



How to take part in Reading Schools Week

How to plan ahead for Reading Schools Week, as well as inspiration for activities

Age: 3-18

CfE: First to Fourth Level

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About this resource

What is Reading Schools?

For those who are new to the [Reading Schools programme](#), Reading Schools is an accreditation programme for schools run by Scottish Book Trust. The focus of the programme is to support and celebrate settings which build and sustain a reading culture in their schools and communities. It is open to every school in Scotland, and has been developed using research into the impact of reading for pleasure on young people.

Throughout this resource, you will see the term [“Reading leadership group”](#). This is one of the key areas of Reading Schools and refers to a group of pupils from across your school who are involved in shaping the delivery of your reading culture. If you are new to Reading Schools and do not have a Reading leadership group, don’t

worry – you use Reading Schools Week as an opportunity to see which pupils might like to be involved! We recommend you use our [Introduction to Reading Schools presentation template](#) during an assembly to introduce this to your pupils and see who would be interested in joining in.

What is Reading Schools Week?

From **Monday 2 February to Friday 6 February 2026**, we'll be marking the first ever [Reading Schools Week](#), a five-day extravaganza designed to celebrate the incredible activity taking place in Reading Schools across the country. Reading Schools Week is open to all primary and secondary schools including:

- Registered Reading Schools, at any stage of accreditation
- Schools that are not yet part of Reading Schools - you are welcome to join in with Reading Schools Week, and we encourage you to join and experience the Reading Schools programme and all it has to offer

Reading Schools is also open to schools including A.S.N. settings and Gaelic Medium Education settings. Please do adapt activities:

- To fit the needs and/or context of your pupils
- To be delivered in Scots, Gaelic or any other languages your pupils speak or are learning

This resource has been designed to support you with:

- How to plan any delivery or activities for Reading Schools Week, including key dates and considerations
- Suggested activities for each day's theme
- How to take your learning from Reading Schools Week further

Why take part in Reading Schools Week?

Reading Schools Week has been designed to be a fun and engaging way for all schools in Scotland to engage with reading for pleasure and develop or sustain their

reading culture. You're invited to join in and connect with hundreds of other Reading Schools nationwide by taking part in daily challenges, sharing ideas and having fun with books and stories!

Both our Reading Schools programme and Reading Schools Week are supported by key research into the importance of reading for pleasure. To find out more about the benefits of reading for pleasure, and a reading culture in your setting, see the following articles on the Scottish Book Trust website:

- [How reading for pleasure can tackle poverty](#)
- [Motivating teenagers to read – how you can encourage reading for pleasure at school](#)
- [How reading improves your mental health and wellbeing](#)

How to register

Register for Reading Schools Week by completing the form [on the Reading Schools website](#).

Prizes

By taking part in Reading Schools Week, you can also win prizes for your school or setting. These include book vouchers as well as grand prize of an author visit. To be in with a chance of winning, you need to be registered through [our registration form](#).

Reading Schools Week Challenges





Each day of Reading Schools Week has a specific theme, with challenges for the pupils and staff in your school to take part in. In this table below, we have included each day's theme, as well as ways you can connect this to the Reading Schools framework.

On pages 6 to 10 of this resource, you can also find suggestion of possible activities for each day. On [page 18](#) and [19](#), you can also find printable bingo cards for pupils which you can use to encourage them to engage with the challenges by ticking off

each activity they take part in.

