

Summer Reading Year 8

We are excited to hear that you are coming to Friends' in September. One of the most important things you can do to be ready, is to read as much as you can over the summer. Here are some suggestions that we think you will enjoy:



WHY IS READING IMPORTANT?

10 ways reading benefits us and why we should cultivate a reading habit today



SHARPENS YOUR MIND

By concentrating on the words and the story line, it stimulates your brain. This particular stimulation can help sharpen your mind, especially the part of the brain that is responsible for concentration and critical analysis.



INCREASES YOUR VOCABULARY

When reading, you might come across a few words you don't quite understand or even recognise. This confusion can lead you to look up the word and discover the definition.



LOWERS YOUR STRESS

The act of reading and focusing on the written word can help relieve your mind off the pressures of the day. By pulling your mind away from the stress at hand, you can relax and let the stress melt away.



DECREASES YOUR DEPRESSION

Reading, especially self-help books, can help ward off depressive occurrences. Just like with lowering your stress levels, reading stimulates the part of the brain that deals with depression as well.



IMPROVES YOUR MEMORY AND FOCUS

Reading at least a little each day can improve your focus and your memory function. In this instance as well, reading stimulates the brain, particularly the part of the brain that helps with memory and attention.



STRENGTHENS YOUR WRITING ABILITIES

Whether you write things for work or just for fun, heavy reading can improve your writing skills and abilities. There are several ways in which reading can help strengthen your writing skills, and each of these ways happens without you even realising it.



ENHANCES YOUR IMAGINATION

Consider the worlds that you are immersed into and the characters you come across while reading a novel. Because of these worlds and characters, the part of your brain which houses your imagination is stimulated, causing you to imagine what the places and people look like just by picturing the words.



BOOSTS YOUR SLEEP

Reading, since it helps you relax and de-stress, can help pull you into a deep and peaceful sleep. That sounds like it might be too good to be true, but reading can, in fact, help you sleep.



ENJOY YOUR ENTERTAINMENT AND PEACE

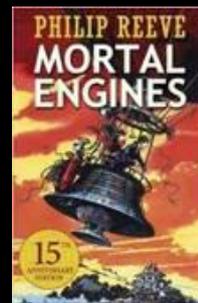
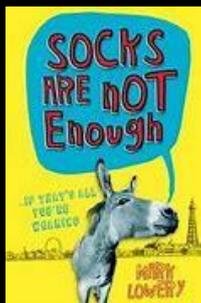
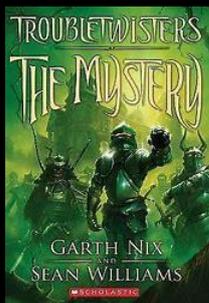
Any reader knows that reading can be peaceful and induce a relaxing state of mind. By immersing yourself in a good book, you can almost feel any stress or worry melt away.



READING CAN BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY

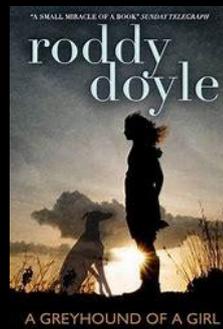
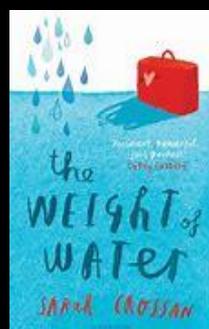
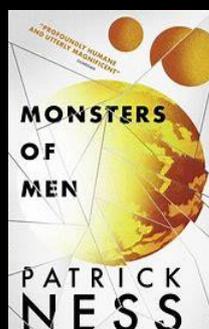
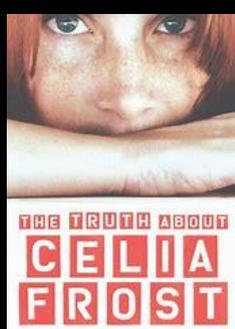
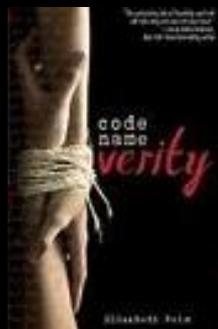
Books can bring joy to your life on a daily basis. The act of reading is a great benefit both to mental and physical health, but it can also brighten your day.

