Ensuring That Children Who 
Can Read, Want to Read

Engagement is essential for successful reading.

Here are some top tips for engaging children prior to reading:

- **Encourage prediction**: use a mystery bag with a selection of objects for the children to examine. What might happen in the story?
- **Activate prior knowledge**: look at the front and back cover; ask children if they know of any other books by the author/illustrator, or if they are familiar the characters/the subject.
- **Build anticipation**: use the illustrations to tell part of the story, or discuss the key information in a non-fiction text.

Here are some top tips for developing understanding and enjoyment after reading:

- **Book Talk**: encourage children to talk with a partner about what they liked, what they disliked and what puzzled them about a book. The book talk could be recorded on a chart.
- **Encourage reflection**: ask children to draw or paint a picture about what they have read.
- **Encourage debate**: use hot seating, where you or the children take on the role of a character.
- **Encourage talk**: ask the children to pretend that they are producing a news programme. Children could interview each other about the book.
- **Encourage talk for writing**: act out the story; the adult tells the story and a group of children act out the story. Track the plot on to a story mountain or create a timeline.
- **Encourage children to recommend books to their friends**: provide ways to record children’s book recommendations and ask them to rate the books 1* to 5*.

Here are some top tips for maintaining children’s interest in books:

- **Develop your own knowledge of children’s books**: this will ultimately mean that you can provide and recommend a good selection of titles for children in your classroom.
- **Get to know children’s interests and tastes**: remember to ask children what they are interested in. A Reading Attitudes Survey can help you with this (see ‘Ideas to Help Develop an Early Love of Reading in Your Classroom: Part 1’).
- **Create inviting reading spaces**: ensure children have access to a comfortable independent reading area with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books, comics and books made by the children.
- **Share your own love of reading**: demonstrate the enjoyment and pleasure you can get from reading. The best way to do this is to read aloud to children daily.

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