



# Reading Champion

## A Parent's Guide to Reading at Home





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## Welcome to Reading Champion

**Reading Champion** is an innovative series, designed to support and enrich your child's reading experience at home. It is the first ever officially levelled independent reading programme linking to the guided reading that your child is doing in the classroom. Using the books at home provides an opportunity for your child to use and apply the reading skills they have learned in school, building confidence and encouraging reading for pleasure.

### Why Reading Champion books are great for supporting your child's reading skills:

- ★ Each book has been carefully checked by literacy experts to ensure it offers the right level of challenge for reading unaided or with little help, building children's reading confidence
- ★ The entertaining, original stories use common interests and real-life experiences so that your child can identify with characters and settings, increasing their enjoyment of reading
- ★ The books are clearly labelled with their colour band on the spine and back cover, making it easy for you and your child to find books that are at the right level, encouraging reading for pleasure
- ★ Vibrant artwork encourages children to pick up the books and helps bring the stories to life
- ★ The books cover a range of contemporary topics and diverse characters, to ensure a broad appeal to children with different backgrounds and interests
- ★ Each band contains six books, meaning there's plenty of choice and lots of opportunity for practice before moving up to the next band

### Developed in consultation with literacy experts

Reading Champion has been developed in consultation with literacy experts Dr Sue Bodman and Glen Franklin at University College London (UCL) Institute of Education (IOE).

Literacy experts Sue Bodman and Glen Franklin on Reading Champion:

*"We welcomed the opportunity to work on a series that is dedicated to building enjoyment of reading. This series will help parents, teachers and librarians make sure that books going into the hands of children are at just the right amount of challenge for reading independently."*



## What is Independent reading?

Books for independent reading are those which are carefully levelled to a child's current reading ability, so that they can read with success and enjoyment. They are 'just right' books, with little or no adult support needed. Reading Champion books have been specifically written to support independent reading. The stories use clear sentence structures and accessible vocabulary that your child is able to understand easily. Sentences use natural language patterns so that books can be read aloud by the child and shared with enjoyment and confidence.

Having lots of opportunities to read independently is essential to your child's progress. Learning how to choose books is an important skill for young readers. Selecting books supports ownership, pleasure and enjoyment so that your child can not only read, but chooses to do so willingly. This series offers a wealth of exciting books to choose from, featuring diverse characters, vibrant colour artwork and contemporary topics, making the experience of home reading both purposeful and enjoyable.

## What are Book Bands?

In school, teachers use a colour-banded system called Book Bands to focus teaching, organise reading groups and monitor reading progress. The books are arranged into colour bands that match your child's reading progress. The colour bands change according to how challenging the book is. A banded book gives teachers the opportunity to teach the reading skills children require for their current stage of literacy learning.

### The banding approach considers:

- ★ the letters and spelling patterns used (how simple and frequent the letter-to-sound relationships are)
- ★ the book's structure (such as how complicated the plot is, and the number of sentences on a page)
- ★ the sentence and language structures (the language patterns match those that the child would use in speech)
- ★ the way that illustrations help the reader (how much support is offered for naming vocabulary and story events)
- ★ the story context and setting (whether the story is based on young children's experiences or requires the child to deal with situations unfamiliar to them)
















## How you can help your child

**Reading Champion** supports parents by providing books which link to the colour band that children will be reading in the classroom. You can ask your child's teacher if they use book bands in school and what colour book band your child is currently reading. You can then offer your child a choice of books from the same colour band in *Reading Champion* and be confident that your child will be able to read the book on their own or with little help.

