

MORE READING, BETTER RESULTS

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ARE YOU READING A GOOD BOOK?

Keywords

reading • pleasure • information • self-expression •
teaching • connection • entertainment • story

Graded readers: from the pleasure of reading to the pleasure of learning

In theory it's easy to read a good book; all you have to do is open it up and start. But it's not always that simple. Sometimes it's difficult to decide whether we really do like the book we are reading or if it's boring. And while some of us give up on it, others keep on reading to the end, but with little enthusiasm... and for students it's the same.

When we hear them say, 'I don't like reading', are we sure what they're really saying isn't 'I don't like this particular book', or 'I don't like doing so many exercises and tests when I read a book'?

Of course it's not something we like to hear in a school context, but it does show they'd prefer a book that they could **read for pleasure**, which allows them to follow a story, explore it, see how it ends, become involved with the characters and the situations, get into the plot and the emotions it provokes, and even imagine their own ending or continuation.

A graded reader allows all students to do just this: **express themselves, have fun** and stay **connected** to their own inner and outer world and with the book itself. At the same time the reader allows you, the teacher, to work together with the class, to transmit concepts, **information, grammar, vocabulary**, and **functions**, while following the school programme. Each story encourages students to learn creatively, making sure they focus their attention on the plot, the characters and their expectations of how story will end. In this way they gradually build up their knowledge of the language without getting bored.

For this to happen though, students need to be able to choose the title that interests them, that reflects their personal tastes and level in order to make the learning process more natural.

1 ARE YOU READING A GOOD BOOK?

What are the stories talking about?

1 Read the following texts and decide which genre they belong to.

A fantasy B adventure C horror D comedy

1 There were dishes, cups, bottles, pans, tomatoes, cakes and many other things to pack in the hampers. As soon as George and Harris started packing, they broke a cup. And, this was just the beginning! George is the worst packer in the world. When George dies, Harris will be the worst packer in the world.

Three Men in a Boat by J. K. Jerome
(Reading&Training Life Skills B 1.2)

2 A few hours later he woke up when the curtain fell to the ground and made a noise. The bed was shaking. There, sitting in the bed, was a white figure. The figure slowly got out of bed and moved towards the professor. The figure's face had no eyes but it had a large, open mouth. Professor Parkins jumped up. He tried to go to the door, but he couldn't reach the key.

Stories for the Curious by M.R. James
(Reading&Training A2)

3 Mr Richardson phoned him and said, "George, a bad blizzard is coming to your area. The weather report calls it 'the perfect blizzard'! Stop your work, get into your van and drive back now!" George knew he was in danger. As he was picking up his equipment, he fell on the ice and hurt his foot badly. He got into the van and tried to turn on the motor but... the motor didn't start.

Alaska Adventure! by Gina D.B. Clemen
(Reading&Training A2)

4 The knights took Rhiannon to the castle. Sir Brangwyn was sitting at a long table. 'Young Rhiannon,' he said, 'you must help me catch the white unicorn of the forest.' 'The white unicorn?' asked Rhiannon. 'When you are in the forest, you must call him. He will come to you.' 'Oh, no!' said Rhiannon, 'The little unicorn is my friend.' 'You must do what I ask!' cried Sir Brangwyn. 'If you don't listen to me I'll kill your father!'

Legends from the British Isles
(Green Apple A2)

2 Answer the questions.

- Which title would you give to each text?
- What could be the end of each text? Write down your personal ending.
- Which text is your favourite? Why?



WHAT IS EXTENSIVE READING?

Keywords

level • motivation • new language •
comfort zone • individual pace

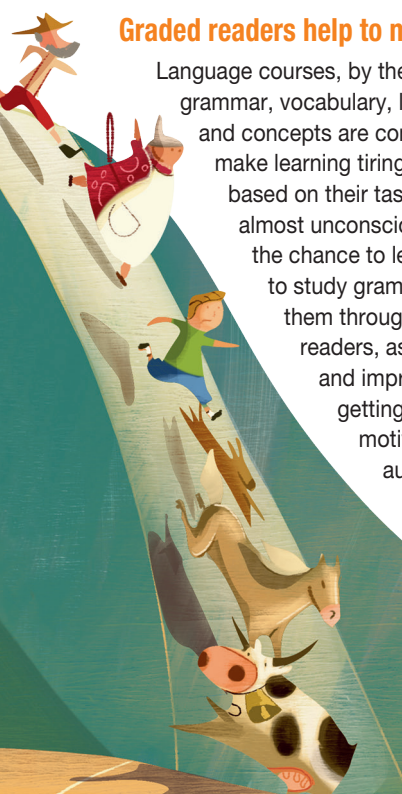
The secret to motivation is choosing the right level

