

Reading Guide for parents and pupils



Engaging with the text

It can be difficult in our busy lives to find the time to sit down and read.

Statistics raised from a reading enjoyment study by the National Literacy trust reveal that just 2 in 5 (43.4%) children and young people aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in their free time in 2023. This is the lowest level since they first asked the question in 2005.

This is a big wake up call for us all to rally to support our children to read, by fostering an enjoyment of reading and by helping our young people to engage with what their reading - only this way can we bring reading back into popularity and our young people can benefit from the many benefits reading can bring.

Benefits of reading every day

- Provides mental stimulation
- Can help you to sleep
- Increases vocabulary
- Increases empathy
- Can reduce stress
- Can improve memory



Reading at Cantell

The Cantell School Library is stocked with more than 9,000 books.

There really is something for everyone!

We are open every day, during every break time as well as before and after school.

If your child is struggling to find something to read, our two librarians, as well as our fantastic English department and literacy team, are always on hand to help your child find something that they will enjoy reading.



Our school library runs constant reading challenges and competitions to help our students engage with reading.

Our library website is also a great place to browse our extensive catalogue of books.

The link to this can be found on the Library page of the school website.

Reading The City of Stolen Magic

You can use this reading guide for Nazneen Ahmed Pathak's *The City of Stolen Magic*, which was our chosen book to gift to all students this Christmas.

These activities however are easily adaptable for any book, and should hopefully give you some ideas on how you can help your child to engage with their reading.

Reading The City of Stolen Magic

Simply by discussing your child's reading with them, asking questions such as:

What are you reading at the moment?

What happened in the chapter/pages you read today?

What's been your favourite thing that's happened so far in the book you're reading?

can help to foster a positive atmosphere around reading in the home.

Just like asking somebody how their day was, asking your child about their reading can open up conversations and help to make their reading feel valued, recognised, and an important part of their day.



For more in depth discussions/activities around your child's reading, here are some things you can try before, during, and after reading this book.

- Discuss what you think the story will be about by looking at the front cover, title and reading the blurb.
- Take it in turns to read a chapter each.
- After reading, discuss your favourite parts and reasons why.
- Write an alternative ending.



Some character/theme questions you could ask your child once they have read the book

- What is the most magical shape in the book? Why?
- What is the most magical object? Why?
- What is the most magical metal? Why?
- If you could have a magical superpower, what would it be and why?
- What makes a hero/heroine heroic?



Why not try a creative activity with your child once they have read the book?

- Imagine and create your own hero/heroine. What is their origin story? What obstacles have they had to overcome or face? Have they had to transform? Describe their nemesis or villain.

OR

Choose a precious stone and create a story about the powers it might have. Try to write at least two - three paragraphs.

Debate

Asking your child to debate on a key topic, theme or issue in the book can help to increase their engagement with the text by making them think more deeply about what they have read.



For example:

“It is always wrong to tell a lie”.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?



Other activities to try post-reading

Nazneen Ahmed Pathak describes that she wrote this book to give her son a story that represents his identity. Ask your child to think about what story best represents their own identity and experience in terms of:

culture

location

history



Other activities to try post-reading

Write a diary entry as if you are Chompa:

- Describe your journey
- Use sensory description to build atmosphere
- Describe the mode of transport and movement
- Describe the weather and nature to build mood
- Include references to Chompa's magical powers
- Include details about her relationship with Leeza

Challenge: imagine and explore why Chompa hates Devaynes



Other activities to try post-reading

Write a travel blog:

Imagine you are moving through a bazaar or market in another country. You could imagine you are in “Old Dacca Chowk Bazaar”

- Create a headline for your article
- Use sensory description to build imagery of the scene
- Use dialogue to create aural imagery of the noise
 - Describe people in the space
 - Describe the weather and nature to build mood
- Draw an image and caption

Challenge: offer advice/top tips to travellers coming to the area

All of these activities have been taken from the resource pack for teachers on Penguin.co.uk, adapted for use at home.

For more ideas, activities, and some brilliant videos from Nazneen Ahmed Pathak where she reads from her book and discusses it, visit <https://www.penguin.co.uk/lit-in-colour/teaching-resources/city-of-stolen-magic-ks2-3>



We hope you have found
this guide to reading
helpful.

For more information on
our school library and
everything we have
available to help your
child with their reading,
keep an eye out for our
library newsletter,
published via email
fortnightly, or check out
our school website.

