

How do I
support my
child's
literacy?



Marches Academy Trust

Literacy at school and at home

At the Marches Academy Trust, literacy is at the heart of everything we do. The development of literacy skills across all curriculum areas is vital. Effective literacy across the curriculum will develop students' ability to:

- Write for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Collect information, organise ideas, draft, edit and write accurately
- Access information and read fluently with understanding and comprehension
- Speak and listen effectively, present information and extend and clarify their ideas and thinking
- Confidence in literacy will also have an impact on their self-esteem, motivation and ability to work independently.

All staff are wholly committed to engaging students in their learning and are innovative in their approach to promoting reading and writing.

We are here to support you, as parents and carers, when it comes to ensuring your child has the best start to their study. We know it can be challenging to encourage your child to engage with literacy-based intervention outside of school so we have put together some documents and interventions to help support and challenge each and every child at the Marches Academy Trust.

Did you know?

- Less than half of 8 to 16 year olds have read a book in the last month.
- 49% of children and young adults think that reading is boring.
- Children who enjoy reading are 5 times more likely to be 'above average' in their Reading Assessment levels.
- 22% of children report that no one at home encourages them to read.
- 1 in 3 children do not own a book.
- 62% of boys do not enjoy writing and pupils at Key Stage 4 are the least likely to enjoy writing.
- Research shows that the average length of a student's contribution to a class discussion is 4 words.

From a whole school perspective...

Top five tips for support:

- 1) Find a quiet spot that can be used for reading and homework.
- 2) Try to take time away from electronic devices such as mobile phones and computers.
- 3) Help to proofread - spellings, capital letters and punctuation.
- 4) Talk to your son/daughter about what they have read, studied and enjoyed.
- 5) We are here to help! If you need any help or feel your child is struggling with literacy, please contact our whole school literacy coordinator.

All reading lists are available on the school's website in the Literacy section (Reading)

• **SMOG Readability Formula – simplified**

SMOG (Simple Measure Of Gobbledegook) is much quicker and easier to work out by hand than other formulae.

1. Select a text
2. Count 10 sentences
3. Count the number of words that have three or more syllables
4. Multiply this by 3
5. Circle the number closest to your answer

1	4	9	16	25	36	49	64	81	100	121	144	169
---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----

6. Find the square root of the number you circled

1	4	9	16	25	36	49	64	81	100	121	144	169
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

7. Add 8 → Readability Level

To obtain the most accurate readability level on longer texts you should carry out this test on three different sections of the document, for example, the beginning, the middle and the end, and take the average of the three scores.

How to
calculate the
reading age
of a text.

Ask for a baseline...

It is always helpful to see what your child has been doing in lessons as well as to gauge for yourself what his/her weaknesses might be and feedback from teachers.

Ask your child's teacher to see assessments and workbooks, discuss the work that they have been completing and then contact your child's teacher if there are any further questions.

How can
I help my
child with
their
spoken
language?

- ❑ Answering in full sentences using the question focus in the answer.
- ❑ Showing you are listening, e.g. looking at the speaker, asking follow up questions, using appropriate body language.
- ❑ Listening attentively and be open to the views of others - you don't have to agree, but you should be modelling a respectful audience.
- ❑ Asking questions to further your understanding, e.g. 'how' and 'why.'
- ❑ Speaking clearly and confidently.
- ❑ Making sure your language is suitable for your language and context.

Key Stage Three

How can I help my child with their reading?

- ❑ **Library Visits:** Has your child ever visited your local library? Giving them the chance to experience this in the local community can boost their interest, enjoyment, and give them real world reading experience.
- ❑ **Exposure:** It is extremely beneficial for pupils to have as much exposure to reading as possible so that they know that reading is an integral part of everyday life. Some things to try:
 - ❑ Talk about reading – Ask them what they are enjoying reading at the moment and tell them about some of your favourite ever books.
 - ❑ Make time to read together.
 - ❑ If your son/daughter has younger brothers or sisters, they could read with them .
 - ❑ Don't just read books – try newspapers, magazines, comics or even the internet.
 - ❑ Let them read what they are interested in! There are so many fantastic children's authors now which you may not have heard of. If you are unsure whether a book is suitable, reading the blurb on the back and the first few pages should give you a clearer picture as well as calculate the SMOG age.
- ❑ **Preparation:** You can help to ensure that your child is well prepared for the reading initiatives currently taking place in school by making sure they have a reading book with them every day.
- ❑ **Rewards:** Ensuring that reading has a high profile in your home will promote a healthy interest in books. Rewarding reading can also help reluctant readers to get into a good routine whilst also supporting avid readers to continue their good practice.
- ❑ Consider obtaining a FirstNews subscription at <https://www.firstnews.co.uk/>

Key Stage Three

To improve reading use the following student checklist for reading:

Student Checklist: Do I?

