read them, and to show how parents can help with that process.
- Organise an after-school book party for the whole family, which would include book-based activities such as a grab-a-granny story session, book quiz, book treasure hunt around the school, a bran tub of assorted books wrapped in colourful paper, dads' top ten books etc. This idea could also be adapted to create a book barbeque.
- Organise a coffee morning to raise money for the school and invite your local bookshop to organise a book stall.
- Arrange for a local sports, pop, tv, film etc. celebrity to visit your school, to increase the street cred of books and reading.
- Organise a drama workshop.

- Through liaising with the library service, try to make sure that all your pupils belong to the local library/arrange a visit to your local library.
- Invite a local publisher to visit the school to explain how books are produced/organise a visit to a local press.
- ‘Which Book?’ competition. Choose 10 well-known books. The task will be to link book titles correctly with either the first or last lines, or an illustration taken from the books. Design an A4 leaflet containing the titles and relevant clues, and provide a post box for the answers. This competition could be of interest to parents and members of the community as well as to children and teachers.
- The Old Favourites – design a questionnaire which the children can use with adults to discuss books that the adults enjoyed when they were children. Create a ‘top 10’ of the ones that are still popular and ask the children to write reviews of them. Organise a display of the books, questionnaires and reviews.

#### **Activities for the staff**

- Coffee-time quiz at break time.
- Poetry or prose readings during lunchtime.
- Create a chain story from book titles over a cuppa.