



Reading for Pleasure at KS3: Practical strategies for engaging year 7 and 8 students

Reading for pleasure offers significant benefits for students at Key Stage 3 where there can be a range of positive impacts on cognitive development and mental health.

In one study, reading for pleasure at both the ages of 10 and 16 was found to have a **substantial effect on a child's cognitive scores** in vocabulary, spelling and mathematics at age 16.

In another, disadvantaged children aged 11-14 who read in their own time and took part in enriching activities at home were **more likely to achieve three or more A-levels**, compared to those not engaged in these activities.

References and more information can be found in [BookTrust's Reading for Pleasure Guide](#)

What factors can influence independent reading?

Choice is an important factor, with a positive relationship being seen between choice and affective aspects of reading such as motivation.



Having **books of their own** is also linked to young people's reading attainment - with students who had their own books being seen to be twice as likely to read daily.





Top tips to implement in your library or classroom

Encourage reading aloud in Year 7

Getting students comfortable with this from transition helps them understand each other's reading habits and brings a positive sociable reading experience as they settle into a new school.

Create memorable reading experiences

- Arrange events like a 'blind date' with books.
- Take school trips to the community library.
- Organise author visits.
- Ask them to write mini book reviews to boost comprehension.

Engage parents and carers

If you have reluctant readers at school, a quick call home to understand a student's subject interests can be enough to engage young people. This may also encourage the parents and carers to have more conversations about books and reading at home.

Remember your Year 8s

Bringing in student voice at this stage will really help to engage young adult readers as their reading preferences change.

No library space? No worries! Take your books on tour around the school

- Have a pop-up library – yes, even in the canteen at lunchtime!
- Take your roaming library into different classrooms for a subject-reading challenge.
- Think outside of lesson times – display books at the start and end of school when students have more time to browse.

Help build a culture of reading for pleasure in the whole-school

- If you can, read when your students read. Modelling that teachers are readers too can be extremely powerful.
- Stick a note on every teachers' classroom door with what they're currently reading.
- Add posters of your favourite book reviews around the school or in the library.