



Celebrating World Book Day: secondary resource

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

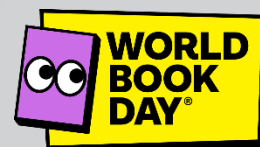
Suitable for secondary pupils

Resource created by Scottish Book Trust and World Book Day

scottishbooktrust.com



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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 in¹. Reading for pleasure has benefits across the curriculum for a child's skills and learning, as well as their motivation to learn². It also helps develop key life skills such as empathy, imagination, problem-solving and communication skills³.

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 our resource on how to make a zine, and Authors Live broadcasts with excellent young adult authors!

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 and young people in our school? Children are more likely to engage with reading when they see characters like them⁴.

Whole-school activities

Day planner

Timings	Activity
Assembly	Assembly Use World Book Day's downloadable resources to run a special assembly.
Registration	Choosing a book Show students how to access information about the 2026 £1 books via the World Book Day website . Where possible, support them to help them decide which £1 title they'd like to trade their token for. Book jam Ask staff to share 10 second extracts of books they've enjoyed, and students vote for their favourites. Incentivise staff with a prize for winning the vote. Quickfire book club Share an article, poem or short extract of a book, and invite students to discuss how they feel about it. Aidan Chambers' structure of Likes, Dislikes, Patterns and Connections might be useful here.
In class	Authors Live (see page 7) Authors Live brings world-class children's authors and illustrators into your classroom. Our Authors Live on demand broadcasts can be filtered by different subjects. Why not put your pupils in charge of creating a watchlist or screening room with snacks? Classroom activities (see page 8) Try our classroom activities, including book speed dating and Book Jenga!
Home time	Hand out a £1 book tokens Explain how to redeem the token and where they might find £1 books near them.

Activity 1: 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?

There are broadcasts with World Book Day £1 book author [A.F. Steadman](#) and other world-class authors, including [Elle McNicoll](#), [Brian Conaghan](#), [Manjeet Mann](#), [Keith Gray](#) and more! For more information see our [Making the most of Authors Live resource](#).

Activity 3: Book recommendation videos

Do you have budding content creators among your staff or students? Why not challenge them to create a 10-second video on one of the following topics:

- An introduction to their to-be-read pile
- 'I've never found anything I want read, but I do like...'
- The books that make me...laugh/cry/think/change the way I act
- A top tip or reading recommendation
- A 10-second summary of a book

You can also use our resource [on Book reviews and trailers on the Scottish Book Trust website](#).

Activity 4: Who is reading this?

Ask your staff to submit some of their favourite titles and ask students to match the staff member to the book.

Activity 5: Catch them reading!

Can teachers conceal a sneaky lesson-time read? Every student who spots a teacher reading earns a point, either for themselves or for the whole class. Students caught reading in lessons earn bonus points.

Classroom activities

Activity 1: Short stories

LIT 3-01a/4-01a, LIT 3-04a/4-04a, LIT 3-07a/4-07a

Pick a short story for each year group and ask subject teachers to read a section each period before the lesson starts. Save some time for questions. If you read a different story each day, you could discuss which were pupils' favourites. If you read the same story over the course of a few lessons or days, ask pupils to predict what they think will happen next and why.

Activity 2: Reading identities

LIT 3-11a/4-11a

Invite staff to discuss their reading habits with pupils. You could use our [My Life as a Reader PowerPoint template](#) which contains prompts for talking about your own reading journey, including sharing books you love as well as being honest with the genres or titles you don't enjoy or didn't finish! You could also invite staff to bring in or display the books in their classroom on the day. You can ask pupils to contribute to some of the specific prompts too. Are there any genres they prefer? What are their earliest memories of reading? Where do they like to read?

Activity 3: Books in every classroom

LIT 3-01a/4-01a, LIT 3-14a/4-14a, LIT 3-16a/4-16a

Reading should be across the curriculum, not just in English class or the library. Why not put pupils in charge of suggesting and researching books that they think could be good for each classroom? You could ask some pupils to visit the school, or local, library to do some research and ask for your suggestions. Your librarian may be able to help you create displays. If you need somewhere to start, we have book lists on

our website which suggest books for your [drama](#), [art](#), [music](#), [geography](#), [history](#), [modern studies](#), [maths](#), [science](#), [computer science](#) and [P.E.](#) classroom!

Activity 4: Book speed dating

LIT 3-02a/4-02a, LIT 3-11a/4-11a, LIT 3-14a/4-14a

This is a great activity for allowing pupils to sample a variety of different books in a short space of time, and to help you get an indication of the books that pupils enjoy reading. Set out several different book stations and ask pupils to pick a book and spend a few minutes reading, before moving onto the next station. Pupils jot down their first impressions of the book as they go, and whether they would like to keep reading.

This activity was taken from our [Running reading groups and events](#) resource where you can find more ideas to help your pupils connect over books and reading.

Activity 5: Play Book Jenga

LIT 3-02a/4-02a, LIT 3-11a/4-11a

Transform a game of Jenga into an incredible (and fun!) tool for Book Talk. Book Jenga was a game brought to the attention of Scottish Book Trust by secondary school librarian Deena Wren, winner of our [Scottish Book Trust Learning Professional Award](#).

All you will need to create Book Jenga is a set of Jenga blocks, a biro or fine liner pen, and your chosen questions! You play Book Jenga by building your tower and taking it in turns to pull out a block and answer the question on it. You can play either by answering the question yourself, or by asking everyone in the group to answer the question before moving on to the next one. The used block is then placed on top of the tower. Gradually the tower builds and becomes less stable. As with all Jenga, the aim is not to topple the tower. The game ends when the tower falls!

To find this full activity see our [Running reading groups and events](#) resource which also contains suggested questions you can use.

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

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

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

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

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