



## **Celebrating World Book Day: primary resource**

A guide to World Book Day including whole school and classroom activities

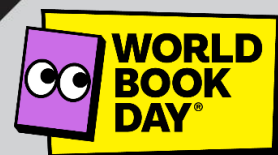
**Suitable for primary pupils**

**Resource created by Scottish Book Trust and World Book  
Day**

**[scottishbooktrust.com](http://scottishbooktrust.com)**



Scottish Book Trust is a registered company (SC184248)  
and a Scottish charity (SC027669).



## Contents

About this resource .....	2
Why celebrate World Book Day? .....	3
Scottish Book Trust packages .....	4
Creating a whole-school plan .....	5
Whole-school activities .....	6
Classroom activities .....	9
Next steps .....	11

## About this resource

[Scottish Book Trust](#) is a national charity that believes everyone living in Scotland should have equal access to books. [Our Schools programmes](#) include book gifting, live events, our [Reading Schools](#) accreditation programme, as well as professional support, training and resources to support you to embed reading for pleasure in your school or setting.

[World Book Day](#) is a national celebration which changes lives through a love of books and reading. They are a national charity that operates in the U.K. and Ireland to promote reading for pleasure, offering every child and young person the opportunity to have a book of their own. World Book Day 2026 is **Thursday 5 March**.

We have partnered with World Book Day to adapt their resources for Scottish schools and settings and help you celebrate World Book Day 2026! On [the Scottish Book Trust website](#), you can find all of the resources including:

- Celebrating World Book Day: early years resource
- Celebrating World Book Day: primary resource
- Celebrating World Book Day: secondary resource
- Celebrating World Book Day: school library resource

- Celebrating World Book Day: home educator resource

You can also find our [designated World Book Day webpage on the Scottish Book Trust website](#), which gathers activities, articles, videos, and more resources that have been handpicked to help you further explore reading for pleasure and the World Book Day £1 titles!

This resource, created in partnership with World Book Day, contains advice and ideas for celebrating World Book Day in your class and school. Throughout, we've highlighted Scottish Book Trust resources you can use as part of your celebration, or to deliver further opportunities to read for pleasure.

The key areas of this resource are:

- How to create a whole-school plan to celebrate World Book Day
- Suggested activities to celebrate World Book Day
- How to continue to support reading for pleasure in your school, build a reading culture and make reading fun using World Book Day and Scottish Book Trust resources and programmes

## **Why celebrate World Book Day?**

Reading for pleasure is a key indicator of a child's future success. In fact, studies show it's more important for a child's educational success than the socio-economic class they grow up in<sup>1</sup>. Reading for pleasure has benefits across the curriculum for a child's skills and learning, as well as their motivation to learn<sup>2</sup>. It also helps develop key life skills such as empathy, imagination, problem-solving and communication skills<sup>3</sup>.

By celebrating days like World Book Day and giving reading for pleasure a high profile in your school, you are demonstrating to pupils that reading is a fun and worthwhile way to spend their time. By sharing your habits and preferences as a reader, you are also acting as a reading role model, which is something that they may

not have at home. Throughout this resource, we suggest ways to make reading engaging and fun for all pupils as well as how to extend these ideas in your school beyond World Book Day.

World Book Day has six key principles of reading for pleasure. They believe children are more likely to love reading if:

- Someone reads to them regularly
- They find time to read
- They have books at home and at school
- They know a trusted person who can help them find the right books
- We make reading fun for them
- They are given a choice in what they read

Similarly, Scottish Book Trust's [Reading Schools](#) accreditation programme is designed to champion your efforts as you build and sustain a reading culture in your school or setting. Our framework, mapped onto [How Good is Our School? 4](#), includes elements that are key to building a reading culture. Many of these key areas support celebrating World Book Day, including role modelling reading to pupils, creating a school environment that encourages and supports reading, and connecting pupils with reading social networks.

By working together to celebrate World Book Day, we can help share the joy of reading and books with more children and their families!

## Scottish Book Trust packages

On the Scottish Book Trust website, we've created [a World Book Day webpage](#) which gathers activities, articles, videos and more resources to help you celebrate World Book Day, including Authors Live broadcasts with [A.F. Steadman](#) and [Jamie Smart](#), tips on creating your own comics, or suggestions of what to read next!

# Creating a whole-school plan

## For school leads

### Key actions

- Arrange a planning meeting with staff
- Plan World Book Day delivery with staff and pupils
- Communicate activities to families
- Hand out World Book Day £1 book tokens

### CLPL

To develop staff knowledge, consider viewing Scottish Book Trust's webinar on [Building a reading culture in your school](#) which shares tips and activities to get your school reading!

