

# Literacy

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***'Literacy supports learning. Pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of all subjects. Better literacy leads to improved self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows pupils to learn independently. It is empowering.'***

Improving literacy skills is a key factor in raising standards of attainment and achievement across all subjects; language is the main medium we use for teaching, learning and developing thinking, so it must be at the heart of our teaching and learning strategy – both subject specific and cross-curricular.

Developing skills in literacy is about learning to use language to express, explore and communicate our thoughts, ideas and feelings effectively with others. We do this through speaking, listening, reading and writing; getting better at literacy means making progress in each of these areas.

## **Did you know?**

- *Less than half of 8 to 16 year olds have read a book in the last month.*
- *49% of children and young adults think that reading is boring; yet children who enjoy reading are five times more likely to be 'above average' in their Reading Assessment levels.*
- *Research shows that the average length of a student's contribution to a class discussion is four words.*

As teachers, we are all members of the 'Literacy Club' and take our literacy habits for granted. Ultimately, we want all students to join this 'Literacy Club' by making the implicit explicit.

At APA, we adopt a cross-curricular approach to promoting good literacy amongst our pupils and staff. We believe that developing literacy is a whole school responsibility and not just that of the English department. Please read below for details of the whole school initiatives our community commits to:

1. The Big Write
2. Book Club
3. Displays
4. The Spelling and Vocabulary Challenge
5. Paired Reading
6. Inclusion: Literacy Intervention

## **1. The Big Write**

The Big Write is at the centre of our literacy strategy; the process from start to finish offers opportunities for pupils to:

- engage in specific activities that integrate thinking through speaking and listening with reading and writing.
- develop reading skills through appropriately levelled in-depth study of each subject.
- develop writing skills through a variety of extended academic pieces.
- work in sustained and practical ways to learn about the art, craft and discipline of writing, including planning and proofreading.
- purposefully redraft their own work in the light of formative feedback.

### **What is it?**

The Big Write is an extended writing task that requires students to provide a developed response (1.5 sides) to a critical question relevant to their current programme of study.

This might include tasks that:

- Prepare students for their assessment(s)
- Push the thinking of our students beyond the classroom
- Check for understanding of a key topic or concept
- Challenge the students to think outside of the box and at the bigger picture
- Are a practice exam question

### **Who is involved?**

Every subject, every student, in every year group.

### **When does it take place?**

Every 2-3 weeks

### **Why are we implementing it?**

For students:

