

**LISNAGRY N.S.**



**LITERACY BOOKLET  
FOR PARENTS**



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# **PARENTS AS PAIRED READING PARTNERS**

## **WHY PAIRED READING?**

Paired reading is a tried and tested method that you can use to help your child with reading. Research shows that paired reading can encourage children to read more independently and become more positive about reading in general.

Paired reading can be a way of giving homework support, but you don't need to stick to the books issued by schools. Paired reading sessions can be just as effective when you read different texts like magazines, newspapers, non-fiction books and comics.

Your paired reading sessions should be fun and relaxed, and should give your child the chance to practice their reading skills without fear of "getting it wrong". Your child's confidence can also be boosted when you give them praise and one-to-one attention.



## **WHEN SHOULD YOU DO PAIRED READING?**

Choose a suitable time when you and your child are in a good frame of mind.

Avoid any time when your child is likely to be tired, hungry or irritable.

Agree on a given time, five to seven times a week.

A period of 10 minutes is recommended for reading together.

Always stop at a natural break in the story, if the book is too long to read at one sitting.

## **WHERE SHOULD YOU DO PAIRED READING?**

Try to find a place that is quiet. Children can't read if it's noisy or there is a lot going on around them.

## **HOW DO I DO PAIRED READING?**

### **BEFORE READING**

It might seem obvious, but it's important that both you and your child are comfortable and sitting side by side so that you can read together.

If you are reading something new, start by talking about things like the front cover, the illustrations and what they already know about the subject matter. A bit of preparation will help your child get ready to read and understand what they are reading.



### **DURING READING**

Start by reading together at the same pace. If your child is reading too slowly or quickly, encourage them to mirror your pace. This might be a little tricky at first, but once you have tried it a few times you should both start to get into a good reading rhythm.

If your child makes a mistake, give them about four seconds to put it right. If they don't manage to correct the word, say the word for them and ask them to repeat it back to you. Then continue to read together, using praise as you read.

Check to see that they understand what is happening in the text. Every so often, pause to ask questions, look at illustrations and discuss interesting points or words in the text. See section on *Questioning* on page 9.

At some point, your child might want to read alone. They can simply tell you they want to do this, or use a signal such as a tap on your arm or a knock on the table. Praise them for their effort. If when reading alone they make a mistake, give them about four seconds to put it right. If they correct the word on their own, they can continue to read alone. If they are still stuck on the word, then read the word for them and ask them to repeat it. You then go back to reading together until your child signals again that they want to read alone.

## AFTER READING

When you have finished reading, there are many fun things you can do to give your child a chance to reflect on what they have read.

Here are some things you can try:-

- Make up quizzes for each other.
- Draw or make models of the characters or setting.
- Use the internet to find out about the author.
- Create a poster advertising the text you have read.
- Compare your opinions – would you recommend what you have read to others?
- Design a cartoon strip about a character.

Here, is a handy guide that you can use as a quick way of reminding yourself how to use the paired reading method.



### QUICK GUIDE TO PAIRED READING

#### READING TOGETHER

Read with pupil, both of you reading at the same pace.



If mistake made, allow four seconds for pupil to correct.



If not corrected, say word and ask pupil to repeat correctly.



Use praise.



Ask questions and discuss what you are reading.

#### PUPIL READING ALONE

Pupil gives agreed signal.  
Praise for reading alone.



Pupil reads alone, ask questions and discuss from time to time.



If error made, give four seconds to correct.



If not corrected, say word and pupil to repeat correctly.



Read together again until pupil signals to read alone.

## **WE'VE TRIED PAIRED READING – WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?**

### **READING ALOUD**

Reading aloud to your child as they follow can allow you to model good habits. They can listen to, for example, how you use expression to bring reading alive and see that punctuation marks affect how you read. Bedtime reading is a nice daily ritual you could have with your child.



### **ECHO READING**

This is very similar to reading aloud, but here you read a section and then your child echoes or repeats what you have read. They get the chance to practice using expression and pronouncing new words etc.

### **SILENT READING**

Each of you can read silently from time to time, either sharing the same text or reading different texts. You can then discuss what you have been reading and ask each other questions. This is an effective method to check that your child is understanding what he/she is reading, especially in senior classes where there is more of an emphasis on silent reading and the content material can often be quite complex.

## **WHAT SORT OF THINGS CAN WE READ?**

Examples of texts that your child and you might enjoy include:-

- Graphic novels, comics, cartoons.
- Short stories, poems, plays or novels.
- Newspapers, online articles and magazines.
- Leaflets, booklets and reference material.

## HOW CAN I HELP DEVELOP MY CHILD'S COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Comprehension is a key skill when reading. While some children appear to be reading fluently, it cannot be assumed that they understand the content. The following activities will help to develop your child's ability to understand what they are reading.

### Pre-reading activities – before opening the book...

- Discuss the topic of the book with your child. *What do we already know about this topic?*
- Explore the cover and title. *What clues do the cover picture and title give us about the book?*
- Predict what may happen in the story. Change prediction as you read through the story.

