

Age guide

Reading isn't really one skill - it's a whole collection of skills, which is why it usually takes children years to become truly independent readers. Every child learns to read at a different pace. Some children pick up the initial skills very quickly, while others may take a while to show much progress, and then race ahead. This is a very general guide to the stages of reading you might see.

NURSERY AGED CHILDREN (AGE 3-4)

may recognise sounds and letters but usually not read. If a child is going to nursery they will start learning letter sounds, spelling their name. They won't necessarily be able to read, but you can start asking them 'what's this letter?' 'What sound does this animal begin with?' Look for board books and picture books.



RECEPTION AGED CHILDREN (AGE 4-5)

will be learning the majority of these phonic sounds and about 45 tricky words through their school year, and are the classic pre to emergent readers. If you have a child reading early chapter books at age 5, be careful content is age-appropriate.

KEY STAGE 1:

Children in years 1 (age 5-6) and 2 (age 6-7) will be building on their tricky words to approximately 200+ and revising phonics and noticing their alternative spelling patterns. Therefore they are usually reading more independently.



KEY STAGE 2:

Years 3 (age 7-8) and 4 (age 8-9) usually are heading towards becoming fluent readers.
By year 3 (age 7/8) they should be moving onto chapter books.
Years 5 (age 9-10) and 6 (age 10-11) are usually fluent.

SELECTING BOOKS:

Plan in advance books for individual children – choosing books that align with their interests is key to their enjoyment and successful reading.

They might be reading chapter books at school, but with us, they still want to read a picture book. That's fine, as enjoyment is key.

If they are always reading below their ability, you can encourage them to try some other books. Try the two-book rule – you choose one, I choose one.

If not sure of a child's level – ask them to read a little to you, a line each, a page each.

***A tip: For children already reading, the general rule is if they can't read 5 words on a page then the book is probably too hard.**

There are many more tips on this in our [Engaging children with books](#) section, so take a look there.