### Key things to consider

Throughout your planning consider the following:

- Make sure you find ways for students to respond to what they're reading, including expressing their reading passions or hopes, or books they do or don't like
- Explicitly teach and model core skills, such as choosing and talking about books
- Celebrate all reading! All reading is good reading, including [manga](#), [audiobooks](#), [magazines and comics](#), as well as books marked as younger than a pupil's age
- Focus on how students want to feel, and respond to their reading rather than their book knowledge
- Ask yourself – is this activity helping students read what they want in their spare time?
- Ask yourself – does this activity make room for students who don't currently choose to read? Is it accessible for them?

- Ask yourself – is our delivery and texts representative of the children in our school? Children are more likely to engage with reading when they see characters like them<sup>4</sup>.

## Dressing up

Dressing up is one of a huge number of ways to celebrate children's reading identities. If you'd like dressing up to be part of your World Book Day celebrations, we suggest you read World Book Day's [Dressing up resources](#) which suggests ways to make dressing up accessible for families who cannot afford costumes, for example:

- Host a costume swap-shop
- Ask pupils to dress in their favourite outfit for reading
- Ask pupils to dress up using only three items of clothing
- Ask pupils to dress in a plain t-shirt and provide sticky labels for teachers and pupils to stick book recommendations on each other
- Alternatives to dressing up, such as:
  - Creating dioramas or collections to represent favourite books
  - Creating reading mood boards (see [page 10](#))

Remember to tell families that the purpose of dressing up is so that children can recommend books to each other.

## Whole-school activities

### Day planner

Timings	Activity
As children arrive	<b>The big World Book Day playground book swap</b> Invite children and families to bring books to swap at drop-off. Cover your classroom doors in brown paper and invite children and families to write or draw their favourite books on them.



Assembly	<p><b>Assembly</b> Use <a href="#">World Book Day's downloadable resources</a> to run a special assembly.</p>
In class	<p><b>Classroom activities (see <a href="#">page 9</a>)</b> Try our classroom activities, including Reading Mood Boards or Reading Rivers to give children the opportunity to share reading recommendations with each other.</p> <p><b>Authors Live (see <a href="#">page 8</a>)</b> Authors Live brings world-class children's authors and illustrators into your classroom. Use <a href="#">our on demand library on the Scottish Book Trust website</a> to choose a broadcast to enjoy. Why not put your pupils in charge of creating a watchlist or screening room with snacks?</p> <p><b>Choosing the books</b> Use <a href="#">World Book Day's website</a> to share information about the £1 titles with the children. Then invite them to choose a book.</p>
Outdoors	<p><b>Scavenger hunts</b> You can also use our <a href="#">10 things to do with any book outdoors</a> to find out how to set up an interactive scavenger hunt for your pupils. Why not theme it around this year's £1 titles, or some of your pupil's favourite books?</p>
Home time	<p><b>Hand out a £1 book tokens</b> Explain how to redeem the token and where they might find £1 books near them. On the World Book Day website, you can find <a href="#">a guide on how to choose a book</a> suitable for children.</p>

### Activity 1: Whole-school assembly

Use the [World Book Day assembly template](#) to get children excited about reading.

### Activity 2: Authors Live

You could also start the day by screening an Authors Live broadcast [from Scottish Book Trust's on demand library](#). Why not put pupils in charge of who to watch? You'll find some of the World Book Day authors in there, including [A.F. Steadman](#) and [Jamie Smart](#). For more information see our [Making the most of Authors Live resource](#).

### Activity 3: Create social experiences

World Book Day is a great way to jumpstart social groups and events over books! Use our [Running reading groups and events resource](#) to find out how to set up reading groups, book clubs, book speed dating or play games like Book Jenga! These can be played all year round to promote chatting and socialising over books. On World Book Day, why not set up different activities in different classrooms and allow pupils to choose what they join in with?

### Activity 4: Cosy reading zones

Put out blankets, cushions and boxes of books. Why not ask each year group to prepare a book box of favourites for the year below? You could also come up with themes, for example, inspired by favourite stories or what to read after this year's £1 book titles.

### Activity 5: Reading recommendation bookmarks

Invite students to create a bookmark or shelf shouter to recommend a book to someone else! You could also use [World Book Day's printable activity sheet](#) to play a game of Book recommendation bingo as a warm up activity.

### Activity 6: Shared reading

Invite several teachers to pitch a book they will read aloud, so children can sign up to listen to the book they most like the sound of. Alternatively, invite older students to read aloud books that younger buddies have chosen.