### During Reading

- Ask your child to visualise what they are reading. Like a movie, our brain creates a picture/video of what is happening. Ask them to imagine what they can see, smell, feel, hear. (E.g. When reading about Cinderella... In my cinema I can see a tired girl in tattered clothes, who smells like smoke because she sleeps by the fireplace.)





- Help your child to make connections when reading. This will help him/her to relate to the text. *This reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_* (a book, a movie, the time that we went to, etc.)

## **Questioning !!**

This is the main tool we use to check and develop comprehension skills. *Blanks Level of Questioning* (overleaf) will help you to ask a variety of questions at different levels.

Start with some level one questions. Only proceed to the next level if it appears that your child is comfortable and capable when answering your questions. Although it is good to challenge your child's ability it is important to ensure that he/she experiences success and feels good about reading.

To motivate and keep your child focused on the task, ask them a question before they read and get him/her to find the answer while they read.

Ask questions during reading to ensure that your child is following the story/text.

Asking questions afterwards enables you to check if your child has comprehended what they have read.

*Note:* Your child's ability to answer questions, at the different levels, may vary from book to book, depending on the topic, genre, etc.





# Blank's Levels of Questioning

## LEVEL 1 Naming

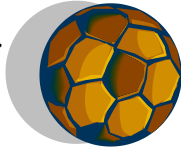
The object/things are present (here and now)

**What** is that?  
**Who** is that?  
**What** is he/she doing?

When looking at a picture ...

Show me a cow/ball ....

Show me something that is big/red/round ..



When pointing to a picture ask your child

**What** is that?



## LEVEL 2 Describing

The objects/things are present (here and now), but the child has to look at them in more detail

**What** is happening?  
**What** is in the box?  
**Where** is Spot?  
**What colour** is the ball/bus...?  
**What can you do with a ball/train...?**  
**How** are these two things **different**?  
**Tell me** something that is a fruit/animal...!  
**Show me** something that is \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_!



What is this used for?

Where is the lamp?

## LEVEL 3 Retelling/Sequencing

The objects/things may or may not be present and the questions are more complex and subtle

**Find one** to use with this. (knife → fork)

**What else** could that be used for?

**What is a ...?** (word definition)

**Find the things that are not blue/used for eating ...**

**Follow a set of directions** → First show me the fox and then the cat.

**How** are "these" the same?



**What** might Molly/Jack say?

**What** might Jack do?

**What** might happen **next**? (prediction)

Can you **retell** the story (summary)

## LEVEL 4 Reasoning

The objects/things are not present and the child must use reasoning and problem solving.

**What will happen if the lion eats the girl...?**  
**Why?**

**What could you do when ...?**

**How** do you know...?

**What** could we **use** to fix the table ...? **Why** would we use that?

**Why can't we ...?**

**Why** is a ... made of ...?

**What** would you do if you were Molly/Jack?



Why can't we ride a tiger?

# SIMPLE ADVICE ON HELPING YOUR CHILD ENJOY WRITING

**Writing is just not easy** – and some children find it a chore rather than fun. Some children will happily write for pure pleasure, and others have to be forced or even bribed. How can you make writing seem just a bit more attractive?



## **Follow your child's interests:**

Does your child like football, off-road cycling, designing clothes or playing with make-up? Whatever their interests, there are good writing opportunities.

- Perhaps a lockable football diary for writing match fixtures and a few private thoughts on each match as played.
- Use postcards or fancy writing paper for writing a short message to Granny – and make sure she writes STRAIGHT back!
- Provide post-it stickers and encourage them to write messages to everyone – even the cat!



## **Talk comes first!**

The standard of children's writing at school is not only how they form letters and handwrite. They must be able to express their ideas clearly. Can they put thoughts in order and discuss what they want to say? All of these depend on speaking. So talk to your child, encourage them to express themselves, listen and respond to their ideas.

## **It all helps!**

## **Spelling**

Spelling isn't everything! The main criteria for a healthy piece of writing is that:

- We can read it.
- It is well expressed.
- It fulfils its purpose – i.e. if it is a thank you letter to Granny, it says thank you!

## **Plenty of Praise**

Writing takes practice and perseverance, both of which are hard if you are feeling discouraged. Be specific when you're praising your child, e.g. *'I like that idea'*, *'I love that phrase you used'*, *'That ending was great'*

## **Provide opportunity for different forms of writing**



- Writing emails, typing messages, posting in a blog are all good ways for children to express themselves in written form.
- They could also create recipes or practical lists (shopping, packing for holidays).
- During playtime encourage your child to write where possible - when playing waiters/waitresses, teachers, etc.
- Write notes to family members, write description under their photos on the computer etc.