Date	Theme	Reading Schools Framework Area	Suggested activities
Monday 2 February	Ask me what I'm reading	1.2.2 – Learner role modelling 1.2.3 – Staff being seen as readers themselves 2.3.2 – Staff-led meaningful conversations around books	See page 6
Tuesday 3 February	Drop everything and read (DEAR)	1.3.2 – School environment 2.2.1 – Regular opportunities to read for pleasure	See page 7
Wednesday 4 February	Share a story	2.3.1 – Modelling reading behaviours	See page 8
Thursday 5 February	Author's takeover day	2.2.2 – Interdisciplinary book projects 2.3.5 – Access to authors (Silver and Gold only)	See page 9
Friday 6 February	Reading leadership group takeover day	1.2.1 – Reading leadership group	See page 10







For each activity, we have included icons to show what, if any, ahead planning you might need to do for each activity:

Icon	Type of planning
	This icon is shown where you will need to print or prepare specific materials before using this activity with your pupils.
	This icon is shown where you may need to set aside a specific amount of time for this activity ahead of time.
	This icon is shown where you may need to meet with other staff or your Reading leadership group to plan or discuss this activity.
	This icon is shown for an activity that pupils can complete at home . This may require you to communicate with families ahead of Reading Schools Week – you can use our printable letter template on page 16 .

Day 1: Ask me what I'm reading

Jumpstart the week by encouraging book talk! Monday's challenge is to get pupils and staff talking about what they're reading as well as their reading habits, identities and preferences. Encouraging book talk in your school is a great way to build social connections – showing that reading can be something that pupils can do in groups or with their friends – as well as helping children respond to what they have, or haven't enjoyed, and find new text recommendations.

Ideas for activities

What planning ahead is required?	Activity idea
	Ask me what I'm reading: Encourage pupils to ask you, and each other what you are reading. You could wear "Ask me what I'm reading badges" and/or ask all teachers to set aside time in their class to talk about books.
	Book Jenga: Get pupils talking about what they're reading, as well as their reading habits and preferences by playing Book Jenga! You can use our resource to create your own set. Or, as your Reading leadership group to come up with some questions.
	Currently reading signs: Make, or print, "Currently reading" signs for your classrooms.
	Guess the Shelfie: Ask pupils to guess the Shelfie – display images of staff members alongside the cover of what they are currently reading (or a favourite book) and ask pupils to match up which cover belongs to who!
	Book Café or Campfire: Organise a book café or campfire chat, where pupils can chat about what they're currently reading over snacks or drinks.
	Ask someone what they're reading: encourage pupils to ask someone at home what they're reading, or about a favourite book or story.







See [page 12](#) for more information on how to plan these activities.

Day 2: Drop everything and read

Tuesday's challenge is about making time for readers to read for pleasure.

Depending on your school, you might want to display timers in each classroom that count down to the time you have designated for reading. Or you may choose to tell pupils that a special bell or announcement will sound at some point during the day, during which they have to stop what they're doing and read!

Suggested activities







What planning ahead is required?	Activity idea
	Take part in DEAR: during DEAR time, everyone must drop what they are doing and read for pleasure. This includes staff too!
	Extreme reading: Take photographs of pupils reading in the silliest place possible. See Mortimer Primary School's blog for inspiration .
	Create a DEAR tracker for your classroom: if Reading Schools Week is your first time taking part in DEAR, you could create a poster where pupils can track how much time they have spent reading at school. You can use it to check in regularly – for example, how many minutes have we spent reading across the year? This could be a great reflection tool for children who may be more nervous about reading.
	Think about your reading spaces: reading for pleasure in a classroom chair is not the most comfortable set-up. If you can, create comfy and relaxing reading zones. Use the guide to Enhancing your reading environment on our Reading Schools website for inspiration.
	Book reviews and shelf shouters: offer children space to respond to what they've read during DEAR – they can use review posters , shelf shouters or create their own bookmarks, with space to write their reviews, to put inside the books inside your school.
	Make time to read: encourage pupils to take home a book or borrow one from the local library.

See [page 13](#) for more information on how to plan these activities.

Day 3: Share a story

Wednesday's challenge is about celebrating the act of telling – and hearing! – a story read aloud. Reading aloud creates social bonds and a sense of community, and it allows pupils to enjoy a text that they may not have otherwise read – whether because it's more advanced than their current level, or because you have chosen something outwith their usual preferences. [Research from the Open University](#) shows that reading aloud can also create a class "repertoire", whereby pupils can discuss and bond over shared texts that they have all listened to.