### Activity 7: Dressing up pack

Use World Book Day's [Dressing-up ideas for educators guide](#) to help students design a low-cost costume to go with their favourite book.



## Classroom activities

### Activity 1: Create a reading river

LIT 0-01b/0-11b/1-01a/2-01a, LIT 0-14a/1-14a/2-14a, LIT 0-07a/0-16a/1-16a/2-16a, LIT 1-28a/1-29a/2-28a, EXA 0-02a/1-02a/2-02a, EXA 0-04a/1-04a/2-04a

A reading river is a poster that charts what a child has read, allowing them to reflect on their own reading journey and celebrate the reading they do at home. From the books they read as a baby, to recipes or the instruction guides from favourite hobbies to magazines or comics. To find out more about reading rivers, see the [Multilingualism in Schools guide on their website](#). The following activity has been developed by Dr. Sabine Litte from the University of Sheffield:

#### **Five steps to creating a (multilingual) reading river:**

##### ***Step 1***

Think back to when you were little: who were the people reading with you? Ask them for help to remember which books and other texts were important to you then, and what languages they were in.

##### ***Step 2***

Think beyond books: in a river of reading, all texts matter. Is reading messages from your friends important, or reading a particular magazine? Do you love cooking and read recipes? Do you read as part of gaming, or to follow celebrities online? It all counts, and it all matters!

##### ***Step 3***

“Important” doesn’t always mean “favourite”. In fact, some reading might be important because you didn’t enjoy it at all, or because it was difficult to read! Or perhaps it links to a special person: a book received from a grandparent, or something you read together with a friend. It could also be what a book stands for: the first book you read in a specific language or the first thing you read after moving to a new country. You, and only you, decide what is important and why.

##### ***Step 4***

Think about the languages you speak, and when and where they come into your

river of reading. Has this changed over time or is it different for different things you read (books, magazines, webpages, gaming, etc.)?

### **Step 5**

Your river of reading is your story, so make sure you tell it. You can present it at school, share it with family and friends or even record yourself presenting it.

### **Activity 2: Create a reading mood board**

LIT 0-04a/1-04a/2-04a, LIT 0-01b/0-11b/1-11a/2-11a

World Book Day has created a [printable activity sheet](#) which you can use to create your own reading mood board. This is a great way to promote conversations about reading and how reading should feel, as well as role modelling reading and sharing book recommendations.

### **Activity 3: Make a mini book!**

EXA 1-02a/2-02a, LIT 1-20a/2-20a

[Use our guide to create your own mini book](#) – it's up to you what you put in it! It could be a new book journal to keep track of your favourite books, a sequel to your favourite story, somewhere to keep your favourite jokes or a World Book Day inspired poem.

### **Activity 4: Create your own World Book Day inspired hat**

EXA 0-02a/1-02a/2-02a

A big party needs a party hat! Use [our printable template](#) to create your own hat by cutting it out and either drawing, colouring or collaging.

### **Activity 5: Make a book trailer**

LIT 1-04a/2-04a, LIT 1-14a/2-14a, TCH 1-01a/2-01a, EXA 1-14a/2-14a

Share book recommendations by filming your own book trailers. Use our [Book review and trailers resource](#) created with IntoFilm to learn about how to create, share

and screen your book trailers!

## Next steps

Promoting reading for pleasure in your school is important all year, not just on World Book Day! For more support to build a reading culture in your school see:

- Our [World Book Day section of the Scottish Book Trust website](#) gathers activities, articles, videos and further resources to further extend reading for pleasure and World Book Day's £1 titles.
- Our [free Reading Schools programme](#) which offers an accreditation for building a reading culture in your school, as well as support and resources to help you with delivery.
- Our [Schools guide](#) contains more information on the programmes, CLPL and resources from Scottish Book Trust created to support teachers, educators and librarians in schools.
- Our [Building a reading culture webinar and resource](#) contains a guide to building a reading culture in your school, including supporting pupils to read for pleasure, developing your staff's knowledge and ideas for groups and activities.
- World Book Day's [Resources Hub](#) contains lots more reading for pleasure ideas, resources for World Book Day and all year round!

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ["Reading for Change: Performance and Engagement across Countries"](#), PISA 2020

<sup>2</sup> ["Motivation During an Excessively Challenging Reading Task: The Buffering Role of Relative Topic Interest"](#), The Journal of Experimental Education. 2011.

<sup>3</sup> ["The role of home learning environment and emerging insights into the impact of the pandemic"](#). National Literacy Trust. 2022.

<sup>4</sup> ["How teachers can put the right book in the right hand"](#), Katherine Wilkinson for Scottish Book Trust