## **WRITING AT HOME**

### **Infant Stage**

- Encourage your child to write their own name, family names, letter sounds and key words.
- Explore writing with paint, chalk, misty windows, in sand, on different textures. etc...
- Develop their gross motor skills in controlling their bodies with care, such as making circles with their arms.
- Dot-to-dot exercises in puzzle books where you must trace over dots is ideal for infants.
- Label their drawings (spelling doesn't matter).
- Ask them to say and try to write simple sentences.
- During play – waiters, teachers, etc.
- Label pictures/photos/ their own drawings.

## Middle Stage: Senior Infants – 3<sup>rd</sup>

Encourage writing in play and what they do.

- Lists for shopping, record the results of their favourite sports team,
- Creating cartoons with short captions underneath/ speech bubbles.
- Email/ write to a pen pal such as a relative/friend who lives away.



Engage with their writing through:

- Saying what you liked in it.
- Asking where their ideas have come from?
- Asking them to show you where a sentence begins and ends.

Help them to organise and sequence their writing by asking them to talk about their ideas or to draw a sequence of simple pictures to show how the main events in a story might be organised.

## Senior Stage: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class

Encourage their personal writing, for example; a journal or diary, social networking, a blog.

- Email/ write to a pen pal such as a cousin, a friend from a holiday, a relative who lives away, etc.
- Create a journal/scrapbook for particular events e.g. Olympics/ World Cup/ X Factor.
- Talk through their ideas with them before they start to write, for example, prompt them to think about how they intend to tackle a subject, create a mind map/plan before writing a story..



Help them to reflect on their writing, particularly the effect they hoped to have on the reader, for example, is the reader sufficiently prepared for the ending?

Encourage them to read through their work, shaping their sentences for clarity and impact and checking their accuracy.

## SPELLING STRATEGIES

*When your child brings home their spellings, try some different ways of learning them each night. Especially if your child is finding a particular word/group of words difficult to spell.*

### Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check

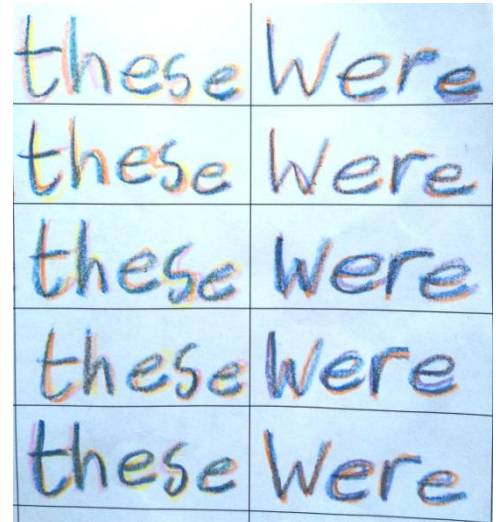
This is the current method children use to learn their spellings.



### Rainbow Writing

This can be done in different ways:

- Write a word out a number of times in one colour WHILE saying the word aloud. Then use another colour and write on top of the original words, while saying the word aloud. Repeat with a number of colours until you have a list of the same word like so →



- Write out the word using a combination of colours, highlighting the tricky parts or spelling rule (e.g. le) in a different colour.

e.g. =      bottle      little      skittle

### Highlighting the Hard Part of the Rule

When you have a rule e.g. adding *ed* for the past tense.

Children can write the main part of the word in one colour and the hard part or the rule in another colour e.g. **glasses** .

Alternatively they can highlight the rule in words.

This can be done verbally too, e.g. veg - e - table = vegetable, tom-b = tomb

## Using words creatively

*Put your spellings into sentences or a story passage. E.g. if one word is **separate**, think of 5 phrases (separate piles, separate rooms), or sentences, I keep my brother and sister separate. Each time the children could write the spelling in a different colour from the rest of the sentence, phrase or passage.*

## Which one?

Write up two words, one correctly spelt, and the other incorrectly spelt. Can your child decide which one is correct? *Their or their?*

## Saying your spellings aloud WHILE you write the word!

This very simple technique suits all children as it involves so many senses and facilitates all the different learning styles.

What type of learner is your child??

Visual (learns by seeing, memorising and visualising), kinaesthetic (learns by doing something hands on) or audio (learns by hearing)? Why not play to their strengths.

## Mnemonics

This is a great strategy for children who continuously spell the same words wrong and find it hard to memorise the correct spelling. You would typically use this strategy with words that are used frequently. It is more effective if your child makes up their own mnemonic that relates to themselves.

### ***Because***

**B**ig  
**E**lephants  
**C**an  
**A**lways  
**U**nderstand  
**S**mall  
**E**lephants

### ***Laugh***

**L**augh  
**A**nd  
**U**  
**G**et  
**H**appy

### ***Join***

**J**ohn  
**O**pened  
**I**t  
**N**oisily





**10 Ways to Become  
a Better Reader:**

- 1. Read**
2. Read
3. Read
4. Read
- 5. Read**
- 6. Read**
- 7. Read**
8. Read
9. Read
- 10. Read**



The MORE  
that you read,  
the MORE things  
you will know.  
The MORE that you  
Learn,  
the MORE places you'll go.