Suggested activities

What planning ahead is required? (If applicable)	Activity idea
	Read aloud in class: set aside time to read aloud – no matter how young, or old, your pupils are!
	Use our storytelling resources: improve your own storytelling skills with our Storytelling resources , which will lead pupils through thinking about how to create and perform their own stories!
	Paired reading: Use our resource to run a paired reading project , with older pupils reading to younger pupils.
	Sensory storytelling: Use our resources to turn a picture book into a sensory story or create your own sensory stories based on pupil's favourite texts or stories, or their own interests.
	Create story sticks or story cubes: Use our resources to create Story sticks or Story cubes to make creating a story more fun and interactive.
	Share a story at home: encourage pupils to read to or with someone at home. Pupils could borrow a book, read to a sibling, or share a story in the language they speak with their family.

See [page 13](#) for more information on how to plan these activities.

Day 4: Author takeover day

The challenges on Thursday will be from our Reading Schools ambassadors:

- [Alastair Chisholm](#) for **primary**
- [Nadine Aisha Jassat](#) for **secondary**

We've included the challenges here so that you can plan ahead. However, we encourage you to keep these challenges a secret from pupils until we release the videos of Alastair and Nadine setting the challenges. These videos will be sent to the email that you register with.

Alastair Chisholm's challenge: Breaking News!

'Get your class buzzing about the books they love with this fun activity that turns reading into a news report!

Pupils imagine themselves as reporters on the scene of an exciting moment from their book, whether it's a reading book, a comic, or even an audiobook. Instead of writing a long piece, they can choose how to share their story: write an article for a newspaper or website, record a short "news report" video, draw a picture of what they can see, or a combination of all three! This activity is flexible and can be done solo or in small groups of up to three children. It encourages pupils to talk positively about the books they enjoy, while giving them a chance to express their ideas in a creative, hands-on way.'

You may find [BBC Bitesize's video resource on Writing a news article](#) (2 minutes, 30 seconds) or [The Young Reporter resources](#) useful here.

Nadine Aisha Jassat's challenge: What happens next?



'Invite your students to think about a book they absolutely love or one where they wish the ending had gone differently. Ask them to imagine what happens to the characters after the final page is turned. They can choose how to share their ideas: writing a continuation scene, sketching what might unfold, or even describing it out loud as if telling a friend a story. This last option links well to the popular TikTok trend

where readers retell book or show plots as if they're real events.

This flexible activity encourages creative thinking, personal response, and discussion, while keeping the focus on celebrating books students connect with.'

You may find our [Book reviews and trailers on film resource](#) useful here.

Other activities

What planning ahead is required? (If applicable)	Activity idea
	Watch Alastair Chisholm or Nadine Aisha Jassat on Authors Live. Each broadcast is 30-40 minutes.
	Learn more about Alastair Chisholm and Nadine Aisha Jassat and create fact-files.

Day 5: Reading leadership group takeover day

As part of registering for Reading Schools Week, we ask your Reading leadership group to submit a challenge for the final day of Reading Schools Week. We'll select our favourite challenges and send them to the email you register with.

Activity planner

Day 1: Ask me what I'm reading

- ☐ Book Jenga
- ☐ Currently reading signs
- ☐ Guess the Shelfie
- ☐ Book Café or Story Campfire

Day 2: Drop everything and read

- ☐ DEAR tracker
- ☐ Refresh your reading spaces
- ☐ Book reviews and shelf shouters

Day 3: Share a story

- ☐ Using our storytelling resources
- ☐ Paired reading
- ☐ Sensory storytelling
- ☐ Story sticks and story cubes

Day 4: Author takeover day

- ☐ Complete your author challenge!
- ☐ Watch Alastair Chisholm or Nadine Aisha Jassat on Authors Live
- ☐ Create author fact files



Day 5: Reading leadership group takeover day

- ☐ Complete your Reading leadership group challenge!