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Murder Is Bad Manners (or *Murder Most Unladylike* in its original U.K. edition)

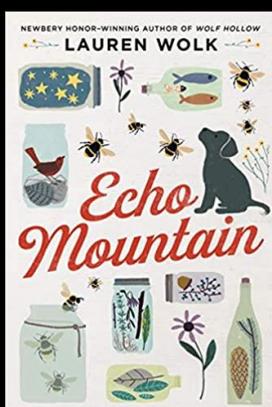
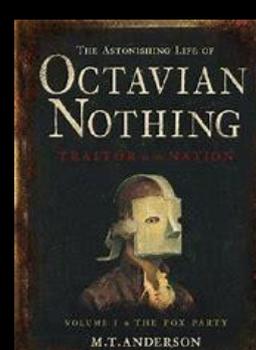
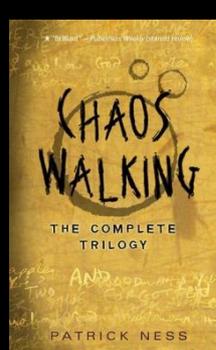
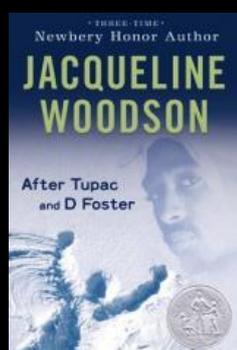
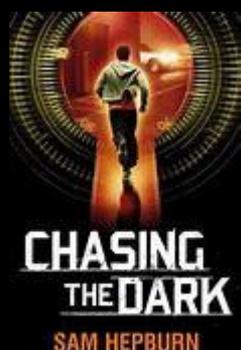
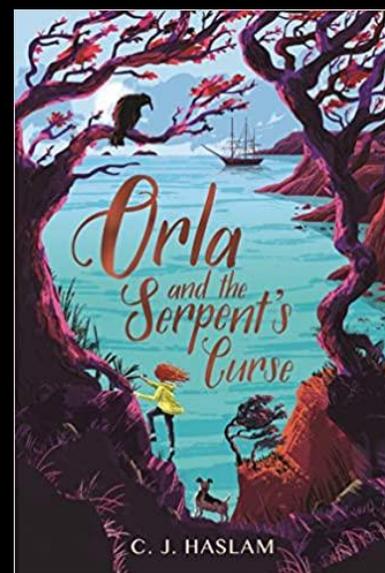
The first installment of a series by first-time author Robin Stevens, is an appealing whodunit set in a posh English boarding school in 1934, featuring 13-year-old detectives and BFFs Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong. Teachers turn up murdered, and a not-so-secret string of affairs (both same- and opposite-sex) may have something to do with it. Narrator Hazel is sometimes worldly and sometimes naive, matter-of-factly noting that her dad has a concubine but not knowing exactly what goes on when characters are "canoodling" behind closed doors. Being a Chinese girl in 1930s England (a smart and rich one), Hazel deals with a lot of casual prejudice and snobbery, and she holds her own. This is a great choice.



Orla and the Serpent's Curse by CJ Haslam ★★★★★ (Walker)

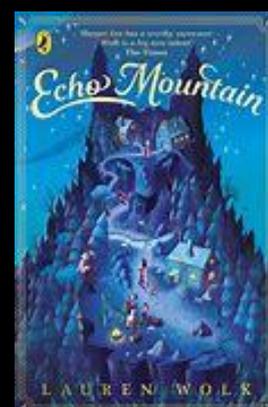
Any children's book with "curse" in its title risks sounding slightly off-putting these days, as life starts to feel ever more like the plot of a dystopian novel. But *Orla and the Serpent's Curse*, by the first-time children's author CJ Haslam, is a welcome breath of fresh air.

The action begins on the first day of the summer holidays, when 12-year-old Orla Perry is travelling to Cornwall with her mother and two bickering brothers. In an image familiar from the spring-summer Boden catalogue, we meet them "in a steamed-up hatchback in a 15-mile tailback somewhere west of Exeter on the A38", with their surfboards strapped to the roof-rack. But on arrival at their remote holiday cottage, events take a sinister turn – and when Orla discovers a necklace in the woods, she finds herself embroiled in a helter-skelter adventure involving a witch's curse that is poisoning the land and threatening to destroy everything it touches.



