

# **Ideas to help secondary schools celebrate the Year of Reading!**

## **Whole school ideas**

- Reading assembly – members of staff to read gripping extracts from books to link in with the assembly's theme.
- Establish a book buddy scheme, so that older pupils help the younger ones with their reading on a regular basis. If at all practicable, this idea could be extended so that secondary pupils could work alongside primary pupils within the catchment area.
- Book swap shop – exchanging books can be great fun!
- Stop 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?
- Arrange for a local sports, pop, tv, film etc. celebrity to visit your school, to increase the street cred of books and reading.
- Pupils in older classes could create books for the younger classes. An opportunity to increase IT skills, possibly.
- Organise a story-writing competition.
- ‘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?

## **Lower school ideas**

- 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/bookmarks.
- Non-stop-read – why not aim for a new record?
- Most loved book/most hated book – an opportunity for individual oral presentations, group discussions etc.
- Reading sleepover – both pupils and staff would surely love to stay in school overnight to read?!
- 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 – for individuals.
- A book tree – the 'leaves' could contain one of the following: titles and authors, quotable quotes, short blurbs, short reviews, marks out of ten for specific titles.
- Story Bridge – primary and secondary schools working in partnership to provide pupils with a unique experience. Year 7 pupils from a secondary school’s basic skills target group could visit feeder primary schools to read a story to Year 3 or Year 4 pupils.
- Class’s top ten – 10 authors, 10 titles, 10 book characters etc. Display the results on the walls using pictures of covers and authors.

## **Upper school ideas**

- Contact your local hospital or home for the elderly – they may appreciate having some sixth formers calling by to read to the residents or patients.
- Organise a drama workshop.
- Students to create websites about their favourite books and authors.
- Create a newspaper based on the plot and characters of a book or series of books, to include an editorial column, sports section, gossip column, breaking news etc.
- After your students have read a specific book, show them a film version of it. Ask them to discuss the difference between them, and the way the director had interpreted the plot and characters.

- Divide the class into groups and give each group a scene from a well-known book. Ask them to re-write the scene as a text message or chat script dialogue. The next task for each group will be to de-code the work of one of the other groups and guess the book in which the scene appears.
- Voting for favourite books along the lines of a general election, with speeches, posters and a voting system.
- Essays with a twist – ask your students to choose two characters from two different books, and write a story where the two meet. Publish the best stories in the school magazine or post on the library/resource centre's noticeboard.
- Book Oscars – devise categories such as 'Best Book', 'Best Female Character', 'Best Mystery', 'Most Popular Author' etc. Ask your students to nominate titles, authors and characters for each category and devise a system to collect their votes. Organise an awards ceremony to announce the winners.

### **Ideas for the school library/resource centre**

- Thematic book displays/book fair.
- Visit by author/illustrator of children's books.
- Book quiz for individuals or teams, possibly along the lines of favourite television quizzes, e.g. *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* or *The Weakest Link*.
- Set up a noticeboard in a busy area of your school and fill it with reviews, articles, information about books, staff and pupil recommendations etc.
- Lunchtime book-based discussion sessions, possibly run by the pupils themselves. Peer recommendation can be a powerful force!
- 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 book of favourite authors.
- Take photographs of members of staff or pupils reading, and display them in strategic places around the school.
- Lucky dip – place around 30 authors' names in a box. Each pupil 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.

### **Ideas for staff**

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

### **Ideas for parents and the community**

- 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 parents to visit the school to help children with their reading.
- 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 press to 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 pupils 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 pupils to write reviews of them. Organise a display of the books, questionnaires and reviews.