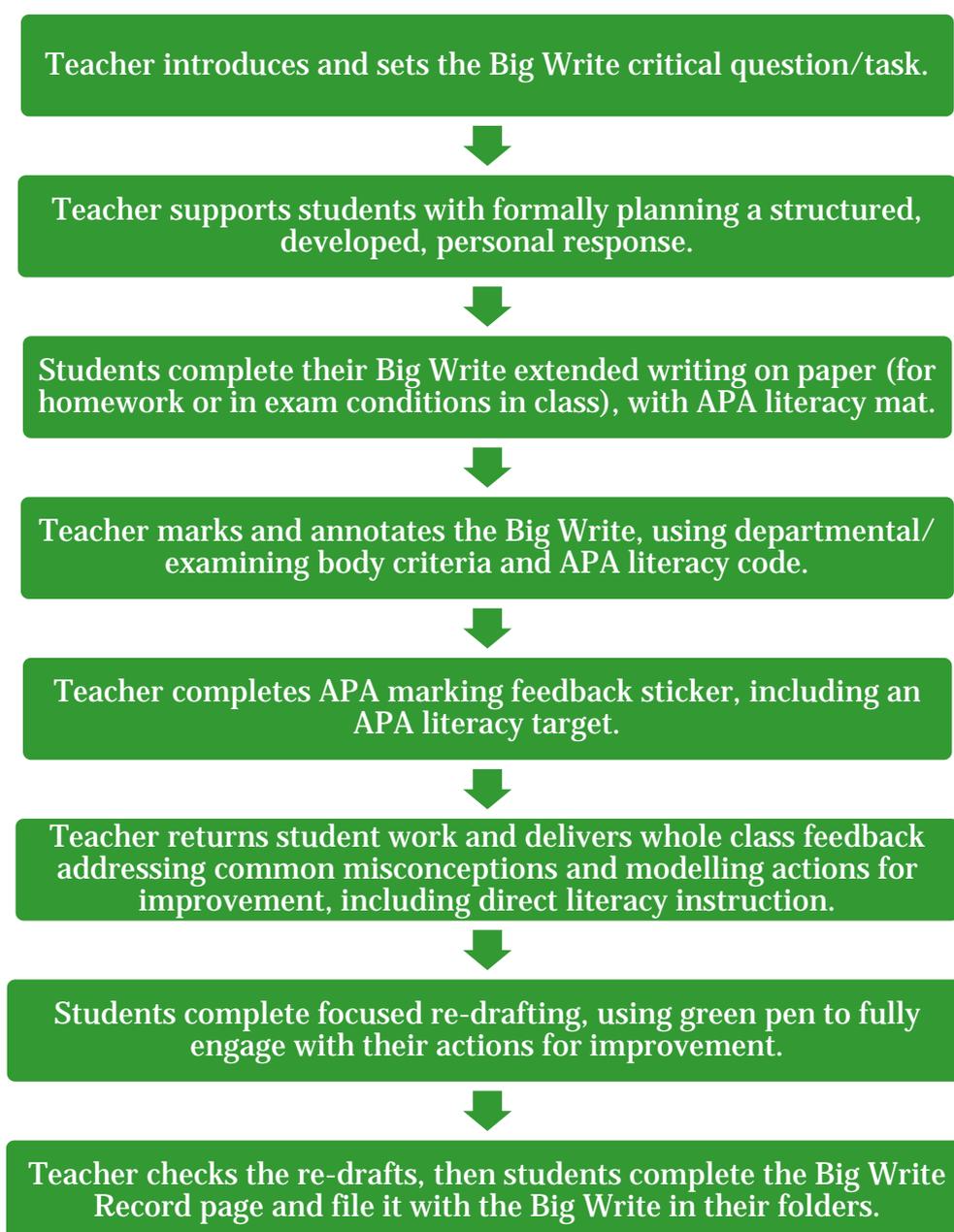
1. Increases their cognitive load by getting them to think critically and builds confidence with responding to higher order questions.
2. Practises key academic skills such as wider research, developing an argument and writing in greater depth.

3. Improves their literacy through regular extended writing and an appreciation of its cross-curricular significance.

For staff:

1. Informs more effective planning by formally assessing student understandings and misconceptions on a regular basis.
2. Drives the progress of your classes through thorough and formative feedback with opportunities to model actions for improvement.
3. Increases enthusiasm and passion for your subject through inspiring critical tasks that encourage a personal, insightful response.

### How does it work?



## **How can I do it well?**

Your Big Writes need to be:

- ✓ Strategically planned on your MTP/programme of study to optimise progress and attainment throughout each key stage.
- ✓ Co-planned with your department to ensure consistency and rigour of critical thinking, academic writing opportunities.
- ✓ Supported with high quality resources that encourage wider reading and broaden students' subject knowledge.
- ✓ Sufficiently differentiated for both high and low attainers.
- ✓ Formally planned with students through speaking and listening activities that insist on their use of full sentences and follows a 'talk, model, write' approach.
- ✓ Clearly checked/proofread by students before handing to you.
- ✓ Student work moderated and evaluated with your department to utilise best practice and address common issues.



## Ark Putney Academy Literacy Mat



PUNCTUATION			
FULL STOP	.	Indicates that a sentence is finished.	I went to the local shop to buy milk.
QUESTION MARK	?	Goes at the end of a question. Always.	Why is he here? Who knows about this?
EXCLAMATION MARK	!	Goes at the end of a sentence to indicate emotion.	Go away!
COMMA	,	Separates different parts (clauses) of a sentence.  Separates items in a list.	Neymar, who is the most expensive football player in the world, was recently sold for £198m.  The German flag is black, red and yellow.
APOSTROPHE	'	indicates possession or omission.	Nikoli's coat. We'll (we will).
COLON	:	Introduces a list or a significant word/statement	The rule is very simple: don't walk on the grass.
SEMICOLON	;	Separates two independent, but related, parts (clauses) in a sentence.	Homer Simpson is stupid; he thinks milk comes from trees.
BRACKETS	()	Separates info from the main clause by holding words apart.	Buffy the Vampire Slayer (scary woman!) was on TV last night.
DASH	-		My son – he was here a moment ago – would love to meet you.
ELLIPSIS	...	Shows some passing of time or adds suspense.	There was an awkward silence...
SPEECH MARKS	“ ”	Indicates words that have been spoken.	“What homework do you have tonight, Taylor?” her mum asked.

