

## Advice for Parents on Helping their Young Person with Literacy

One of the greatest factors that will make a difference in helping your child be successful with improving their literacy during their time at secondary is the support of parents and carers. We know this, so in this section you will find helpful information and resources to ensure that every student has the ability to become successful in reading, writing, spelling, and speaking and listening.

A little bit of background:

The National Literacy Trust conducts research each year to track young people's attitudes towards reading and writing. In 2014 these were their key discoveries:

Reading:

- Only half of young people identify reading as an enjoyable activity (54.4%)
- While the number of young people reading for enjoyment outside school continues to rise each year nationally, this is still only half (41.4%)
- Young people who enjoy reading are three times as likely to read about the level expected for their age compared to their peers who do not enjoy reading

Writing:

- Levels of enjoyment of reading (54.4%) are higher than writing (49.3%)
- While students are beginning to read for enjoyment more in their own time, there has been little change in young people writing in their own time for enjoyment
- Children who enjoy writing are six times as likely to write above the expected level for their age as their peers who do not enjoy writing

Our young people's attitudes towards reading and writing not only define how they will do academically at school, but how they will successfully communicate with others in their community. To help our students to succeed, we need your support.

### Support for Reading

Our young people should be reading 15-20 minutes every night. This can include books, comics, magazines, blogs, graphic novels, and news outlets (both digital and print).

Here are our top tips for supporting your child with reading:

Tip 1: Seek Advice and Guidance

- Encourage your young person to talk to other students and members of staff about what books they might like;
- Sign-up with your child to your local library – many of them run teen book clubs;
- Talk to other parents about books that they have bought for or recommended to their child.

Tip 2: Find the Right Level

- All students in Year 7 and 8 are given a level for Accelerated Reader, so encourage them to read at that level and make progress by moving up each time they quiz;
- Encourage your son/daughter to visit the Senior Fiction section of the LRC once they enter KS4 and Post-16.

### Tip 3: Making a Regular Time Together

- Set aside a time each week (maybe over dinner or before watching a favourite show) to talk about what they are reading;
- Share with them a book that you are reading, or a story you enjoyed when you were younger.

### Tip 4: Praise

- Showing interest in your child's reading habits and praising and rewarding them when they read can work wonders!

### Tip 5: Be a reader

- Your own attitude to reading has a huge impact on how your child will view it. If they see that you read and view reading positively they will be more likely to do so also.

## Support for Writing:

### Tip 1: Writing can be done anywhere

- Journals on holidays are an excellent way to encourage writing. Want to use a more tech-savvy approach? You can encourage your child to start a private blog that they share with friends ([www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com), [www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com)) or put updates on Facebook and Twitter.

### Tip 2: All Forms of Writing are Fun

- Take advantage of all opportunities you can to get your child writing;
- Write a thank you note for a gift;
- Write a review on a website like Trip Advisor;
- Write a letter of complaint or gratitude after an event.

### Tip 3: Enter Competitions

There are several writing competitions that are run every year in this country. Here are some links to some of the largest:

- Young Writers UK run competitions throughout the year with excellent prizes – [www.youngwriters.co.uk](http://www.youngwriters.co.uk)
- BBC Young Writer's Award – Supported by Book Trust, this competition runs every year and entries are submitted in February – [www.booktrust.org.uk/prizes/21](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/prizes/21)
- National Writer's Award is run by Explore Learning and is a short story writing competition – [www.explorelearning.co.uk/youngwriters](http://www.explorelearning.co.uk/youngwriters)
- The National Literacy Trust runs a range of competitions for students across all key stages to improve their writing – [www.literacytrust.org.uk/schools\\_teaching/competitions](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/schools_teaching/competitions)

### Tip 4: Redraft

- Encourage your son/daughter to proofread their work.
- Encourage them to redraft something they have written and be willing to provide constructive criticism on anything you see that needs correcting (the best work is never the first attempt).

### Support for Spelling:

Many people think that once a student enters secondary school that they no longer need to learn about spelling; this is simply not the case. Students continue to develop their knowledge of phonics all the way through into adulthood and their working life.

#### Tip 1: LEXIA

Make sure that your son/daughter is getting the most out of the LEXIA Phonics programme we run at the academy. They can download the 'LEXIA Strategies' app from the iTunes Store or Chrome Store. Simply enter [nadia.marken@wilmingtonacademy.org.uk](mailto:nadia.marken@wilmingtonacademy.org.uk) when asked for the teacher email and then students can enter their regular login details (username: 15+first initial+last name, password: read).

#### Tip 2: The Tools of the Trade

- Make sure a dictionary is available at home for students to check their spelling in their work.

#### Tip 3: LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK

- This is a great strategy to check and practise new words; the student writes the word, covers it, checks that they wrote it correctly, and repeats the process 10 times.
- The most common words used in the English language are only 200 words! They make up 80% of what we say. They can be practised from this website: <http://teacherjoe.us/Vocab200.html>

### Support of Speaking and Listening:

Speaking and Listening comes naturally to all of us, right? We speak and listen everyday, but sometimes we forget that using language correctly needs as much support as improving reading and writing.

#### Tip 1: Pause, Prompt, Praise

- Encourage your child to read with you, or present an oral task for school to you. When they make a mistake, ask them to PAUSE, PROMPT them with the correct answer, and PRAISE them when they make the correction.

#### Tip 2: Talk Time

- With so much going on in our busy lives, it can be hard to find time each week to talk. Make sure you set aside some time though, even if it is only 10 minutes per day, when the families talk together; it can be about each other's day, a major story in the news, or telling each other jokes or funny stories.

#### Tip 3: Online Support

There are many websites that provide support for improving speaking and listening:

- [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english/speaking](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english/speaking) - A site full of activities to improve presentation skills.
- [http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/microsites/english\\_new/revised\\_gcse/controlled\\_assessment/speaking\\_listening\\_video.asp](http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/microsites/english_new/revised_gcse/controlled_assessment/speaking_listening_video.asp) - a site that shows examples of good speaking and listening practice.

### Literacy and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

There are a number of apps available for students who wish to use their own device as a learning tool. Many of these applications can be found in both the Chrome Web Store and iTunes Store:

**Accelerated Reader:** currently only available on iTunes, the AR app allows students to quiz on their device while connected to the school network. You can also ask your son/daughter to log in and you can check their bookshelf to see how many books they have read on the programme.

**LEXIA Strategies:** This app allows students to complete their 90 Lexia minutes per week. Headphones must be used in school, but the programme can also be used at home. It requires a teacher email, so please enter 'nadia.marken@wilmingtonacademy.org.uk' when prompted. Currently available on both the Chrome Web Store and the iTunes Store.

There are a number of apps recommended for secondary students at: <http://www.iteach-uk.com/resource/fantastic-apps/post-primary-apps>. While these are for Apple products, there will be an equivalent in the Chrome Web Store.