- Skim and scan to find information quickly- ask questions that require them to do this.
- Find a quotation which could support my ideas.
- Find information in the fiction and non-fiction texts I am reading.
- Understand the connection between the purpose of a text and its layout and organisation.
- Use clues from the text to work out what the writer means even when it is not stated directly.
- Find the main ideas in a text and support them with evidence.
- Use a range of imaginative reading strategies when I read, such as speculation, prediction, questioning, empathy and visualisation
- Use empathy to make judgements about a character
- Use clues from the text to work out what the writer means even when it is not stated directly
- Explain why I like or dislike a text
- Choose the best reading strategy to work out the meaning of words I do not know
- Scan long sentences to make sure that I know where they end and how they are organised

If your child has difficulty in following the words on the page, a ruler is a helpful tool to follow line by line. Specialised reading rulers can be found on Amazon or in local stationery shops.

HELPFUL LINKS:

What Should I Read Next?

www.whatshouldireadnext.com

BBC Bitesize:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/z3kw2hv>

Find a selection of books:

www.lovereadng4kids.co.uk/

Carnegie Award Shadowing:

<http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/shadowing.php>

Key Stage Three

How can I help my child with their writing?

- ❑ BBC Bitesize has some useful resources to support writing:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks3/english/writing/>
- ❑ Build a climate of words at home. Go to places and see things with your child, then talk about what has been seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched. The basis of good writing is good talk, and younger children especially grow into stronger control of language when loving adults -- particularly parents -- share experiences and rich talk about those experiences.
- ❑ Let children see you write often. You're both a model and a teacher.
- ❑ Be as helpful as you can in helping children write. Talk through their ideas with them; help them discover what they want to say. When they ask for help with spelling, punctuation, and usage, supply that help.

Questions to ask your child:

- 1) What is the purpose of your writing?
- 2) Is there a more ambitious word you could use here?
- 3) Have you put the full stop and comma (etc.) where it should go?
- 4) Who is your audience?
- 5) What other types of punctuation could you use here?
- 6) What type of text is this?
- 7) What was the feedback on your last piece of writing?

Key Stage Three

How can I help my child with their writing?

- ❑ Provide a suitable place and notebook for children to write. A quiet corner is best, the child's own place, if possible. If not, any flat surface with elbow room, a comfortable chair, and a good light will do.
- ❑ Encourage (but do not demand) frequent writing. Be patient with reluctance to write.
- ❑ Praise the child's efforts at writing. Forget what happened to you in school and resist the tendency to focus on errors of spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical aspects of writing.
- ❑ If length is a problem draw a box on the page and ask child to write enough to fill the box. Add to the box as necessary.
- ❑ Be alert to occasions when your child can be involved in writing, for example, helping with grocery lists, adding notes at the end of parents' letters, sending holiday and birthday cards, taking down telephone messages, writing notes to friends, helping plan trips by writing for information, drafting notes to school for parental signature, writing notes to letter carriers and other service persons, and preparing invitations to family get-togethers.

KEY STAGE FOUR

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Disgust | 12. A lot | 22. Breaking |
| 2. Beginning | 13. Happened | 23. Satisfied |
| 3. Specific | 14. Receive | 24. Decided |
| 4. Precise | 15. Really | 25. Probably |
| 5. Apprehensive | 16. Tomorrow | 26. Interested |
| 6. Definitely | 17. Weird | 27. Relief |
| 7. Necessary | 18. Tired | 28. Possibly |
| 8. Disappear | 19. Normal | 29. His/he's |
| 9. Disappoint | 20. Interrupt | 30. Says |
| 10. Appearance | 21. Over- | |
| 11. Completely | exaggerating | |

30 most common spelling mistakes on the language papers

Spell it
right

In looking at examiners' report from this year it became apparent that keywords were continuously misspelled.

These 30 words need to be embedded in your child's vocabulary.

Key Stage Four

Key questions to support literacy:

- What is the relevance of this word?
- Who is this character and why is he/she significant?
- What do you think is going to happen?
- How will this support your knowledge for your exam?
- Can you create an example or real-world scenario for me based on what you have read?
- How can I help make this information stick?
- Can you use a more ambitious word here?
- What other forms of punctuation could you use?
- If I draw a box in your workbook can you fill it with writing?
- On a scale of 1-10 what is the amount of effort you have put into this piece of homework?

Key Stage Four

How to support your child with reading.

As your son/daughter prepares for their GCSE's in Years 9/10/11 they will be asked to read/write more extended texts.

