



Reading for Pleasure at KS2: Empowering Pupils Through Book Choice

Why does book choice matter?

Allowing children to choose what they read – and helping them to make that choice...

...strengthens children's motivation to read, especially when they feel their preferences are respected

This helps them to read more frequently / develop a reading habit

Children experience the immediate and long-term benefits of reading

Our research highlights that enjoyment of reading decreases as children progress through primary school and this is an increasing concern for teachers.

BookTrust Teacher Survey (2024)

Diversity and representation in books matters

Representation is vital in helping motivate children to read. Diversity in stories, characters and illustrations in children's literature affect how young readers see themselves, different lives and cultures, and the world around them.



Books as mirrors

Representative literature helps children to develop a positive self-identity



Book as windows

Diverse, representative and inclusive texts help children develop an empathetic understanding of other people



Top tips for empowering students through choice

1. Give children **access to all different types of reading materials**. This could be novels, picture books, graphic novels, non-fiction, poetry, verse novels, as well as alternatives such as magazines and comics.
2. Choose books that children may not have experienced before for **read alouds** as it's a great way for everyone to experience the book/author together.
3. Simplify your **book space** in the classroom to reduce overwhelm and make choosing easier for children. Facing book covers out can make a big difference.
4. Allow students to **put a book back** (then encourage them to choose another!) if they are not enjoying it; this is a key part of choice and developing an identity as a reader.
5. Model and encourage **'book talk'**. This can be peer-to-peer or with adults in informal moments, such as in the playground or dining hall, or more formal time in the classroom.
6. Think about the **physical space**. Do your displays incorporate books? Could your students help you create a book display around a theme or event?
7. Think about **'choice and voice'**. Use pupils' interests and preferences to help provide new book choices.
8. Use pupil **'reading champions'** from across the school to share their favourite books or help curate selections.
9. Help children explore **how to select a book**. For instance by looking at the cover, reading the blurb, exploring the first few lines, or by discussing recommendations with peers or teachers. You could have a 'book tasting' or 'book picnic'.
10. Use **Bookbuzz Primary** to support book choice skills and give every student the autonomy of choosing a book of their own to keep.