PARAGRAPHS	
<p>The <b>TIPTOP</b> rule: You move onto a new paragraph when you change: <b>T</b>ime, <b>P</b>lace, <b>T</b>opic or <b>P</b>erson.</p>	
<b>ACADEMIC WRITING</b>	<b>CREATIVE WRITING</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction – directly addresses the question.</li> <li>2. Main body – 2-3 paragraphs explaining different ideas in a logical order.</li> <li>3. Conclusion – summarising the main points of your response.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening – hook the reader and set the tone for the piece.</li> <li>2. Middle – build towards a climax.</li> <li>3. Ending – leave the reader with a closing thought/event that they won't forget.</li> </ol>
CONNECTIVES	
<b>Sequencing</b>	
Firstly, ...      Previously, ...      Meanwhile...      Finally, ...	
<b>Illustrating</b>	
Such as...      For example...      For instance...	
<b>Adding</b>	
Furthermore...      In addition...      Also,...	
<b>Comparing</b>	
Similarly...      In the same way, ...      Equally...	
On the other hand...      Whereas...      In contrast...	
However...      Besides...      Although...      But/Yet...	
<b>Emphasising</b>	
Surely...      Nonetheless...      Unquestionably...	
<b>Concluding</b>	
Therefore...      In conclusion...      To summarise...	



## Ark Putney Academy Literacy Mat



### BASIC PROOF READING

- ✓ Every sentence/paragraph must start with a capital letter.
- ✓ Every sentence/paragraph must finish with some form of punctuation.
- ✓ All names of people, places and things need a capital letter.
- ✓ When writing titles, capitalise the first word and main/important words. □
- ✓ All speech uses speech marks and starts on a new line for a new person.
- ✓ Paragraphs must be used to structure a piece of writing. New paragraphs start on a new line with an indent.
- ✓ Common spelling errors (conjunctions, homophones, trick words etc.) should not be made.

### TO/TWO/TOO

- To goes in front of a noun: *I'm going to the store.*
- To also goes in front of a verb: *She is learning to sing.*
- Two is a number: *The rich family own two cars.*
- Too is used instead of also/as well: *My friend is going to come with us too.*
- Too also shows excess: *We ordered too much food.*

### ITS/IT'S

- Its is possessive: *The dog ate its dinner.*
- It's is short for it is: *It's cold in the hallway.*

### THERE/THEIR/THEY'RE

- There shows position: *Your seat is over there.* □
- Their shows that 'they' own something: *Their blazers are navy blue.*
- They're is short for they are as in: *They're revising every day.*

### YOUR/YOURE

- Your is possessive: *This is your pen.*
- You're is short for you are: *You're coming over to my house.*

### SPELLING TIPS

- Sound out the word; think about how it looks
- Think about a similar word and how that spelling can help
- Is there a memory sentence (mnemonic) for this word?
- Look it up in a dictionary or thesaurus

### COMMON CONTRACTIONS

I'd	We'd	It'd	You'd	They'd
I'm	We're	They're	It's	What's
Aren't	Didn't	Don't	Shan't	How'd
I'll	We'll	It'll	He/she'll	You/They'll
Wasn't	Weren't	Hadn't	Haven't	He/She'd
Can't	Couldn't	Won't	Wouldn't	Shouldn't
Isn't	Doesn't	Hasn't	He/She's	You're
How's	Where's	Who's	Who'd	When's

### SENTENCES

**Simple:** contains a subject and a verb and can contain an object.  
e.g. *Polly likes to snooze in the sun.*

**Compound:** joins two simple sentences using conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so* e.g. *Polly likes to snooze in the sun but she doesn't like the rain.*

**Complex:** has a main clause and a subordinate clause separated with a comma e.g. *Polly likes to snooze in the sun, which makes her dribble with delight.*

#### Tenses:

**Past:** writes about events that happened before e.g. *Dylan used to enjoy playing his guitar.*

**Present:** writes about events that are happening at the moment e.g. *Dylan is learning how to play the guitar at school.*

**Future:** writing about events that might happen at a later date e.g. *Dylan wants to learn how to play the guitar when he is 15.*

#### Starting Sentences Differently:

-ly/-ing/-ed  
Slowly/ Clearly, ... Hesitating/ Summarising ... Frightened/ Appalled...

