

8 Ideas to Get Boys Reading

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Introduction

Whether you're looking to boost boys' reading for pleasure or your aims are more closely aligned with raising attainment, this resource provides you with a range of ideas to encourage boys to engage with reading more readily and more sustainably.

These ideas can, of course, be used with girls too and not all boys will need explicit encouragement to read. But for those children who need an extra helping hand to discover the joy of reading, we hope this will help.

Rather than looking to apply all of these ideas, pick one or two that resonate with you and that you feel will land well with the children you have in mind and give them a go. And if in doubt, hunt your librarian out - they will be full of suggestions to put these ideas into practice.

Good Luck!

Motivate Me!

Tap directly into boys' areas of interest and expertise

Boys are a lot more likely to read if the subject matter is of interest to them so get to know the child a little. Learn about what makes him tick, how he spends his spare time, what fascinates him and what things he'd like to know more about.

Find out what his hobbies are. He may be motivated to read non-fiction books or magazines about a hobby he enjoys, especially if they will add to his knowledge or skills

He may enjoy fictional stories featuring characters with similar interests to him

You Could Try

Is there a well known figure he admires? If so, relevant biographies, blog posts or news articles might be of interest to him



Aim High and Gamify

Appeal to his competitive instincts and celebrate successes

Children will always live up, or down, to our expectations so have high aspirations for boys and their reading. If they have a competitive streak, appeal to that by setting challenges or goals about time or volume of reading. Consider what your goals are and how you can use friendly competition and celebration to encourage, praise and reward them working towards these goals.

Encourage them to set goals for their reading - and to see how far they can exceed this goal



You Could Try



Put boys in teams and encourage them to collaborate to work towards reading goals

Gamify reading by encouraging boys to design badges to celebrate reading milestones - Audible badges might provide some great inspiration



Non-Reader?

Many boys consider themselves 'non-readers' wrongly

Many children (and adults) perceive a hierarchy when it comes to reading and consider themselves to be non-readers because they read the 'wrong' kinds of things. Boys who readily read instructions, magazines, websites or graphic novels may consider that their reading doesn't count; but it does!

Consider whether some types of reading are valued more highly than others and how you could dispel this

Give boys ready access to a wide range of reading matter

You Could Try

Set out to proactively praise reading in its many forms, being specific in your praise and working hard to 'catch' boys reading



Like looking in a mirror

Children often like books which include characters just like them

Children like to see themselves reflected in the characters they're reading about and finding characters that children identify with can be a great gateway into non-fiction. It's not always easy to find books that reflect the diversity of our students but a good librarian will likely be able to recommend something for a child you have in mind.

Ask boys to recommend books to one another which include characters they identified with



You Could Try



Find books set in or near the place where you live

Books set in school can provide something that all pupils might identify with.



Books written in series can keep boys engaged for a long time

If a boy finds he likes a particular author, character, or world; reading other books or material that follow on can prevent us having to return to the drawing board. There are many brilliant series that engage boys and some very prolific authors that can be a great springboard into the world of reading.

Reading the first book in a series as a class reader and encouraging boys to continue with the series independently

Encouraging boys to read the books on which a favourite film or TV series is based

You Could Try

As well as series of stories, you can encourage boys to build a regular reading habit based on a regularly updated blog or magazine they enjoy



On and On and On

Ha ha ha!

If you'd like boys to read for pleasure, try keeping it light-hearted

Appeal to boys' sense of fun and mischief in your choice of reading matter. Reading doesn't have to be a solely serious business and if you can get him laughing, you'll likely get him turning (or swiping) through the pages...

Books which point fun at adults often prove especially popular - Roald Dahl and David Walliams often come up as recommendations here



You Could Try



Joke books and comic books

Funny characters make for fun reading - for example Andy and Terry and their crazy capers in the 13 Storey Treehouse series may make him chuckle



Reading Role Models

Do your male pupils have male reading role models?

It's important that boys have reading role models who can help to inspire a love of reading. Role models can come in the form of adults at school or home and also in the form of fellow pupils too.

Make a display of staffs' favourite books or other reading matter with a note from the relevant staff member about what they enjoyed

Develop a peer reading scheme with older boys encouraging younger boys to read

You Could Try

Running a workshop for Dads about how to foster a love of reading in their sons



Make a Habit of it

Create regular time and space for reading to enable positive habits to form

Making even a small amount of time each day or each week with the specific aim of fostering a love of reading can help to create sustainable habits in boys. This may be class reading or independent reading - regular reading of any kind should be the initial aim whilst confidence is built and habits are formed.

Start the day with quiet reading of any type, this has the added benefit of readying pupils for learning



You Could Try



Vote for a class reader for the term and read a chapter each day.

Encourage the reading of bedtime stories at home



Your Suggestions



Rachel Symons @RachelSymons1 · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

Barrington Stokes books are amazing - age appropriate short stories with lower specified reading ages. The font and parchment chosen to ease strain on eyes.

Captain underpants - funny & part graphic novel.

Diary of a wimpy kid

Beast quest

All engaging, non patronising & series.