## How Reading Champion is structured

Band	Age Range	Word Count	Number of titles
<b>Key Stage 1</b>			
 Pink 1a/1b	Age 3+	Approx. 40	12
 Red 2	Age 4+	Approx. 80	6
 Yellow 3	Age 4+	Approx. 100	6
 Blue 4	Age 4+	Approx. 150	6
 Green 5	Age 5+	Approx. 250	6
 Orange 6	Age 5+	Approx. 350	6
 Turquoise 7	Age 5+	Approx. 450	6
 Purple 8	Age 6+	Approx. 550	6
 Gold 9	Age 6+	Approx. 700	6
 White 10	Age 6+	Approx. 800	6
<b>Key Stage 2</b>			
 11-18	Age 7-11+	800+ words	6 at each

For more information about the differences between each band see the guide at the back of this leaflet.



## Tips for reading at home

Parents are the child's first and best teacher. *Reading Champion* acknowledges this teaching relationship and builds upon it.

Here are some tips for parents and carers to support children to become confident independent readers:

### Create a reading environment

Reading can take place wherever your child likes to read – curled up next to you on the sofa, in bed before they go to sleep or at the kitchen table. The guidance included at the back of the books offers ways to focus conversation so that positive reading behaviours are developed. It offers some suggestions to talk about the book, from what the child noticed that made it appealing, to retelling the story and relating it to their own life and experiences.

### Managing reading time

A good time to read is when you and your child are not too tired. Try to ensure that reading time is viewed as something to be looked forward to, not something which takes children away from other pleasurable activities. It can be helpful to make regular but short times to read to avoid interrupting other things your child enjoys. Introduce reading time by talking about the book choices on offer and how different books may look exciting or relate to your child's interests. If the child feels they are being made to read or that the reading time is about getting words correct, they are not likely to want to read the next time. Always try and create a positive reading environment.

### Reading alone

If your child chooses to read by themselves, you can praise them for completing the book and for choosing something that interested them. The greatest praise of all is showing an interest in how the reading was for them. Did they enjoy the book? What was funny or interesting? Would they recommend the book to other children?







## Reading aloud

If your child chooses to read aloud, then praise can also take the form of encouragement as your child reads, praise for reading smoothly and with expression, and encouragement if your child works on a word that was tricky for them. Praise for having a go can offer an incentive to continue and shows that it is okay not to be able to read every word instantly. Even adults have to slow down and work something out as they read.

## Giving praise

Praise is important. Telling your child how well they are doing provides them with motivation to keep going. You can't have too much praise! Praise will work differently depending on whether the child is reading aloud or sitting away from you reading to themselves. It is equally important in both.

## Constructive praise

What we say when we give praise is important. Saying 'Good' or 'Well done' offers encouragement. However, it can be so much more helpful to be specific about what has been done well. For example, you might say: 'I noticed the way you looked carefully at that word and sounded it out, that worked well' or 'Great! You sounded just like the character was talking there.' This may help your child to recognise what it was that they did and will encourage them to use the same technique when reading other books. In this way, careful use of praise can work as a type of teaching, even when the reading is independent.



## Reading Activities

### Before reading

Talking before reading helps your child sort out what they already know about the book's topic. The 'before reading' section in the back of each book will help you talk with your child about how their previous experiences relate to the story they are about to read. This can be an important time for your child to think about the words that relate to the topic and the sort of vocabulary that might come up in the book. Talking before reading also supports how your child chooses a book. Discussing the illustrations on the front cover or what the title might convey is often a good place to start.

### After reading

When your child has finished reading, talk about the story with them. Encourage your child to retell the story in their own words. Then discuss aspects of the story that are not actually written in the text but are contained within the story events and the language patterns. This is called inference. This will help show if your child has understood the meaning of the story. The notes at the back of the book support this. If you feel that your child has not fully understood, you can go back and read sections to them, pointing out aspects of the illustrations that will help them read 'between the lines' of the story. You can give your child an opportunity to respond to the story. They can use the ideas in the story to create their own story supported by the words and sentences in the book.





## Reading Champion and Phonics

### Supporting phonics

*Reading Champion* books offer opportunities for children to use and reinforce the phonic knowledge they are learning in school. The words in the stories use known spelling patterns and can be easily decoded. Whilst not following any specific phonics scheme, the books place phonically decodable words within clear sentence structures and are supported by the context. Some of the guidance at the back of the books offers ideas for the child to reinforce the spelling patterns they know by finding certain words in the book. This can be made into a fun activity. For example: What letters would we expect to see in 'play'? Who can find it first? Can we find this word in any other places? Can we find any more that look like that word? (say, day, for example).

