

Form Time Reading Programme

“The more you read, the more you know. The more that you learn, the places you’ll go.”

— Dr. Seuss, I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!

Overview of Form Time Reading Programme

Stories are powerful tools for learning. In his book *Why Don’t Students Like School?*, Daniel Willingham devotes a whole section to the importance of stories, arguing that, “The human mind seems exquisitely tuned to understand and remember stories – so much so, that psychologists sometimes refer to stories as ‘psychologically privileged’, meaning that they are treated differently in memory than other types of material.”

It seems, then, that stories are a vital tool for learning. Throughout history, stories have been shared within communities to not only to pass on wisdom and knowledge from one generation to the next, but from one person to another. Stories are powerful.

In 2017, the University of Texas published a [short article](#) outlining how sharing stories and reading them aloud to students had a notable impact on literacy levels.

By reading to students across all subjects, with staff modelling fluency and the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar vocabulary, they found a general increase in students’ phonological awareness and language development.

Reading aloud also has the added benefit of positioning teachers to guide students through challenging texts which they may not yet be able to access themselves. This gives students opportunities to engage with interesting, enriching stories that might feature sophisticated vocabulary and structures, as well as challenging content. As Didau says “When we read to students, fluency barriers disappear.”

Reading a variety of texts from a range of genres and time periods increases students’ exposure to rich vocabulary, providing more opportunity of fostering a well-developed inner voice – without which, a student’s ability to enjoy the pace and rhythm of more advanced stories will be diminished. Reading aloud is gap narrowing as there is a high correlation between reading comprehension and listening comprehension. For texts which are challenging for students, prosody can be a real aid to understanding.

This again suggests that a well thought out, teacher-led reading programme conducted in tutor time could prove fruitful in developing reading comprehension – but that's not to say that there are gains to be had in literacy alone.

There's also an opportunity here for us to use this as a vehicle for broadening students' knowledge and cultural literacy too. If we can enable students to access a range of texts they might never have experienced without us, then we can build firm foundations for their later learning and later life.

Great literary texts of all persuasions tend to be in dialogue with some of the most important questions humanity has grappled with throughout the ages and across many cultures. By giving students access to a wide range of authors, settings, characters, and stories, we can empower them to engage further with such ideas themselves.

Through experiencing the villains, heroes, trials and triumphs of great literature, they will at least be much better equipped to explore similar issues in their own lives as they encounter them.

The communal experience afforded by a shared tutor reading programme is beneficial for all.

After all, there's a reason why performance and theatrical traditions have had such prominent place within our society, going right back to ancient Greece.

As we laugh and cry, both at and with the characters we follow, our sense of group cohesion strengthens and our relationships grow as a result. This communal experience alone would make every page shared in tutor time well worth the effort.

Why read?

- **To read is to have access to the store of human knowledge. In reading, we encounter not just knowledge, but the mind that recorded it, with its experiences and biases, its insights and perceptions.**
- **Reading creates empathy. In reading, we project ourselves into others' experiences, and come away from them changed. In reading, we see past ourselves and our immediate experience.**

- **When I read, I feed my mind and strengthen it; I use it and train it; I can grow, and compare points of view, weigh up competing ideas, and arrange the store of knowledge that reading allows me to possess. To read is to have the power to learn regardless of the school I attend or the teacher who teaches me.**
- **In reading, I have the opportunity to master language. I hear the voices of others, and I can imitate them, blend them, and absorb them into my own voice. In reading, I encounter thousands upon thousands of words I may never come across in daily speech, and with the words come thoughts and ideas I may never encounter on my own. To develop such capacities enables me to communicate in ways I could not have dreamt of without reading.**
- **In short, reading is so essential to the transmission of culture that to be without it is to be, in every sense of the word, marginalised.**

Key benefits of reading together:

- **A social experience that builds a sense of community and belonging.**
- **Reading creates empathy.**
- **Regular modelling of fluent, passionate reading delivered by tutors.**
- **Exposure to countless words and phrases not found in everyday dialogue.**
- **Coverage of a wealth of themes and concepts valuable for personal development.**
- **On-going improvement in independent reading skills.**

Form time reading at Weobley High School

In form time, all students are read to in their tutor groups, once a week for twenty minutes. By reading to them, we are able to supplement the text with valuable context that boosts student knowledge and understanding.

We read a range of texts from different cultures, traditions and time periods. In addition to providing our students with access to some excellent texts, the tutor group reading programme is also designed to complement the curriculum, drawing links to ideas, themes and figures studied in lessons and in RSC. By the end of their time with us at Weobley High School, our students will have read a number of books with challenging themes and vocabulary.