Planning for Reading Schools Week



This section shows the planning you may need to consider in advance of Reading Schools Week. Whilst we have included multiple ideas for each day, **all of these suggested activities are optional**, and we **encourage you to adapt them to suit the context and needs of your school or setting**.

General planning





	<p>Make sure your staff are on board – explain to them the purpose of Reading Schools Week and decide what delivery or activities you’ll be engaging with. We have a downloadable resource designed to help you introduce Reading Schools to your colleagues.</p> <p>Use our activity planner on page 11 to decide what activities you would like to deliver during Reading Schools Week.</p>
	<p>Meet with your Reading leadership group – decide what kind of delivery or activity they will be responsible for and make sure they are aware of any roles or responsibilities ahead of Reading Schools Week.</p> <p>If you don’t yet have a Reading leadership group, you can use our Introduction to Reading Schools presentation template during assembly to encourage children to join!</p>

Planning for Day 1: Ask me what I’m reading



Type of planning required	What to do
	<p>Ask teachers, or staff, to ensure they set aside time in their day for pupils to engage in book talk. All reading is good reading! If you prefer audiobooks, magazines, newspapers, comics or graphic novels, you can still role-model reading.</p>
	<p>Book Jenga: If you don’t already have a Book Jenga set, you could make one using the resource on the Reading Schools website.</p>
	<p>Currently reading signs: Gather materials to create “Currently reading” signs for your classrooms, including printing our template</p>



	<u>Guess the Shelfie</u> : Ask staff to bring in a photo of their bookshelf at home.
	<u>Book or Story Café</u> : Meet with your colleagues to decide when and where you could host a Book Café, and what you might need to provide (e.g. book boxes, snacks, drinks, etc.)

Planning for Day 2: Drop Everything and Read




Type of planning required	What to do
	With your colleagues, decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What time you'll have as a school for pupils to drop everything and read. • Would you like to use a countdown or play a random announcement/ring your school bell? • Where your pupils will read – if in classrooms, is there a way to create more comfortable reading spaces?
	<u>Create a DEAR tracker for your classroom</u> : prepare paper, pens, pencils, etc., as well as where you'd like to display your DEAR tracker.
	<u>Think about your reading spaces</u> : Discuss your current reading spaces with your colleagues. This might not be something you fully solve ahead of Reading Schools Week, but it's good to start the conversation!
	<u>Book reviews and shelf shouters</u> : print our <u>review posters</u> or <u>shelf shouters</u> templates.

Planning for Day 3: Share a story

Type of planning required	What to do
	Ask teachers, or staff, to set aside time to read aloud to pupils. It can be fiction, non-fiction, poetry, picture books or a play – the choice is yours!
	Use our storytelling resources : read through and/or print our <u>storytelling resource</u> .

	Paired reading: read through and/or print our paired reading resource . You may need to meet with other teachers if your paired reading involves multiple classes.
	Sensory storytelling: read through and/or print our use our resources: Turn a picture book into a sensory story or Create your own sensory stories .

Planning for Day 4: Author takeover day

Type of planning required	What to do
	(Primary) Alastair Chisholm's challenge: Breaking News! Make sure you set aside some time during the day to introduce Alastair Chisholm's challenge, and for pupils to take part.
	(Secondary) Nadine Aisha Jassat's challenge: What happens next? Make sure you set aside some time during the day to introduce Nadine Aisha Jassat's challenge, and for pupils to take part.
	Watch Alastair Chisholm or Nadine Aisha Jassat on Authors Live: decide time to watch the broadcasts on our website.

