

RESPECT
COURAGE
EQUALITY
FRIENDSHIP
EXCELLENCE
DETERMINATION

A Guide to Reading at Erasmus Darwin Academy

*'Read at every wait; read at all hours;
read within leisure, read within times
of labour; read as one goes in; read as
one goes out. The task of the
educated mind is simply put: read to
lead.'*

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Why is reading important?

Reading for pleasure is the most important activity your child can do to improve their achievement in school. Reading is the best way to improve vocabulary which is essential for success in every subject as by reading students are exposed to a wide range of words. Reading also has social and emotional benefits. It increases self-esteem and studies show that students who read are more empathetic. Growing up can be difficult and reading can help young people explore complex problems from the safe fictional world of a book.

Reading at Erasmus Darwin Academy

- A reading book forms part of a student's daily equipment. They should have one with them at all times. This can be a book from home or the library. A strike will be issued by their tutor if they do not have one.
- The library at Erasmus Darwin Academy is fully stocked with a range of books for a variety of different abilities and interests. Mrs Dickinson, the librarian, will support students when choosing a book. Students will be able to visit the library during their allotted time.
- In order to keep our school library stocked, if students fail to return a book back to the library after two reminders or if they return the book and it is damaged, they will be charged £6 to replace the book.
- All students will read as part of the tutor programme.
- All students will read at the start of their lesson after lunch (except on Wednesdays).
- All English lessons start with at least five minutes of silent reading.
- Year 7 and 8 have a library lesson once a fortnight. This is a lesson dedicated to reading. Students will read silently, have the opportunity to read aloud to their teacher, discuss the book they are reading and complete quizzes on Accelerated Reader.
- All students in KS3 need to read for at least 30 minutes per day. This is their English homework so it is not optional. You must sign your child's reading log each week (we recommend at the same time of the signing of the planner). Students need to read a minimum of one book per month and take a quiz on Accelerated Reader if they are in Year 7 and 8 or write a book review if they are in Year 9.
- Students are rewarded when they become 'millionaire readers' or improve their reading age by a significant amount. Students' successes will be celebrated in their library lessons and they will receive a certificate.
- We also like to make reading competitive. This year, the number of words read and/or quizzes passed will contribute to the House Cup.
- Reading interventions are given to students whose reading ages are significantly below their chronological age. This is conducted in small groups with Mrs Dickinson.

Accelerated Reader (Year 7 and 8)

- Students complete a 'STAR Reading Test' three times a year. This gives each child a reading age that can be compared to their chronological age. This is a computer adaptive reading test that gives current information about a child's reading level.
- Once a month students need to complete one quiz on a book they have read (they can of course complete more than this). This helps to monitor comprehension and track the amount of books and words students are reading.
- Students can complete these quizzes either in the library lesson, in their own time at school or at home. The 'Accelerated Book Finder' has a powerful search engine you can use from home - <https://www.arbookfind.co.uk/>
- It also helps teachers to monitor progress and to see where your child might need further support in their reading.
- Guidance on how to support your child when accessing 'Accelerated Reader' from home will be sent out.

Libresoft

- This is our new library system.
- All students have an individual username and password which allows them to request and reserve a book from home. Students are also able to see all books that are available in the library.
- Year 9 use this system to submit a book review electronically each month. If the book is not on the system, then they can write the review in their reading log.
- Guidance on how to support your child when accessing 'Libresoft' from home will be sent out.

Literacy Assessment Online (Year 9 and 10)

- Similar to 'Accelerated Reader', this is a computer test that we use for Year 9 and Year 10 to track students' reading ages.
- This helps teachers to monitor progress and also highlights students' misconceptions at word level in order for teachers to identify which students need extra support.
- This allows us to track reading age data four times a year.

How to support your child with their reading

- Get your child to make predictions about the book they are about to read. This will help with their inference skills. They could do this by looking at the front cover, reading the first sentence or using chapter titles.
- Encourage your child to summarise what they have read. This can be done verbally or they can reduce what they have read by writing down 3 things.
- Ensure your child can clarify what they have read. For example, encourage them to reread sections they do not understand, focus on key words and even look words up that they have not come across before.

- Ask your child questions about what they are reading. This will help with their comprehension and their ability to verbalise their ideas. For example, 'did you enjoy that book? Why? Why not? Was there any part you didn't like? What happened in the section you have just read?'
- If you have younger children, ask your older child to read aloud to them or children can also read to pets. This will help build their confidence. Michael Morpurgo is a particularly good shared read as his books have something for everyone.
- Continue to read aloud to your child (even if he/she is a fluent reader).

Tips to help encourage your child to read for pleasure

- Use the 'Recommended Reads' list for their year group.
- Find books with a connection to something they love. For example, if they are football fans try Dan Freeman's *Jamie Johnson Football Series*.
- 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/>
- Try a 'phone free' hour and use this time to encourage your child to read.
- Build reading into part of your daily routines. Find a regular time for reading in your child's day so they can begin to expect it as part of their routine. This can be any time of day – before bed, after dinner, in the morning before breakfast or as soon as they get home from school.
- 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/ young adult book yourself; the plot-driven nature of many of these books means they are relatively easy reads.
- Let your child see you reading for pleasure and talk about what you read and how you choose books.
- Find the book version of a movie: *Stormbreaker*, *Harry Potter*, *The Book Thief*, *The Princess Diaries*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, *Maze Runner*, *Fault in Our Stars* and *Wonder* are all films based on children/ young adult books. Both of you can read the book, watch the film together, then discuss the differences.
- 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 e.g. *I Am Malala*.
- Non-fiction books linked to a child's interests are also a great way to spark a desire to read. For example, *Good Night Stories For Rebel Girls* or *Stories for Boys Who Dare to be Different*.

If you would like any more information please contact Miss E Tomlinson (Lead Teacher of English - Development Stage & Literacy and Oracy Co-ordinator) on e.tomlinson@eda.staffs.sch.uk or Mrs H Dickinson (Librarian) on h.dickinson@eda.staffs.sch.uk