Teachers often complain about the fact that their students don't read. Graded readers encourage reading because they let students work at the level which is most appropriate for them, each one at their **own learning pace**. One thing that graded readers consider an absolute priority is that the students are **motivated**; that they 'feel' they can attempt reading a story independently and with ease. If the **level** is too high or inappropriate, students will feel discouraged and either abandon the book or not like it which definitely won't help.

Let's ask ourselves a question: no great musician ever began to play starting from Beethoven's symphonies, so why ever should a student, just beginning to learn a foreign language, read a complete novel?

Graded readers help to memorize, understand and learn to choose

Language courses, by their very nature, follow a well-defined teaching path: grammar, vocabulary, language and functions. This means that rules and concepts are continually being taught, and it's natural that this can make learning tiring. Simple texts and exciting stories chosen by students based on their tastes and preferences means discovering the fun and almost unconscious aspects of learning through reading. It gives them the chance to learn **new words** effortlessly and a natural opportunity to study grammar and other features of the language and memorise them through reading. This is a great added value of the graded readers, as it goes beyond the sheer hard work done a school and improves the entire teaching commitment, as well as getting the students used to making choices in a fun and motivating way. Graded readers therefore represent an autonomous **comfort zone** that can be difficult to reach in the classroom. The free choice of book makes students want to keep on reading, again and again with their motivation creating a virtuous circle of learning combined with the pure pleasure of reading.



2 WHAT IS EXTENSIVE READING?

Discovering the text

1 Before you read. Match the words (1-4) to their definition (A-D).

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> sword | A Short mythological person with a long beard. |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> screen | B Similar to a long knife, used for fighting. |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> key | C Flat part of a television or computer where you see images. |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> dwarf | D Small button used to control a computer. |

I watched Jack Longshanks as he took the sword quickly and lifted it high above his head. Silently he turned round. He wanted to surprise the dwarf hiding behind a tree. With a single movement he jumped towards the creature and cut its head off. Then he ran as fast as he could.

"Yes!! Excellent, Jack Longshanks," I said. Another ten points flashed onto my screen. I was getting stronger and more powerful every time I played. I moved Jack north towards the forest and past the dwarf who lay headless on the grass. The quest to find the key was more difficult than I imagined but that was why the game was so good.

"Adam!" It was my sister Lucy so I turned the music on my stereo up and pretended that I couldn't hear her. My bedroom door burst open and Lucy walked in.

"Didn't you hear me? Turn that music down. I was calling you. Dinner's ready." "Yeah, well, I'll come down when I've finished this game." "Right! Well, when you've finished playing with those dwarves the rest of the family is ready to eat."

She went out of the room angrily. "And close the door behind you!" I shouted. "Hey, what's going on?" I couldn't believe it!! I took my eyes off the screen for ten seconds and Jack wasn't there. He was now moving off in a completely different direction towards the castle. I pressed the right keys on my keyboard and made him run north again.

Time Games by Victoria Heward (Reading&Training B1.1)

2 Comprehension check. Look at these sentences.

Say whether they are true (T) or false (F).

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Jack Longshanks is a friend of Adam. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Jack Longshanks is the character of a videogame. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Adam loves videogames. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Adam is very fond of his sisters. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3 What do you think? Write a brief answer for these questions.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 Do you like the character in this text? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, because ... | <input type="checkbox"/> No, because ... |
| 2 Is Adam good at videogames? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, because ... | <input type="checkbox"/> No, because ... |
| 3 Do you think Adam's sister seems nice? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, because ... | <input type="checkbox"/> No, because ... |



CHOOSING THE RIGHT BOOK

Keywords

free choice • comfort level •
variety of topics • motivation • class library

Where intensive study meets extensive reading

When following a programme of study, the work is naturally intensive, as you have to learn structures, constantly memorize new words, become familiar with the vocabulary, study grammar rules, recognize and use functions and then practice them all in speaking and writing. This can be quite a challenge! Graded readers are a very useful tool to assist this challenge, because they offer texts, even short ones, which consolidate linguistic knowledge through a wide **variety of topics** which have something for everyone. As well as this – and this is one of their most successful characteristics – you can choose the graded reader that is at the **most “comfortable” level** for students, so that they feel curious and involved in the subject and are stimulated to continue reading it.