Research Findings: Reading Means Achieving

Recent research into the reading skills of 15 year olds across the world found that children who are more interested in reading do better at school than those who don't read for pleasure. The study also found that parents who talk to their children about books, TV programmes and films help to keep their children interested in reading. Having books, newspapers and magazines around at home also made a difference to how interested children were in reading. (DfE)

Extended reading and independent study of subjects that your child is interested in make for more well rounded and focused analysis in coursework and exams.

Key Stage Four

How do I help at home?

- ❑ Collect newspaper articles about topics your child is studying.
- ❑ Read together if your child is having problems with reading in a particular subject.
- ❑ Read with them - you could both do the 16by16 challenge as a book club.
- ❑ Speak to your child's subject teacher, to see if there is anything that they could read that would help their studies or that would help them enjoy a topic.
- ❑ Talk about everyday topics, encouraging your child to use the technical terms they are learning at GCSE.
- ❑ Look up technical words that you or your child don't recognise from their work in a dictionary or on the internet and make it your word of the day.

"I was really worried about my son as he used to tell me that he hated reading. One way I could get him to read was by buying car magazines as a treat."

Mum, Oswestry

"It's easy to forget how much reading you do every day. I make sure my kids realise it is a part of my life by getting them involved when I can - like cooking using a recipe, making a shopping list or looking at the paper to see where we

are in the league!"
Dad, Whitchurch

16 by 16 Reading Challenge

- *Lord of the Flies* - William Golding
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* - Maya Angelou
- *Of Mice and Men* - John Steinbeck
- *Oliver Twist* - Charles Dickens
- *Frankenstein* - Mary Shelley
- *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* - Robert Louis Stevenson
- *Misery* - Stephen King
- *Wuthering Heights* - Emily Bronte
- *Brave New World* - Aldous Huxley
- *Never Let Me Go* - Kazuo Ishiguro
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* - Harper Lee
- *The Catcher in the Rye* - J.D. Salinger
- *Rebecca* - Daphne Du Maurier
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* - Mark Haddon
- *Heroes* - Robert Cormier
- *The Outsiders* - S.E. Hinton
- *Animal Farm* - George Orwell
- *The Book Thief* - Markus Zusak
- *Life of Pi* - Yann Martel
- *The Kite Runner* - Khaled Hosseini

Key Stage Four

How can I help my child with their writing?

KEY EXAM WORDS

Analyse: examine something in detail to explain it

Understand: view something in a particular way

Describe: give a detailed account

Explain: describe in detail giving reasons why

Present: to show something in a clear way

Compare: to note similarities or differences

It is imperative that your child understands the command words that are expected in each subject's exams.

The exam boards we use at The Marches Academy Trust include:

AQA

OCR

Edexcel

Eduqas

A google search of these boards, subjects and exam codes will give you the command words needed for success.

Key Stage Four

How can I help my child with their writing?

- ❑ Access BBC Bitesize for some additional support:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english/writing/>
- ❑ Build a climate of words at home. The basis of good writing is good talk, and younger children especially grow into stronger control of language when loving adults -- particularly parents -- share experiences and rich talk about those experiences.
- ❑ Be as helpful as you can in helping children write. Talk through their ideas with them; help them discover what they want to say. When they ask for help with spelling, punctuation, and usage, supply that help.
- ❑ Encourage your child to read newspapers and respond in letter form to the opinion section or even online comments sections of news stories.
- ❑ Provide a suitable place and notebook for children to write. A quiet corner is best, the child's own place, if possible. If not, any flat surface with elbow room, a comfortable chair, and a good light will do.

Sample exam papers are available from all exam boards and, at the very least, from your child's teacher.

Ask your child what the difference is between a 4 mark question and a 20 mark question.

Set a timer and have your child try to answer the question in full in allotted time (a minute per mark is a good guideline)

Key Stage Four

How can I help my child with their writing?

Extended creative writing tasks are available through the literacy page of the school's website.

Students should also be familiar with the characteristics and requirements of text types in all facets of writing (homework included). These are also available through emailing your child's teacher.

- ❑ Praise the child's efforts at writing. Forget what happened to you in school and resist the tendency to focus on errors of spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical aspects of writing.
- ❑ If length is a problem draw a box on the page and ask child to write enough to fill the box. Add to the box as necessary.
- ❑ Be alert to occasions when the child can be involved in writing, for example, helping with grocery lists, adding notes at the end of parents' letters, sending holiday and birthday cards, taking down telephone messages, writing notes to friends, helping plan trips by writing for information, drafting notes to school for parental signature, writing notes to letter carriers and other service persons, and preparing invitations to family get-togethers.



For further support please contact your child's Head of Academic Progress/Head of Year, English teacher or the school's literacy coordinator at.

There is also a parent toolkit available for download on each school's website that contains grammar guidance, text types and a variety of other supporting documents that will help you support your child through their development in literacy.