## APA Literacy Marking Code

***Use the codes to help you edit your work: use green pen!***

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Student Action</b>
Underlined and CL	<i>Correct the missing or misused capital letter(s)</i>
Circle and ^	<i>Include the missing word(s)</i>
Circle and P	<i>Correct missing or misused punctuation</i>
Circled word and T	<i>Check and correct tense of verb</i>
Underlined and Sp (correction in margin)	<i>Correct the spelling 3x</i>
Underlined and G	<i>Rewrite this sentence so that expression is more grammatically accurate</i>
//	<i>Split your ideas up using paragraphs</i>

## APA Literacy Targets

<b>Punctuation</b>	<b>Sentences</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Spelling (Sp)</b>
Accurately use full stops, exclamation marks and questions marks.	Join some sentences together with a conjunction (and, because, but, or, yet, so, then...)	Use a greater variety of words to express positive opinions.	Use the correct spelling for their/they're and there.
Accurately use commas in a list and/or to separate parts of a sentence.	Start more sentences with a comparison connective.	Use a greater variety of words to express negative opinions.	Use the correct spelling for it's and its.
Accurately use a colon to introduce a list or idea.	Start more sentences with a contrasting connective.	Use a greater variety of analysis verbs.	Use the correct spelling for your and you're.
Accurately use speech or quotation marks to show when it is someone else's words.	Start more sentences with different word types (-ly, -ing, -ed).	Use a greater variety of connectives.	Always remember the correct spelling for to/too/two.
Accurately use a semi-colon to join to linked sentences together.	Use some advanced complex sentences with 3-4 parts split up using punctuation.	Use one ambitious word per paragraph.	Use the correct spelling for ...
Accurately use dashes or brackets to add extra information in a sentence.	Use some very short sentences for high impact.	Use the following subject specific vocabulary at least once: ...	Always use the following spelling rule ...



## **2. Book Club**

It is widely acknowledged that reading for pleasure is an influential factor not only in students' reading aptitude but also in their overall educational success – more important even than their family's socio-economic status.

When we consider the background of APA students, we can appreciate that it is part of our duty to provide them with opportunities to read widely and to read for pleasure. Book Club gives them this experience.

### **What is it?**

A timetabled lesson devoted to reading for pleasure as a class. All students will read the same book (based on their reading ages and interests) alongside their teacher and complete a written task of their choice in response to each text.

### **Who is involved?**

All students in KS3; cross-curricular teaching staff.

### **When does it take place?**

One 40 minute lesson per week.

### **Why are we implementing it?**

For students:

1. Ignites their engagement and sense of joy in reading for pleasure through a shared, unconfined experience.
2. Provides them with the support they may not get at home to read more challenging and thought-provoking texts.
3. Builds their confidence with independent reading and comprehension.

For staff:

1. Allows you to share and spread your love for the experience of reading for pleasure with students.
2. Provides you with an opportunity to understand the literacy challenges our students face and how to best address them in your classroom.
3. Contributes to student confidence, progress and attainment across all subjects.

## How does it work?

Each class teacher will choose a reading-age-appropriate novel to read with their group. They will be given guidance on how many weeks it should take to complete the reading.



Each week, the teacher will lead on reading the book in sequence. This can be done as a class (with the teacher reading or with the students turn-taking), in small groups, in pairs or independently.



During the lesson, the teacher will use the suggested reading strategies to guide students through their comprehension, inference and response to the book.



At the end of the lesson, the teacher will provide students with an opportunity to summarise what they've understood from their reading that day.



Once the book is complete, students will complete a piece of writing from the writing task selection.

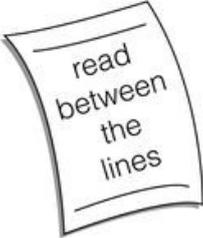


Teachers will mark this piece of writing using the APA literacy code and APA literacy targets.



Students use green pen to correct their reading and literacy errors and put it in their Book Club Big Write folder.

