


# Reading and Listening

**IMPORTANT Parent or Carer –**  
Check that you are happy with any weblinks or use of the internet.

## Activity 1 – Reading and sharing books Set up a cosy book nook

<p><b>What to do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Set up the book nook together. You can make this as simple or decorated as you like. For example, a shoe box with books inside, a cushion and a cuddly toy, or a pop-up tent, fairy lights, sleeping bag, torch and cuddly toy and decorated book box. You might start simple and develop the nook over time.</li><li>○ Rotate the books in the nook each week, including your child with the process – some books will be too favourite to swap out!</li></ul>	<p><b>What you need</b></p> <p>A selection of books in a box Cushions, blankets, soft toys etc. A cosy spot (<i>in a corner, by a window, under a table, in a pop-up tent, etc.</i>)</p> 
<p><b>Extension</b></p> <p>Theme the nook, working together to make paper bunting, reading posters and other decorations on a theme or favourite book, e.g. a Gruffalo's cave.</p> <p>Make some books to add to the nook, folding paper and writing together (<i>see Writing Activities 6</i>).</p> <p>Move the nook to new locations for variety.</p>	<p><b>Questions to ask</b></p> <p>Where shall we have the book nook? What would make it cosy? Which books shall we have first? How could we make the box look special? Which toy would be great to read your books to?</p>

## Activity 2 – Reading and sharing books

### Make and use a story sack/box

#### What to do

- Choose a simple picture book which you will both enjoy reading.
- Share the book enjoying the story and discussing the different events.
- Collect or make props together to present parts of the story to help to retell it. You don't have to have everything represented – just the key elements and nothing needs to be perfect! They are just prompts.

*The making can be spread over a few days – it should feel like fun.*

- Once you have made and/or assembled the props, take turns to tell the story with the props.

Example story sack contents:

*Room on the Broom* by Julia Donaldson

Toy wand, ribbon tied in a bow, fancy dress witch hat, broomstick made from a lolly stick and paper fringe stuck on one end. Characters drawn on card, coloured, cut out and stuck on lolly sticks: witch, cat, dog, bird, frog, dragon.

#### Extension

Choose a character and talk about them. Give them advice, make them a present, design a new outfit for them etc.

Retell the story but make some changes – a different ending, different character etc. This can be done physically by swapping props before the telling.

Make up conversations between the story characters.

#### What you need

An engaging picture book

Objects/images that can be used to retell the story (paper, card, pens, lolly sticks, scissors and tape for making props)

A bag or box to keep everything in



#### Questions to ask

What happens at the beginning/next/at the end of the story? Can we remember how the story starts/ends?

Which characters are in the story?

What other things can we make or find to show what happens in the story?

Can we tell the story using the sack objects?

What if we changed...?

What advice would you give the witch?

## Activity 3 – Listening and exploring sounds

### Play 'I Spy'

#### What to do

- Play the traditional game 'I Spy'. Pick something that you can see and give a clue with the phrases, '*I spy with my little eye something beginning with...*'. For example, if you are looking at your cat, you would end the phrase by saying the c sound.
- Your child guesses the mystery object, saying words which begin with the sound. Keep praising any words which begin with the right sound and give clues if the guesser gets tired.
- Swap roles and play again.

**Key Tip:** Use the *sound* not the letter name with the game. Try to use 'pure sounds' which your child will have learnt at school. (The hardest are f, l, m, n, r, v, w, x - if you are not used to this). See website below for help.

#### Extension

Move the game around: in different rooms, by the window, on your walks.  
Use a page from a book for a new setting or use imagination, e.g. *What would you see under the sea, in a witch's cottage, etc.*

#### What you need

Nothing for the base game  
To extend: a book with detailed illustrations



#### Questions to ask

Can you guess what I have seen?  
What things can you think of which begin with that sound?  
Does *ball* really begin with *m*?  
Can you have a go? What can you see? What sound does it begin with? Try whispering it if you need to.

Cbeebies *Alphablocks* take us through saying each sound in the alphabet:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/alphablocks-watch>

## Activity 4 – Word recognition

### Go on a high frequency/key word treasure hunt

#### What to do

- Write 10-20 words on your searchable objects. If you don't have key words provided by your school, you can choose from this [list](#).\* The idea is to include 80% words which your child can read easily (recognise by sight) and 20% which they are learning.
- Hide the words around the home/garden and start the hunt. Each time your child finds a word they can only pick it up once they have read it aloud. If they can't read a word, tell them what it is and re-hide it to be found again in a moment.
- You can repeat this game, gradually swapping in new words as your child becomes more confident. Keep word number manageable to keep it fun.