Free choice means better motivation

It is important, especially as graded readers are meant to be enjoyable, that the texts are fluid and not continuously interrupted by tests. If we consider this an effective premise for reading, graduated reading can be seen as a very useful supplement when integrated into the study program, making it more active, engaging and less tiring. To make sure that students always enjoy approaching a text, it is important that they are **free to choose** the title that inspires them, as they will be more **motivated** if they find a story that arouses their interests and curiosity. Even in the same class it might be useful to have different graded readers, which the students can then swap. In each class a **small library** could be created, in which books can be exchanged, be the object of discussions, exchange of “reviews” and an expansion of cultural horizons and tastes.



3 CHOOSING THE RIGHT BOOK

Create a book

1 Match these titles (1-3) to the genre that you think is most suitable (a-c).

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Canterville Ghost</i> | a Adventure story |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Alaska Adventure!</i> | b Detective story |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Act II: Murder!</i> | c Ghost story |

2 Which text (A-C) belongs to each of the titles (1-3)?

A At eleven o'clock, they all went to bed. Some time later, Mr Otis woke up because there was a strange noise in the corridor. It was one o'clock. He opened his bedroom door. In front of him, there was a terrible old man. His eyes were red like fire. His long grey hair was thick and dirty. He was wearing old-fashioned clothes. Heavy chains were hanging from his wrists and ankles.

B George Parker's plane landed at Fairbanks International Airport in the late afternoon. Jim Nakodi was there to meet him. "Welcome George!" exclaimed Jim. "It's good to see you! Thanks for coming up so quickly. This earthquake created a real emergency. We need an expert like you." "Jim! It's been a long time!" said George, smiling at his friend. "Wow, it's really cold up here!"

C Suddenly a young man in the crowd cried, "Look! That's Sherlock Holmes, the famous British detective! I read about him in the paper." "Yeah!" exclaimed an old man. "He's lecturing at the university and then taking a vacation in the States." Everyone was amazed when they saw a tall, well-dressed man of about 45, walking into the theater.

3 Which picture would you choose for the cover of each book?

Match the pictures (A-C) to the titles (1-3) from exercise 1.



4 Now you have “created” four books about five different subjects. Which would you prefer to read? Why? Explain your choice in one sentence.



WHAT DOES 'DIVERSION' MEAN?

Keywords

language acquisition • confidence •
long-term memory

How long-term memory is activated

It all started when an English teacher, who didn't speak German, was travelling through Germany. While driving, she kept coming across the word *Umleitung* (which means 'diversion') written on yellow road signs showing work in progress.

Although the teacher didn't understand the word, she started to remember it and to guess where she would see it. She understood its actual meaning later on, but in that precise moment something set off a mechanism which then stimulated her visual memory, a **long-term memory**.

The importance of context

This episode demonstrates how an unknown term, when put into the correct context, is more easily recognizable and, as such, easier to remember. In graded readers, contextualization and the motivation to guess meaning, with the help of images too, works as a guide to memorising a word, or a semantic field.

This in turn produces a positive effect on language learning, since it helps students to **acquire awareness of the language**, to use the vocabulary – and to have more **confidence** in using it – , to memorize

the grammar and finally, something fundamental in the study of language, the constant stimulation of long-term memory.



Discovering new words

1 Choose the correct meaning of the words from those given.

When they arrived in front of the **cathedral** they found a large stone with a big sword in it. Under the stone were written the words: 'The man who pulls this sword from the stone is the true king of Britain.' The message surprised them and they all wanted to try. 'This is going to be easy,' they said, but none of them could move the sword. They soon became angry because they thought that there was a trick. 'Never trust that old wizard,' they complained. 'He made us come a long way, and now he is making fun of us.'

The **Archbishop** stood outside the cathedral and watched the knights as they tried again and again to pull the sword from the stone. Finally he said, 'The man who will be king is not here today. In one week, on New Year's Day, we will all meet here again. I will organise a **tournament**. The strongest and bravest knights of the land will fight against each other and the winner will be our new king.'

Snowing seven days later as many lords and knights rode to London to take part in the tournament. With them went Sir Ector, his son Kay and young Arthur. Arthur was still too young to be a knight but he was happy to watch Kay fight.