Texts have been selected extremely carefully to ensure that the range of narratives available address age-appropriate themes, and offer a high level of challenge too. We are dedicated to ensuring that progress is made at every stage of our students' learning journey, and are sure that this new initiative will provide endless opportunities for that. The importance of reading for pleasure cannot be underestimated and we hope to build up pupils' enjoyment of reading and their confidence to read independently. All pupils can offer their ideas and join in discussions with their tutor and peers as they progress through their reading journey.

Key Details:

When? Once a week during form time.

Where? In form tutor classrooms.

How? Form tutors read to their tutees, who track the text with a ruler/bookmark.

Which texts? See below the overview of texts allocated to each year group.

Why? There is much evidence that illustrates the link between reading and exam results and ultimately future earnings. However, reading is also of cultural benefit and it exposes pupils to lives and experiences they might never otherwise come across and in turn promotes emotional intelligence and empathy.

We are incredibly proud to introduce this project in our school.

At Weobley High School, we are certain that the energy and commitment invested by each member of staff will reap huge gains, both on academic and pastoral level.

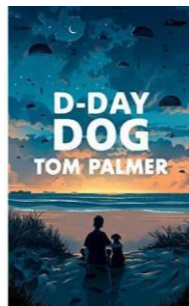
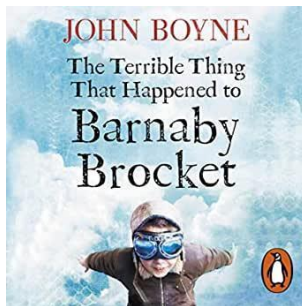
'A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies ... the man who never reads lives only one.' (George R.R.Martin)

Form time reading programme

Year 7

Here is the list of books that Year 7 will be reading – click the book covers below to find a summary of each:

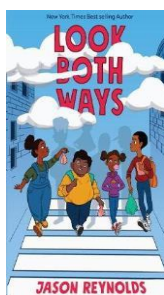
The Terrible Thing That Happened to Barnaby Brocket – John Poyne
D – Day Dog – Tom Palmer
When the sky falls – Phil Earle



Year 8

– Click the book covers below to find a summary of each:

Look both ways – Jason Reynolds
Lightning Strike – Tanya Landman
Booked – Kwame Alexander



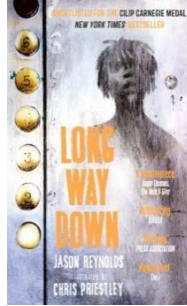
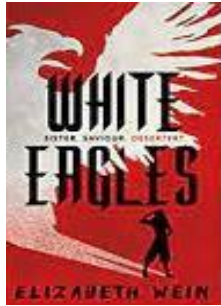
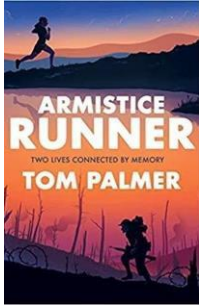
Year 9

– Click the book covers below to find a summary of each:

Armistice Runner – Tom Palmer

White Eagles – Elizabeth Wein

Long Way Down – Jason Reynolds



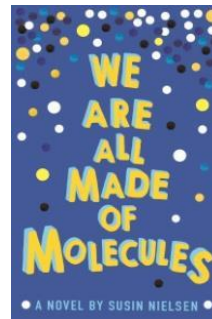
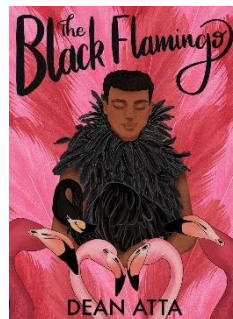
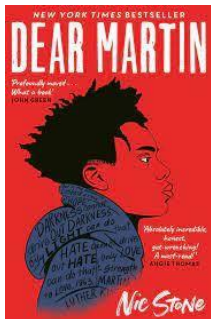
Year 10

– Click the book covers below to find a summary of each:

Dear Martin – Nic Stone

What's your problem? Bali Rai

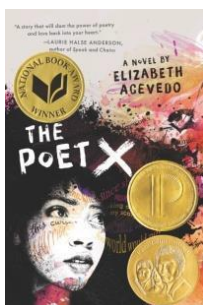
We are all made of molecules – Susin Neilson



Year 11

– Click the book covers below to find a summary of each:

The Poet X – Elizabeth Acevedo



Tutor-led reading in form time

'A word

After a word

after a word

is power.'

(Margaret Atwood)