#### Extension

Challenge your child to set up the hunt for you. They are in charge of reading each word as you find it.  
Choose some new words on a topic which your child is interested, e.g. animals, vehicles, etc.

#### What you need

High frequency words/key words\* written on objects you can hide, e.g. *card rectangles, lolly sticks, pebbles, gold coins (paper disks painted), plastic egg shapes, etc.*

house

there

little

**Avoid the temptation to turn this into a lengthy test.**  
These words are usually learnt over the year in Reception. Rushing to 'tick them off' risks damaging confidence and enthusiasm – these are hard to regain.

#### Questions to ask

Which words do you know already?  
Which are a bit tricky at the moment?  
Can you find the words?  
How many can we find in 3 minutes?  
Do you know what this one says?  
Look at it now. Will you recognise it when you find it next?  
What words could we put on the cards next?

First 100 High Frequency Words <http://www.highfrequencywords.org/first-100-high-frequency-word-list-precursive.html>

Next 100 High Frequency Words <http://www.highfrequencywords.org/next-200-high-frequency-word-list-precursive.html>



## Activity 5 – Reading and sharing books

### Prepare a book reading

#### What to do

- Pick a book together which you are going to practise and perform for a planned person. This could make a lovely gift/focus for a video call.
- Read together, taking turns to read a page, or a section. The idea is to give your child practise in perfecting a reading but keeping it manageable by sharing the load by reading some too.
- Practise reading aloud until the reading is confident and fluent.
- Try to do different voices for the characters and develop sound effects, *a tap on a glass for a spell*, etc.
- When you are ready, share the reading with an appreciative audience.

#### What you need

A book which your child can read or partly read (a story book which your child really enjoys)

Simple items to make sound effects



#### Extension

Create a recording which your child can listen to while they are looking at the book.  
Share a recording with a faraway family member and ask them to send a similar one for you to enjoy together.  
Make some 'read along' recordings for your child of books which are a bit too hard for them to read yet. They will enjoy listening as you turn the pages (or ask an older sibling to).  
Watch and enjoy some reading or animated versions of familiar story books (*see below*).

#### Questions to ask

Which story will Auntie Tára like?  
Which parts will you read and which parts will I read?  
Can you read this sentence?  
How can we make it more fun to listen to? How will the snake speak?  
What sound could we use for the fairy appearing?  
Are we ready to share this? Could we make it even better?

Julia Donaldson's

*Room on the Broom*: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p0102qfj/room-on-the-broom>

*Zog*: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0bwdw8y/zog>

*The Gruffalo*: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00pk64x/the-gruffalo>

*The Snail and the Whale*: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000cslw/the-snail-and-the-whale>

CBeebies' *Bedtime Stories* are regularly updated: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b00jdlm2/cbeebies-bedtime-stories>

## Activity 6 – Listening and exploring sounds

### Play ‘Guess the sound’

#### What to do

- Secretly collect a range of noise-making items and hide them from view.
- Make one sound at a time, challenging your child to guess the things making the sound.
- To make it easier, show them a range of objects first and then select one or two to make the sound.
- Repeat the game, sharing the task of finding noise-making objects like a scavenger hunt. Everyone can contribute at least one sound for everyone to guess.

#### What you need

Things which will make a noise, e.g. *cereal and a bowl, glasses case which snaps shut, spoon and mug, stapler and paper, noisy toy, hard back book, musical instrument, etc.*  
A barrier to hide the hidden things (could be a box open on its side)



#### Extension

Give your child complete control of the game. Set ground rules to avoid family heirlooms being bashed together.  
Play bingo: Set up as a bingo game with at least 2 players. Everyone picks 3 items from a choice of 6-8 – they can draw or write their chosen things on a piece of paper. You make a sound and they tick it off if they have it. First to full house wins.

#### Questions to ask

What do you think that sound is?  
What is it like? How could you describe it?  
What does it remind you of?  
What things can you find that we could make a sound with?  
How can you make a sound with it? Is there more than one way?  
How many sounds have we heard?  
How many points do you have?  
Who will win?