'Do you think you will win?' he asked. Kay laughed. 'Of course I'll win, little brother. I will be the new king!' Kay reached to take his sword from its **scabbard**. It was not there. 'Where is my sword? Arthur, I haven't got my sword!' Kay realised that his sword was still at home. 'Don't worry, Kay, I can ride back quickly and get it for you.'

Tales from Camelot by Victoria Heward
(Green Apple Life Skills, A2/B1)

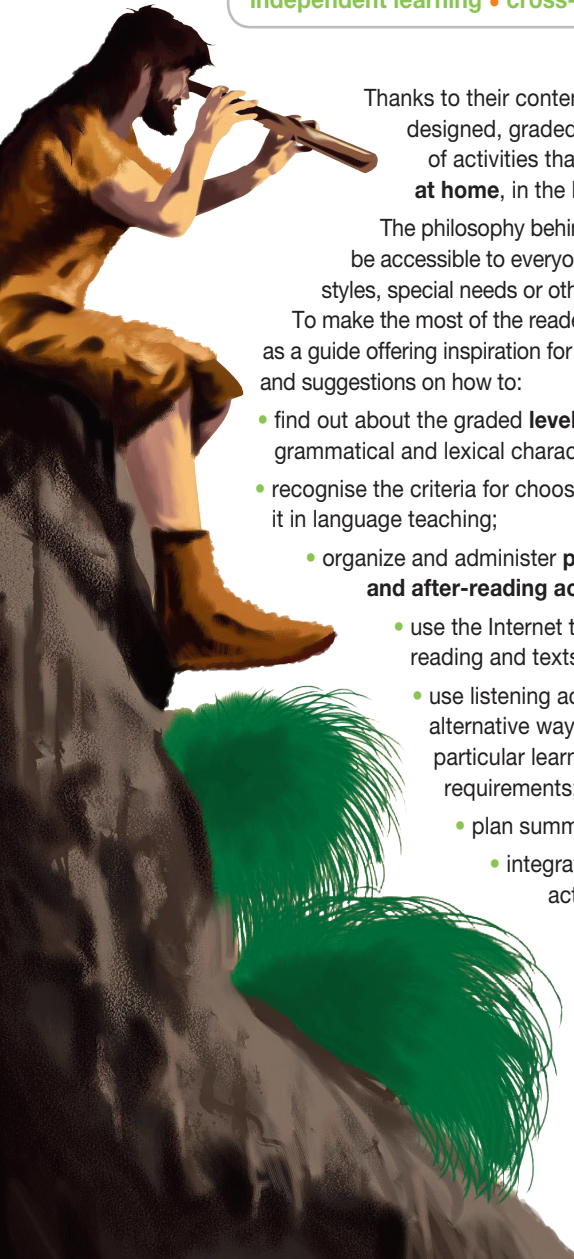
- 1 **Cathedral**
 - ☐ very big and important church
 - ☐ Italian-style church
 - ☐ mayor's house
 - 2 **(to) Make fun of**
 - ☐ enjoy an event
 - ☐ laugh very loudly
 - ☐ joke about someone (in an unkind way)
 - 3 **Archbishop**
 - ☐ very important priest
 - ☐ Mayor
 - ☐ Head of the Church of Rome
 - 4 **Tournament**
 - ☐ round object
 - ☐ competition
 - ☐ horse race
 - 5 **Scabbard**
 - ☐ illness
 - ☐ bag for the knife
 - ☐ special bag for a sword
 - ☐ purse
- 2 Invent a sentence for each of the correct words in exercise 1.
- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5



WHAT'S IN THE BLACK CAT GRADED READERS HANDBOOK?

Keywords

suggestions • pre-, during- and after- reading activities • independent learning • cross-curricular themes • levels Ideas



Thanks to their contents, levels and the way they were designed, graded readers provide a wide range of activities that can be done in the classroom, **at home**, in the book or on the move.

The philosophy behind graded readers is that they should be accessible to everyone, catering for personal learning styles, special needs or other particular requirements.