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James Hoy @JD_Hoy · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

Whatever they're interested in. My brother hated reading. Dad found him a fishing book, loved it! For me it was anything military. For my son it was Pugs. If they're interested they will learn. Capture the imagination first.



Amandar @robb_live · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

Hello, I have found that reading aloud to my (previously) reluctant reader has significantly changed his relationship with books. The more authentic the story telling the more often he returns to read the stories himself, and more connected to them he becomes. Shared stories 📖❤️



Mrs B @katebodle · 13h

Replying to @PookyH

Stink Moody series has worked for some of mine!



Ally Knowles @Allyk_OneEd · 15h

Replying to @PookyH

My son loves the Lorax we read the book and watch the film (that helps) but is also Spider-Man and lego obsessed. So maybe comics or similar or Lego do some books for the young end xx



James Lawton @jingles87 · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

I loved reading at primary school and read a lot but stopped in secondary due to the behaviour of others. I got back into it by reading sporting autobiographies about people I admired on the advice of a teacher. This meant between 15-18 I read more than I have ever done.



Your Suggestions



Sue Cowley @Sue_Cowley · 15h

Replying to @PookyH

Prima games guides were a revelation to me. They don't even realise that they're reading.



Kevin Taggart @KevDFT · 12h

Replying to @PookyH

Michael Rosen's big book of bad things is amazingly popular every year. Reluctant readers sit and devour it after the briefest introduction to his writings or video clips. Poetry is at first noticeably manageable in its length which they like!



Spinnny @spinningdice · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

They're older, but I learned with the puddle lane books. Comics might be a good option phoenix comics have a subscription anthology comic, so has a variety of different story styles.



Mrs K @josefina20181 · 13h

Replying to @PookyH

Another vote for the Treehouse series, Tom Gates and the Phoenix comics. My son also loves practical books like 'The Boys' Book: How to be Best at Everything' by Guy McDonald & Dominique Enright. Books with punchy bits of text work better to hook him in than longer narratives.



Jen_McN @Jen_McN · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

Practical & purposeful:

Joke books

Atlas

Instructions for building something (Haynes) Recipes w/ diagrams to support.

Nonfiction aligned to interests.

Barrington Stoke for short chapter books.

Rapid Readers for comic style fiction/nonfiction. Reading Quest for fantasy & mystery.



deb_OT @dmay_ot · 15h

Replying to @PookyH

Tree House books. Anything which captures their interest. Comics. Graphic novels.



Your Suggestions



Lizzy Anne G. MCCT @lizzygr33 · 12h

Replying to @PookyH

Captain Underpants&the dog books by the same author. Tree house storey books, how to train your dragon series, diary of a wimpy kid,David Walliams. It was me reading with him consistently everyday from age 7+ too that gave him motovation. Kindle to alter font size too.



Emily B @Emilyb_1991 · 2h

Replying to @PookyH

I've taught boys who have loved Tom Palmer books as the subject matter appeals to them. He's written ones about football and rugby as well as a spy dog.



CromWhitt

@Crom45413292

Replying to @PookyH

Paul Jennings - really funny stories, short and fun to read. (do you remember the programme Round the Twist? based on his stories).



Karen Hobbs @stripeyren · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

Anything by Cressida Cowell. Listening to the audiobooks definitely opened up the books. And anything that tied in to favourite tv shows... horrible histories, Pokemon and Star Wars



TessGwen
@TessGwen

Replying to @PookyH

When he was older he really got into graphic books & some of his friends' parents told me they got their more reluctant readers hooked too. Some favourites:

8:14 PM · Sep 2, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone



Your Suggestions



EstherNemohideshercreator @GreenGinger814 · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

Agree previous replies. Apparently husband reluctant reader, put off by teacher disparaging comics. As her youngest, his mum ignored & left him to Asterix. Now teaching science, published author. Ditto my boys. Anything short & visual. Dogman, Claude, Top Trumps, Deadly 60, Lego



Helena @Helena_McDon · 15h

Replying to @PookyH

Newspapers are great and topical too. My secondary school pupils love Diary of a wimpy kid and David Williams books too x



MrsDoc @RoDavies71 · 12h

Replying to @PookyH

Depending on age:
Horrid Henry
Captain Underpants
Wimpy Kid
Tom Gates
Joke books
Non-fiction of their hobbies
Graphic novels

All things I have used with reluctant readers after their Reading Recovery sessions finished.



Vanessa Barrett @Vanessa72029781 · 15h

Replying to @PookyH

Comics were great for my dyslexic sons. They started off with Horrid Henry, Horrible History/Science and Roald Dahl books. One of them later enjoyed the Percy Jackson & Heroes of Olympus series by Rick Riordan.



Anita Cleare @thinking_parent · 14h

Replying to @PookyH

Anything published by @BarringtonStoke Exciting plots, good writing but easier to read. My reluctant reader couldn't put them down!



Bee @barneybo · 11h

Replying to @PookyH and @MoominTheBrave

I have 5 boys, 3 of whom are dyslexic. Reading was always a fraught subject but I got round it by buying computer games (final fantasy/Zelda) that required reading, this lead to anime books.. it worked in so far as they will now read for pleasure 😊



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Helpful?

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@CreativeEdu with
what worked well**



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