## Reading Strategies

<p>Re-read the Text</p> <p>more information = more understanding</p>	<p>Activate Prior Knowledge</p> 	<p>Use Context Clues</p> 
<p>Infer Meaning</p> 	<p>Think Aloud</p> 	<p>Summarize the Story</p> <pre>     Characters     └─&gt; Setting         └─&gt; Problem             └─&gt; Solution           </pre>
<p>Locate Key Words</p> 	<p>Make Predictions</p> <pre>     think ──&gt; pair ──&gt; share           </pre>	<p>Use Word Attack Strategies</p> <p><b>rereading</b></p> <p>re · read · ing</p> <p>prefix   root   suffix</p>

## Reading Strategies Explained

### 1. *Re-read the text*

Re-read a section of the text that was difficult or significant; use a visualiser to display it on the board and emphasise words/punctuation that are significant in the meaning.

### 2. *Activate prior knowledge*

Discuss the students' knowledge BEFORE you begin reading about a specific topic or idea. What do they know about the setting, about the ideas, about something the characters are going to discuss? Make it as relatable as possible for every student; using pictures/videos/current affairs really helps.

### 3. *Use context clues*

- Synonyms e.g. It was an idyllic day; sunny, warm and perfect for a walk in the park.
- Antonyms e.g. Marty is gregarious, not like his brother who is quiet and shy.
- Definitions e.g. Prosperity means people have lots of money and success.
- Examples e.g. A team would be elated if they won the championship trophy.
- Explanations e.g. Diane didn't have the energy to get out of bed because she was lethargic.
- Contrasts e.g. The feral cat would not let us pet him, unlike our tame cat.

### 4. *Infer meaning*

Ask students to think about the connotations of words and phrases and think beyond the surface/obvious.

### 5. *Think aloud*

Give students time to talk through their thoughts in pairs before you discuss as a class. Think-Pair-Share!

### 6. *Summarise the story*

Students take a short chunk of the story and summarise it in bullet points or in a 50/100 word limit. They can re-phrase into their own words and change the order so that they put the most important events first, or so that they think chronologically if the book was not. This is a nice activity to do at the end of a chapter.

### 7. *Locate key words*

Give these on the board BEFORE you begin reading and write the definitions of the words up. Alternatively, add the definitions as a class as you go.

### 8. *Make predictions*

Simple really, before you read the next part, ask students to think, pair and share their predictions.

### 9. *Use word attack strategies*

Break the word down into its' parts to help them understand.

- Use pictures as clues
- Sound out the word phonetically
- Look for familiar chunks in the word e.g. auto, pre, anti, omni
- Connect to words they know
- Re-read the sentence to decipher meaning
- Use prior knowledge

## Writing Task Selection



# Book Review

Book review by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the book about?

Briefly describe the main characters and your opinions of them.

Who would this book be suitable for? Why?

Consider Age/interests.

Explain your favourite moment and evaluate why it was so good.

Would you/would you not recommend the book? Why?



# Diary Entry

**Introduction:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Feelings**

**Thoughts**

**Feelings**

**Thoughts**

**Feelings**

**Main:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Thoughts**

**Feelings**

**Thoughts**

**Ending:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The form features a central 'Main:' section with a large rounded rectangle. To its left are three circular bubbles labeled 'Thoughts', 'Feelings', and 'Thoughts' from top to bottom. To its right are two circular bubbles labeled 'Thoughts' and 'Feelings' from top to bottom. Above the 'Main:' section is another rounded rectangle labeled 'Introduction:' with four horizontal lines. Below the 'Main:' section is another rounded rectangle labeled 'Ending:' with four horizontal lines. Large black arrows point from the 'Introduction:' box to the 'Main:' box and from the 'Main:' box to the 'Ending:' box. Orange curved arrows connect the circular bubbles to the 'Main:' box and between the bubbles themselves.

# Write a Letter

**Paragraph 1:** Clearly explain why you are writing.  
**Paragraph 2:** Add more detail, using appropriate language, and making it interesting.  
**Paragraph 3:** Summarise your main points for writing the letter and an appropriate signing off, e.g. **I look forward to hearing from you.**  
**Signing off:** *Yours sincerely* if you know their name / *Yours faithfully* if you don't.

Write address here:

Write date below:

Dear .....,

**Paragraph 1**  
I am writing to...

**Paragraph 2**

**Paragraph 3**  
In summary,...

**Sign off**  
Yours...



## How can I do it well?

Your Book Club could also work to develop our students' confidence with reading aloud and building their general knowledge.

- **Confidence with reading aloud:**

### ***Warm up game***

To introduce students to activities focused on reading aloud with confidence, you can get them to do the following activity.