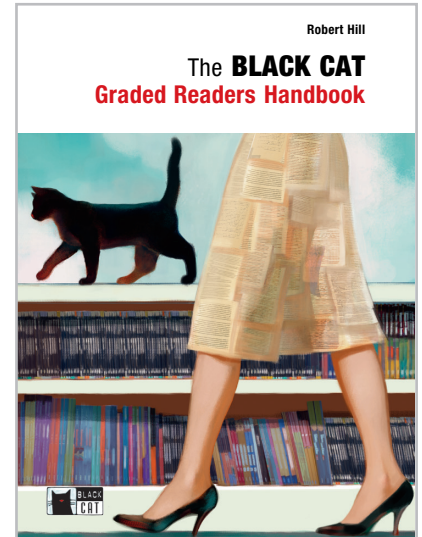
To make the most of the readers, a Black Cat handbook is available, as a guide offering inspiration for activities and providing lots of **ideas** and suggestions on how to:

- find out about the graded **levels** available and their related grammatical and lexical characteristics;
- recognise the criteria for choosing a level and how to use it in language teaching;
- organize and administer **pre-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities**;
- use the Internet to create projects related to reading and texts;
- use listening activities to follow the text, to suggest alternative ways of dealing with the plot, to help particular learning difficulties or particular requirements;
- plan summary-based activities for each level;
- integrate the Cambridge and Trinity exam activities, present in all graded readers, into the lessons;
- activate CLIL activities thanks to **crosscurricular** materials in various graded readers;
- organize drama activities;
- ... and much more!

5 WHAT'S IN THE BLACK CAT GRADED READERS HANDBOOK?



The description of all graded reader levels with information regarding the number of words, CEFR levels, Trinity and Cambridge examinations.



Help and suggestions on how to choose a graded reader for the class and how to help the students make their own independent choice. Advice on how to organise effective reading activities in class.

Detailed advice on the different type of pre-, during- and after reading activities and how to use films and the Internet.





WHAT'S THE POWER OF ILLUSTRATIONS?

Keywords

visual learning • quality • award-winning artists •
creativity • support • prediction

Visual learning

Learning through **visualisation** is quick and easy for everyone and nowadays communication through images is one of the most common ways we use to explore and find out about things. Just think how the millions of photos taken on smartphones and shared every day around the world allow both the sender and the receiver to understand a situation, know a place and to imagine a context. So the image stimulates learning, encourages the use of intuition and in this way helps you to memorise data. And by images we don't just mean photographs, but also illustrations, paintings and comics.

Graded readers are designed around this principle: the illustrations make the story "visual", so readers understand its context, can observe the characters and places it describes and follow the development of the plot step by step, as if they were looking at the whole story on another level, parallel to the words. In order to bring this double level to life, the graded readers are illustrated by successful artists. Many of them are **international prize winners**, able to transmit powerful images in an engaging way which facilitates the learning process.

Different ways to use illustrations and stimulate creativity

There are numerous ways in which the illustrations can **help** the text:

- encourage the learning and enrichment of vocabulary;
- form the basis for **creative** comprehension or **prediction exercises** on the situations and actions of the characters;
- be used to summarise the story: at the end of each book there is always an exercise to reorder images and reconstruct the plot. This sort of activity can become a challenge to create an alternative story (great for pair or group work), or to imagine a different ending, and therefore stimulate creativity and facilitate learning.



6 WHAT'S THE POWER OF ILLUSTRATIONS?

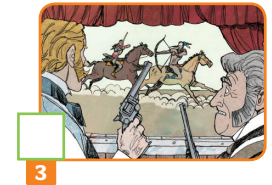
Make a story with the pictures

- 1 Look at the three pictures (1-3) and match them to a place where they might be set (A-C).

A Europe

B Asia

C America



- 2 Who do you think the characters might be? Choose one of the following.

- a ☐ A thief
b ☐ A gentleman
c ☐ A killer
d ☐ A trickster
e ☐ A policeman

- 3 Look at the characters. How do you think they are feeling? Match the pictures (1-3) to the words (a-f). You can use more than one for each picture.

- a ☐ cunning
b ☐ happiness
c ☐ surprise
d ☐ fear
e ☐ terror
f ☐ aggressiveness

- 4 What title would you give to each picture?

- 5 Now invent a short story: choose the genre (adventure, travel, thriller...), include the characters with the profile and feelings that you chose, add the places and, at the end, give your story a title.



Illustrations by Fabio Visintin, **Around the World in Eighty Days**,
by Jules Verne (Reading and Training Life Skills B1.1)



LEARNING TO READ!

7 LEARNING TO READ!

Keywords

self-study • assessment • collaborative activities •
reading diary • silent reading • class reading •
reading for pleasure • summaries

Reading in Class

It could be a good idea to set up a regular “**class reading time**”, in which the students read their chosen book **in silence**. It is important that they have chosen a book they like and that it is at an appropriate level for them. This can become a valuable occasion for you to observe the class, to identify their individual reading methods, power of concentration and the pleasure they get in following the story as it unfolds.