***Echo Mountain* is by Lauren Wolk, the Newbery-winning author of *Wolf Hollow*.**

It's about a family in Great Depression-era Maine who lost everything and are rebuilding their lives in a rural, mountain community. Ellie, who's 12, and her family are also taking care of her father, who's in a coma after an accident. There's some scariness, mild gore, and mention of blood from injuries. She suspects a friend's black eye is from his mother but he says it was an accident. The book opens with a newborn puppy that seems dead and Ellie has to take it away to bury it, but there's a safe resolution when she's able to get it to start breathing. Ellie is a great role model for empathy, bravery, hard work, curiosity, and willingness to do whatever needs to be done.



You can find a fantastic list of the best books for your age here.
<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/1/100-best-books-9-11/>

And here:
<https://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk/genre/12/11-plus-readers.html>

And here:
<https://www.readbrightly.com/50-best-books-11-12-year-olds>

We know the value of reading And if you're struggling to get your child reading again. . . .

It doesn't have to be a battle. Use these strategies to encourage.

1. Keep things real.

Make explicit connections between your child's ability to read and his/ her future options in life. If they are thinking of a career path, have open, honest discussions about the ways reading might be necessary for success. Just be careful to discuss, not preach!

2. Let your child choose.

The best way to encourage your child to read is to allow them to read whatever they find engaging, whether it's comic books, cookbooks or romance novels about vampires or zombies. The books your child is drawn to might not be your favorites, but don't discourage their preferences. Reading is reading.

3. Look for books at the right reading level.

If your child struggles with reading, it can be challenging to find high-interest books at the right reading level. Look for books that specifically target reluctant readers – google to find them! It's also a good idea to let your child use assistive technology that makes reading easier, such as audiobooks. Getting practice with an accessible text is better than giving up on a traditional book that is geared for more advanced readers.

4. Model reading

The best way to create a culture of reading in your home is to read as much as possible. The more your child sees you reading, the more likely they are to follow suit. This doesn't change once your child enters secondary school. As you know, young people are very resistant to any message that implies *do as I say, not as I do!*

5. Discuss what they read.

Talk in meaningful ways about what your child reads. Ask questions and encourage debate. If your child has dyslexia or **ADHD**, or struggles to commit to reading, they may prefer talking about a story to reading it. Why not ask them to read a bit to you and then talk? Or take turns reading...or have them read to you in the car...

6. Resist the urge to criticize.

If your child is a reluctant reader, you want to prevent her from shutting down about reading altogether. And that means keeping negative opinions about what they read to yourself. If you don't like the vampire stories, don't voice that criticism. Be tolerant and encourage reading, whatever form that takes- reading Biography or Sport or Non-fiction is as valuable as reading fiction!

7. Find a compelling series.

Readers who get hooked on the first book in a series can follow the same characters or themes through many more books. For young people with learning and thinking differences, starting a new book can be daunting. But the familiarity of a series can make it easier to understand the text and can reduce the negative feelings associated with starting a new reading task. Find the right characters or themes, and even reluctant readers will be eager to pick up the next book in the series.

8. Connect reading to your child's passion.

By secondary school, your struggling reader may have lost the motivation to work on reading skills. But you can encourage them to stay engaged by looking for ways to connect reading to subjects that are relevant to them. For example, if your child is a reluctant reader who wants to work with animals, focus on that topic and make it clear how important reading as background to understanding their passions will be to future interests and careers.

9. Tie reading to social media.

If your child likes texting friends and posting on social networks, you can give them mini-assignments that use those interests. For example, encourage them to start following a blog and to read interesting posts aloud to you occasionally. Or you could ask them to be on the lookout for **interesting abbreviations** people use in texts and get her to make a cheat sheet or to quiz you on what these abbreviations stand for. (A great way to catchup on the latest teen speak- LOL!)

10. Leverage their interest in current events.

Highlight the ways that your child can use reading to keep tabs on what is happening in the world. Encourage your child to pick up a newspaper or subscribe to a magazine. For teens with learning and thinking differences, reading might seem **frustrating** or boring. But if your child is interested in sports, politics, celebrities, music, you name it, there will always be something they might want to read!

Most importantly – don't give up! If you keep suggesting books and allow them to choose, they will find something! If you can get to a book shop – have a coffee and let them roam - make it a treat! If you're at home – do some googling of our suggestions and see what appeals!