The idea of the activity below is that pupils chant the verse, but each time they chant it in a different voice.

Ask pupils to repeat each line of the chant below after you. When you get to the 'In a \_\_\_\_\_ voice' line, insert a word like 'high', 'low', 'quiet', 'loud' and so on. This will act as the instruction for how pupils say the lines the next time round. So, after you've finished one verse, chant the next one in a different voice – high, low, quiet, loud, fast, slow, and so on.

Boom Chicka Boom  
Boom chicka rocka chicka rocka chicka boom  
Alright  
Okay  
One more time  
In a ..... voice

Use different variations. Ask your class for suggestions – the possibilities are endless!

### ***Reading aloud criteria***

- Pitch** - Make your voice higher or lower to match characters
- Tone** - It's not what you say, but how you say it. You can't say 'I am very cross' in a really happy voice. The meaning of the phrase doesn't match the tone of your voice.
- Volume** - You can build the mood and tension by speaking quietly or loudly. A variation while we read aloud helps to enforce the meaning of the story and put it into a context
- Pace** - Play with reading some phrases quickly, and some phrases slowly. This helps us get a sense and a mood. Also consider slowing down and drawing out words to build anticipation.

- **Building their general knowledge:**

- Have students bring in a weekly newspaper article that relates in some way to the book you are reading.
- Direct students towards websites/books/documentaries etc. that will broaden their understanding of the issues involved in your book.
- Build in historical, cultural and social information that is relevant to the characters and events in your book.

### **3. Displays**

- Each department must have a wider reading display for each key stage in their corridor. This should aim to be creative and aesthetically pleasing whilst providing enough information for students to be inspired to read around their subject.
- Each classroom must have highly visible key word, synonym, connective and academic vocabulary displays. This should be consistent across the department and regularly used by students throughout their spoken and written language in lessons.
- Each member of staff must have their 'My Best Book Ever...' poster on their door.

### **4. The Spelling and Vocabulary Challenge**

KS3 tutors will administer a weekly 10-word spelling test with their tutor groups as per the following:

Term 1: 100 most commonly misspelled words

Term 2: Tier two academic vocabulary

Term 3: Subject-specific vocabulary

*NB: Challenge task for each test is to provide the definition for each word.*

- Tutors must set this as a homework on SMHW each week, administer the challenge in test conditions and record scores in the spreadsheet provided.
- Each student receiving 10/10 will be given a positive point for 'Commitment'. Each student providing the correct definition for every word will be given a positive point for 'Effort'.
- Recognition for consistent success in the spelling and vocabulary challenges will be given in termly whole school celebration assemblies.

### **5. Paired Reading**

#### **What is it?**

The paired reading scheme involves older students supporting younger students with their reading under adult supervision.

#### **Who is involved?**

30 high attaining/reading age students in years 9, 10 and 12.

30 low attaining/reading age students in years 7 and 8.

#### **When does it take place?**

Friday tutor time in the library.

### **Why are we implementing it?**

For the tutees:

1. Improved reading attainment – decoding and comprehension of words and text – through personal 1-to-1 attention, allowing them to work at their own pace.
2. Increased confidence and enjoyment of reading; improved attitudes to reading for pleasure and increased amount of reading outside of school.
3. Interaction with a positive peer role model – learning from their positive behaviour and increased sense of belonging in the school community.