To understand how the reading experience and understanding of the text is progressing (as well as how much the students are enjoying the book) you could ask them each to prepare a brief **summary** of the different parts of the book they've read. Alternatively, to stimulate interest in the story and the characters, the students could do **collaborative tasks** in pairs or groups which lead on to discussion and an exchange of ideas on the situations, characters and the plot.

Reading at home

Even reading at home can be a fun, simple way of checking how students approach a book **independently**, outside of school. It also ensures that the pleasure of reading is always the main focus and doesn't get inundated by tests and complicated exercises.

How to keep a check on individual reading progress and understand how the students are getting on with their reader? You could ask the students to keep a reading diary, a simple table in which they describe their general reading habits (how long they read for and where) and their reactions to the story: if the characters are interesting/ boring/ curious etc. is the plot gripping/ scary/ adventurous/ unrealistic and so on. Reading diaries also help students to understand if they like the reader, how much it involves them, what emotions it provokes and whether these change during the course of the story or not. You can adapt the **reading diary** depending on the type of book the students have chosen. If they are reading a thriller, for example, the emphasis will be on the twists in the plot, if it's a travel book the places themselves will be the most important part. Students consider this type of **assessment** a fun task rather than a real “test” even though it constitutes an important educational aspect of reading, while being accompanied by the **pleasure of reading**.

Reading Diary

1 Read the text and complete the reading diary.

Lord Canterville lived in a fine old English house called Canterville Chase. When Mr Hiram B. Otis saw it, he immediately decided to buy it. He was a rich and very important American with a large family and he wanted to live in England. Everyone told him that he was very foolish. 'There is a ghost,' they said. 'Canterville Chase is haunted!'

Lord Canterville himself told Mr Otis why he preferred not to live in the house. 'My Lord,' said Mr Otis, 'I'll take the house with the furniture and the Ghost. I come from a modern country where we have everything that money can buy. If ghosts really existed in Europe, I'm sure that an American would take one back home. He would put it in a museum or a show for everyone to see.'

Lord Canterville smiled. 'The Ghost really exists. People have seen it many times in the last three hundred years, since 1584 in fact. It always appears before the death of any member of my family.'

A few weeks later Lord Canterville sold Canterville Chase to the Americans. There were six people in the Otis family. His wife, Mrs Lucretia Otis, was a beautiful lady. She was full of energy and very healthy. They had called their oldest son Washington in a moment of patriotism. He was tall, blond and good-looking. His sister, Virginia, was fifteen years old with large blue eyes; she was lovely. The youngest children were twins. They were often naughty but everybody liked them.

The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde (Reading&Training Life Skills B1.2)



My reading habits

When I like reading: ☐ afternoon ☐ evening ☐ weekend ☐ holiday
☐ others

My favourite place to read: ☐ in my bedroom ☐ on the beach ☐ in the park
☐ at the bus stop ☐ others

How much time I spend reading every day: ... minutes ... hours

How I like to read: ☐ in silence ☐ out loud ☐ with the radio on ☐ with the tv on
☐ others

The book I'm reading: The Canterville Ghost

	I really like it	I quite like it	It's alright	It's boring	Reason
The setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The story	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Otis family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr Canterville	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



I DON'T HAVE TIME TO READ!

Keywords

time • organization •
value of reading • story

Making the best use of reading time

I don't have **time**! This is one of the most common excuses students (and adults) use to explain why they don't read. Actually the real problem is often about how time could be usefully employed to make reading enjoyable.

Graded readers are structured in such a way that they help **organize** reading time. The length of the chapters depends on the level and ensures a relaxed, satisfying read that doesn't take too long. In addition, every **story** – and every literary genre to which it belongs – is made up of lots of short blocks of text. In this way, reading is fun and not just a collection of challenging pages that risk being too difficult and boring to read. The aim is to stimulate students to read, often and everywhere.

It doesn't matter how long they spend, as, even if they only read one chapter, they are acquiring skills and vocabulary. And if it's a good story they'll gradually start to read for longer and longer periods, in reading sessions that are fun and full of growing curiosity rather than being something they're forced to do. And this in itself is a sure way to become a strong reader.

The **value of the graded reader** and its contents leads students to appreciate their reading time, and progress almost unconsciously towards structured learning thanks to their increasing ability to manage reading sessions.