### Decoding tricky words

If your child comes across a word that they find challenging to decode, you can read them the word. Then encourage them to run their finger under the word, reading it slowly from left to right so that they can become more familiar with the letter information.



## A guide to Reading Champion independent reading bands



### Independent reading Pink 1a & 1b ★



Books at Pink A Independent provide opportunity for your child to use their early reading skills on books which have one repeated sentence throughout. At this stage your child is heavily reliant on the pictures to tell the story, having only just moved on from wordless books. Your child will be using their finger to track from word to word and recognising some words that they know and are beginning to match the words with the picture to make sense of what they are reading.

In Pink B Independent books, there is a changing word on each page, fully supported by the artwork.



### Independent reading Red 2 ★



Independent Red books feature short, simple sentence patterns with repetition. Your child will need to be using all the skills being taught in the classroom, including phonics and sight words, to read Red Independent books at home. New vocabulary in books at this independent band is carefully chosen to match your child's growing literacy skills.





Independent reading Yellow 3 ★



Sentences in Yellow Independent are still quite simple but less repetitive. Stories often have more than one character, and any new vocabulary words are supported by the meaning and the illustrations. Your child will be able to use their knowledge of phonics to sound out simple words with one syllable. You will be reminding them to look very closely at the letters on the page to use this skill.



Independent reading Blue 4 ★



In Blue Independent books, sentences are getting longer, and punctuation supports your child to read fluently. Your child is becoming more skilled in using their phonic knowledge to read less familiar words, and books at Blue Independent include familiar letters and sounds to ensure your child can apply their new skills in reading.



Independent reading Green 5 ★



At this independent band, your child will begin to read a range of different sentence structures. For example, 'said Mum' might now appear in between two parts of speech, and sentences might start with an adjective phrase (something your child will be learning about in class). There will be more opportunity to use what they know about phonics to read unfamiliar words which will often have more than one syllable. These words will be strongly supported by the story topics and the sense of meaning



Independent reading Orange 6 ★



By the time they are reading at Orange Independent, your child will have established how to read and match easily. The layout of words on the page will be varied, with longer sentences across more than one line. You will notice how the stories are becoming more complex. Including more characters and events. Words are becoming less phonically regular and some alternative spellings will be used. For example, the word 'wind' can have two different meanings, and your child will need to use the meaning of the story to read this word correctly.



Independent reading Turquoise 7 ★



There is now more text on each page, with some pages having no illustration at all. This gives your child opportunity to read like a reader across longer passages of text. You will see that where there are pictures, they may only depict one aspect of what is going on in the story, as the plots become more complex. Talking to your child after they have read to ensure they have understood is important here as the stories become longer and more detailed.



Independent reading Purple 8 ★



The need for reading with inference becomes more important as the stories develop. The choice of vocabulary (such as 'screamed' or 'grinned') helps your child think about the characters in the story, and the use of punctuation, such as the three little dots (...) called an ellipsis, makes the story more exciting.





Independent reading Gold 9 ★



Longer stories and less familiar vocabulary at this independent band means that your child will be using their word reading skills to work out new words with less support from illustrations. They will know now how stories 'work' and will be able to make predictions about characters and plot and check to see if they were right after they have read the story.



Independent reading White 10 ★



By this independent band, your child is using all they have learned to read for meaning with enjoyment and understanding. They have now the reading skills to enable them to read longer stories and to continue to develop their skills of reading with comprehension by reading frequently and widely. At the end of White Independent books, your child will be ready to move on to the Key Stage 2 materials in the Reading Champion series.



For guidance on Independent Reading 11-18 books, see the Reading Champion Key Stage 2 Parent Guide coming in 2019.