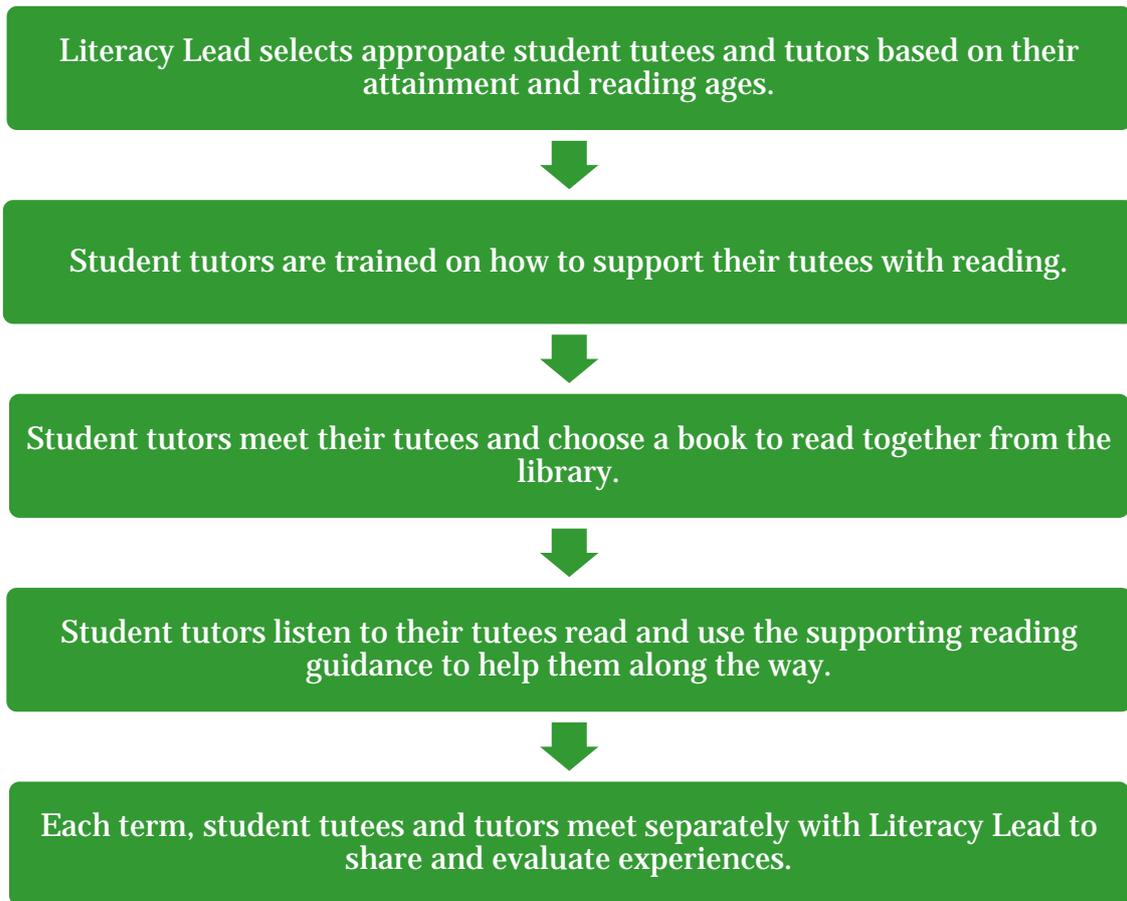
For the tutors:

1. Development of interpersonal skills through experiencing a deeper sense of responsibility, dedication and pride in being able to help a peer, as well as an increased sense of belonging in the school community.
2. Improved speaking and listening skills through asking meaningful questions and active listening.
3. Improved attitudes to reading for pleasure and increased amount of reading outside of school.

For the school:

1. Improvement in attainment of under-performing pupils in English/reading.
2. An effective supplement to high-quality whole school literacy strategy.
3. Improved school community cohesion – pupils in different year groups getting to know and supporting each other.

## How does it work?



## How do they do it well?

When students are learning to support other students with reading, it can be helpful to share the following advice with them:

### 1. Predict:

- Look at the cover and read the title. Ask, “*What do you think this story will be about?*”
- Take a **picture/chapter walk** before reading – look at all the pictures/chapter titles, or just the first few. Ask, “*What do you think is going to happen in this story?*”
- Stop reading mid-way** and ask, “*What do you think will happen next?*” or “*How do you think this problem is going to be solved?*”
- Be sure to **revisit your predictions** when you finish reading the chapter/book. Were your predictions correct?

### 2. Question:

- Think aloud and ask questions while you read. **Encourage your tutee to ask questions too, especially the classic kid question, “Why?”.....**
- I wonder why...
- What would have happened if...?
- What do you think about...?

What would you have done instead?

### 3. Retell

Encourage your tutee to **use pictures** to retell the story to you.

**Make a story map together** – draw a map of the key things you need to remember to retell the story without the book

**Model the use of sequence words for retelling:** first, to start with, in the beginning, next, secondly, then, finally, last.

### 4. Connect

Connect with a character: Would you have done the same thing? Which character **are you most like?**

Connect with an emotion: How do you think (character) felt? Have you ever felt **like that?**

Connect with a place: What do you think it's like to live there? Would you want to **visit this place?**

Connect with another story: This reminds me of another story we have read...