An interview about reading

1 Read the beginning of the adventures of Robin Hood and then answer the interview questions.

At the time of this story King Richard, known as the Lionheart because of his bravery, was away on a crusade in the Holy Land. During this time his brother, the greedy Prince John, ruled England in his place and no one liked him. Prince John made the people pay very high taxes and took away their lands and belongings. Poor peasants often died of hunger. The sheriff of Nottingham was one of Prince John's worst sheriffs. These were very difficult times. Robin Hood's real name was Robert, son of the Earl of Huntingdon, a tall, handsome young man. He was kind and friendly with everyone. One day the cruel sheriff of Nottingham killed Robin's father in order to take away his many lands in Locksley. Young Robin lost his father, his home, his belongings and all his lands. He was very upset because he loved his father very much. 'What can I do?' he thought. 'I'm alone and I don't have my family or my home any more.' Robin decided to escape to Sherwood Forest with his faithful servants. They chose to live as free men in the forest, although they lived outside the law. They did not want to be slaves of King John and the evil sheriff of Nottingham. However, King John considered them dangerous outlaws. Deep inside the forest Robin sat under a huge old oak tree and talked to his faithful servants. 'Sherwood Forest is our new home. We'll hunt the animals of the forest and go fishing in the streams. We'll carry bows and arrows. When I blow my horn three times, you must all hurry to my side.' 'But remember, my friends, we are free but we are outlaws,' said Robin seriously. 'We are considered dangerous enemies of England – the rich and the greedy hate us and are against us. Only the poor honest people are with us.'

Robin Hood retold by Gina D. B. Clemen
(Green Apple A2/B1)

2 How long did it take you to read the text?

3 How much did you enjoy it?

- a ☐ a lot
b ☐ not much
c ☐ not at all

4 What did you like best about the text? Choose the best answer for you. You can choose more than one.

- ☐ the places
☐ the characters
☐ one character in particular
☐ the historical period
☐ the adventure genre
☐ other (say what).....

6 At the end of the interview what sort of reader do you think you are?

- a ☐ a reader of short chapters
b ☐ a reader of long chapters
c ☐ a reader of adventure stories
d ☐ reader of other genres (specify which)



HOW GRADED READERS DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS?

Keywords

story • critical thinking • emotional intelligence • collaborative behaviour

Reading as a moment of growth and self-awareness

Reading is a gateway to the world around us. It puts us in touch with others and also with ourselves, by stimulating us to think about who we are, how we perceive reality, what we think about the things that happen and what could happen. In short: reading develops our life skills; it goes beyond educational aims and strengthens us as people, affecting our life from all points of view: emotional, social and cognitive.

Reading is an apparently simple activity, but in the same way that we approach a plot, evaluate the characters and the dynamics they create in the **story**, or even in the way in which we perceive the context, we form the **critical ideas**, the ability to evaluate ourselves and the world. Learning to evaluate means learning to sympathise and relate to others, to **collaborate** and develop **emotional intelligence**. This helps us deal with our everyday life more easily and solve the challenges and issues that arise thanks to the relationship with have with ourselves.

Life skills in graded readers

Graded readers are structured precisely so that the reading and didactic moments that accompany them, give students an opportunity to think about themselves and the world around them. They do this in a “circular” activity of listening to their emotions, talking to each other about how they feel and forming critical and cognitive ideas. So, reading a story means, relating to others, asking questions and finally deciding, step by step, who they want to become.



9 HOW GRADED READERS DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS?

The **LIFE SKILLS** series

What are Life Skills?

Life Skills can be found everywhere: from self development and life coaching books, to staff recruitment processes, and even in the classroom. They are transferable competences, recognised as essential for growth (initially personal and eventually professional), with the capability to instil positivity, versatility and readiness to face life's challenges. Life Skills have been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”.

EMOTIONAL:
Self awareness
Coping with emotion
Coping with stress

SOCIAL:
Empathy
Effective communication
Interpersonal relationship skills

COGNITIVE:
Problem solving
Decision making
Critical thinking
Creative thinking

The core of **Life Skills** is made up of 10 competences, grouped in 3 macro-areas.





HOW DO I THINK AND FEEL WHEN I READ?

Keywords

emotions • feeling • mind maps • thinking

Working on life skills while reading

Reading arouses **emotions**; it can make you feel happy, sad, bored, moved... This applies to any book we read: stories contain a world of emotions and **feelings** that are triggered off as the plot unfolds before us.