Building on Reading Schools Week

Reading Schools Week is just five days, but we encourage you to build on what you've delivered for longer-term engagement. For example:

- Include what you delivered during Reading Schools Week in your Evidence plan
- Ask pupils what they enjoyed and what they might like to do again
- Ask pupils if anyone is now interested in starting, or joining, your Reading leadership group
- Ask staff what they noticed during Reading Schools Week, what they found effective and what they would be interested in doing again, or expanding on

- Share what you delivered with families – informing them about what you have done and what impact it has had is a great opportunity to open up a discussion about reading at home

Further resources

- Find out more about Reading Schools via the [Reading Schools website](#)
- Find out more about Reading Schools Week via [our webpage on the Reading Schools website](#)
- To find resources to support you during Reading Schools Week, see the [resources on the Reading Schools website](#) and [on the Scottish Book Trust website](#)

Printable letter for families

Dear family members,

As part of our Reading Schools journey, we are taking part in Reading Schools Week from **Monday 2 February** to **Friday 6 February 2026**. Each day, we'll be exploring the importance (and fun!) of reading.

Each day, your child will be set challenges with the aim of encouraging reading for pleasure, bonding over books and stories and connecting with other pupils. We would like to encourage you to do the following at home:

Monday 2: Ask me what I'm reading

Your child will be asked to ask someone at home what they're currently reading, as well as about a favourite book or story. Be honest! All reading is good reading, so whether you like historical epics or spy thrillers, prefer magazines or audiobooks, or whether you've tried to read a book you just couldn't finish – having an open and honest discussion about reading helps children see it as something they too can engage with.

Tuesday 3: Drop everything a read

During the school day, your child will take part in "Drop Everything and Read" time. If they've got a book they'd like to bring in, remind them to pack it. If not, they can borrow one from school or the local library. We'll also challenge them to think about when they may be able to read at home – whether first thing in the morning, or to help them fall asleep.

Wednesday 4: Share a story

On Wednesday, we'll encourage pupils to share a story – enjoying hearing, or telling, a story aloud. We encourage you to share a story at home too. Your child could read to you, a sibling or another relative. Or you could read, or tell, them a story. This doesn't have to be in English – use whatever language you use at home. Don't worry about getting it perfect – the important bit is enjoying a story together. We've linked a

Scottish Book Trust article with some top tips below!

Thursday 5 and Friday 6

On both Thursday and Friday, your child will receive a challenge from our Reading Ambassadors and other Reading Schools across Scotland. We don't have a specific challenge for pupils to bring home, but you might like to:

- Continue making time to talk about books, reading and stories together
- Support your child to read each day, or read to them each day
- Read together when you can
- Visit your local library to borrow more reading materials – you can find your local library at: <https://www.mygov.scot/find-library>

If you'd like more inspiration of what you can do at home to support your child to read for pleasure, we recommend Scottish Book Trust's Home Activities Hub:

<https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/home-activities>

You can also find articles which contain top tips for reading together:

- Tips for sharing picture books: <https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/articles/tips-for-parents-sharing-picture-books-at-home>
- World Book Day and beyond: reading together all year round: <https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/articles/world-book-day-and-beyond>

We're looking forward to Reading Schools Week, and hope you are too!

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

Bingo challenges!

Are you up for a challenge? During Reading Schools Week, we're challenging you to get involved with reading at your school. Use this bingo square to tick off everything you manage to achieve!

Complete your author takeover challenge from Alastair or Nadine	Share a book or story recommendation with someone	Complete your Reading leadership group challenge
Try a new genre or format	Write your own challenge in here:	Listen to a story read aloud - or share one yourself!
Drop everything and read!	Ask someone at home about a story they've enjoyed	Ask someone what they're reading

Bingo challenges: plain text version

Are you up for a challenge? During Reading Schools Week, we're challenging you to get involved with reading at your school. Use this bingo square to tick off everything you manage to achieve!

Complete your author takeover challenge from Alastair or Nadine	Share a book or story recommendation with someone	Complete your Reading leadership group challenge
Try a new genre or format	Write your own challenge in here:	Listen to a story read aloud - or share one yourself!
Drop everything and read!	Ask someone at home about a story they've enjoyed	Ask someone what they're reading