

# World Book Day

## What Is World Book Day?

World Book Day is an annual event which aims to promote reading for pleasure and provide every child with the opportunity to own a book of their own. The event was created in 1995 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization): an organisation responsible for ensuring that everyone in the world gets a chance to learn.



## What Happens on World Book Day?

On World Book Day, schoolchildren are encouraged to partake in fun and exciting activities, such as dressing up as characters from their favourite books, learning about authors and taking part in fun reading challenges (such as 'Readathons'). It is hoped that, in doing so, children will be further inspired to engage more with books and reading materials, helping to encourage them to read for pleasure.

Over the years, an increasing number of organisations and institutions have joined schools in celebrating World Book Day, including: libraries, booksellers, publishers and authors.

On World Book Day, schoolchildren in the UK are given a token to purchase one of a range of books for £1. This incentive aims to enable all children to receive at least one new book each year, inspiring a passion for reading and books in all.

## Why Is Reading Important?

A number of studies have shown that reading for pleasure has a positive impact on children's achievement at school; it can help aid comprehension skills and widen a child's vocabulary. By reading a variety of texts, children may gain a greater general knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Reading for pleasure also enables young people to develop better problem-solving skills and greater empathy which helps to make and maintain positive relationships with others.

Author of the popular 'How to Train Your Dragon' books and National Literacy Trust Ambassador, Cressida Cowell, said, "Reading gives children the very literacy skills they need to succeed at school, at work and in life... Just one book can make a huge difference."



## Books for Everyone

As well as promoting the importance of reading for pleasure, many of the activities carried out during World Book Day help to fundraise for a number of charities, such as Book Aid International. This charity believes that 'books have the power to change lives' and that everyone deserves the right to access high-quality books. They provide books for people around the world who, for whatever reason, cannot access reading materials, such as those affected by war and poverty.

## Not Sure What to Read?

It can sometimes be difficult to find a book that you find interesting and engaging. Book covers can be very eye-catching and offer a useful snapshot of what a book may be about but sometimes we need help to choose that perfect next read. Here are some top tips to help you to select that perfect book:

Read the blurb on the back cover. This will provide you with a useful insight into what the book is about. If the description arouses your interest, you may decide to give the book a try.

Have a quick flick through. By having a brief look at the inside of the book, you will be able to get an idea of the size of the font and whether it has any illustrations or quirky layout devices that might grab your attention.

Ask for a recommendation. Why not ask your friends and classmates if they have read any good books recently that they might recommend? They may be able to offer you their opinions and give you a quick summary of what a book may be about.

Read a non-fiction text about a familiar topic. This could be a fact book, a biography/autobiography or a magazine about something or someone that interests you.

Variety is key. While it is often convenient to stick to what we know we like, by trying something new we can often surprise ourselves.

Consider a film tie-in. Perhaps you have seen a film lately based on a book. Why not try reading the text that inspired this film version?

Persevere a little. Sometimes, a book may not grab you instantly so it is important to read the first few chapters. It can sometimes take a little time to become engrossed in a story and its characters.

Visit your local library. Borrowing a book is free of charge for children and librarians are often on hand to provide some helpful advice and offer suggestions.

# Questions

1. What does UNESCO stand for? Tick one.
- ☐ United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
  - ☐ United Nations Environmental, Scientific and Cultural Organization
  - ☐ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
  - ☐ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Conservation Organization

2. **World Book Day is an annual event which aims to promote reading for pleasure.**

Which word is **not** a synonym of 'pleasure'? Tick one.

- ☐ understanding
- ☐ happiness
- ☐ amusement
- ☐ enjoyment

3. What are schoolchildren given on World Book Day?

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4. Fill in the missing words.

Reading for \_\_\_\_\_ also enables young people to  
develop better \_\_\_\_\_ skills and greater empathy.

5. Look at the section called **Not Sure What to Read?**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'something that you have already encountered or experienced'.

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6. Why might a child want to read a book which has a film tie-in?

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7. Explain why you think reading for pleasure can help widen a child's vocabulary.

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8. Why do you think that libraries are involved in celebrating World Book Day?

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9. The charity Book Aid International believes that 'books have the power to change lives' Explain what is meant by 'books have the power to change lives'.

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10. Summarise what you have learnt about World Book Day using 25 words or fewer.

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