

Reading for pleasure

How you can help your child

The Benefits of Reading

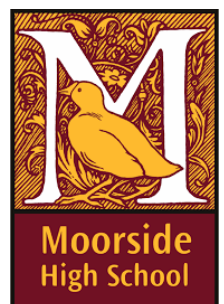
Research shows that reading has benefits in many areas of education and life. In addition to the obvious benefits on reading comprehension and attainment, it also impacts upon:

- Vocabulary
- Understanding of grammar
- Spelling skill
- Writing attainment
- Attitudes to reading and writing
- Knowledge and understanding of the world and other people
- Achievement in other subjects, including maths
- Empathy and understanding of emotions
- Development of our sense of 'self' and identity

Understanding students who struggle with reading

If students struggle to read, then the texts they encounter at secondary school can be off-putting for them and then, understandably, result in low levels of enjoyment and therefore demotivation. This creates a vicious cycle. As they struggle and don't enjoy it, they read less and because they read less, they don't progress and then find that they struggle to acquire the necessary knowledge in many other subjects too.

Wellbeing and behaviour can also be affected as a result of this. It is, therefore, vital that we help them not just with their reading skill, but their perception of it as an enjoyable activity. Research suggests that reading for pleasure makes the most difference to students' progress and attainment in reading. This applies to specific skills, as well as overall attainment in reading - for example, comprehension, vocabulary and grammar.



The 'Cycle of Positive Influence' National Literacy Trust research into the interrelationships between reading enjoyment, attitudes, behaviour and attainment suggests that the current thinking could be considered as a 'cycle of positive influence'.

1. Students take part in an activity such as reading/ story telling.

4. This then needs to be positively reinforced for the cycle to continue and for the student to remain positive.



2. If this experience was a positive one, then they may be motivated through factors such as enjoyment or connection with the other person involved.

3. Students are then more likely to develop positive attitudes towards reading.

How can you support your child's reading at home?

- Sharing your experiences about why reading is important for life and work, whilst being mindful not to add to any negative feelings, can help children to see that everyone struggles with certain things but it's worth persevering.
- Avoid reading being seen as a chore through requests such as 'if you read for 15 minutes, you can...'. Whilst this may work for some young people, it is unlikely to lead to reading being seen as an enjoyable activity.
- Research by the National Literacy Trust showed that reading for pleasure increased during the 2020-2021 lockdowns; one of the reasons young people gave for this was having the time to read and having fewer distractions. This would suggest that helping your child to balance their time and factor reading into their schedule in a quiet environment would be beneficial.
- Take an interest in what they're reading and studying at school by reading around topics as well so that you can engage in discussion about their texts/areas of learning, whilst modelling an interest in reading.
- Help your child to experience feeling successful with reading. Praise and encourage them, whilst showing interest in what they've read.