Green Apple Life Skills and Reading and Training Life Skills series allow just this: they let the story flow without interrupting the reading. They accompany the plot with illustrations making it not only more interesting but more intuitive from a linguistic point of view. In this way even the characters come to life and produce sensations and emotions in the reader. At the end of each chapter there is a *Think* activity, designed to give expression to these moods and reflections.

Overall conscious understanding and skills

Instead, at the end of the book there is a collection of activities that involves the whole book, which re-explores the story from numerous points of view: extensive reading exercises related to each chapter, listening, exercises using the Internet and exam related activities. And at the end of the didactic section which has worked on the various different skills, a **mind map** ties all the ends together in a conclusive exercise, putting together all the personal and educational experience of the graded reader.

And this is fundamental, because a young person who reads is a **future adult who thinks**.



Reading with the life skills

Tom lived in the town of St Petersburg with his Aunt Polly and his brother Sid. During the long summer evenings there weren't a lot of fun things to do. Tom liked walking around town. One evening he met a big boy who was a stranger. Tom looked at him because he didn't see new people often. The boy had new, expensive clothes. "Who is this boy?" Tom thought. "He's got new shoes, a blue jacket, a white shirt, a brown hat and a blue tie... but it's not Sunday. He probably comes from a big city. My clothes are really old and ugly, and I don't have any shoes." They looked at each other – Tom didn't like him. Tom finally said, "I can beat you!" The big boy laughed and said, "Why don't you try?" There was a moment of silence. "What's your name?" asked Tom. "I'm not going to tell you," answered the big boy. "Oh, really," said Tom nervously. "I think you're afraid of me," said the big boy. "I'm bigger and stronger than you." "I'm not afraid of you," said Tom. "I'm not afraid of anyone!" There was another moment of silence. The two boys looked at each other angrily. Suddenly Tom pushed the boy and the boy pushed Tom. Soon they were fighting on the ground. Tom hit him and pulled his hair. Then the big boy hit Tom on the nose but this didn't stop him. Soon the big boy started crying and said, "Stop! Stop!" Tom got up from the ground and said, "Well, I said I could beat you, didn't I?" The big boy's nice clothes were dirty and he got up slowly and walked away.



The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain (Green Apple Life Skills A2)

1 **THINK!** Read the sentence below, taken from this chapter.

"Tom finally said, 'I can beat you!'"

The big boy laughed and said, "Why don't you try?"

Tom doesn't like the rich boy and wants to show him he's stronger. Circle the words below that describe Tom.

kind • smart • friendly • stupid • intelligent • strong • weak • angry • happy

2 Which feelings can you find in the chapter you have read? With the help of dictionary find at least 8 words and divide them into "good feelings" and "bad feelings", and say why.



CAN WE READ IN A MOBILE WORLD?

Keywords

download • interactive • digital technology •
everywhere • devices • communication

Connection without borders

Over the last few years **digital technology** and **communication systems** have made great strides, making it possible to connect to any **device** from anywhere in the world. We can now carry out countless activities: reading, listening, watching videos and films, sending photos and exchanging material via email or direct sharing. In a word: mobility has become a daily resource, shortening distances and making communication easier.

Today you can quickly **download** music, videos and... books from the web. So even downloading graded readers and related material is quick and easy. And with tablets or phones it is even easier as these “symbols” of mobility, allow you to read **practically anywhere and at any time** of the day.

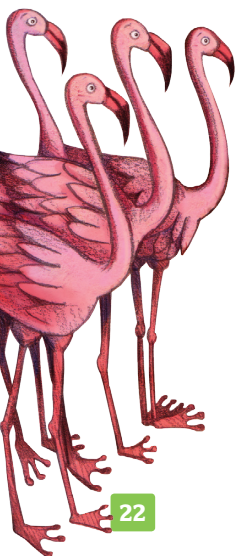
Graded readers: all-inclusive digital technology

When it comes to mobility, the word “reading” is far too simple: graded readers offer many experiences which open up all-inclusive opportunities which are suitable for all requirements and particularly adapted to special learning needs.

Thanks to the expansion of new digital technologies:

- all the illustrations of the graded readers can be enlarged;
- you can listen and read graded readers at the same time thanks to the *Read aloud* function, which highlights the words as they are read. While following the story, the students can also do the listening exercises;
- web-related projects open up numerous possibilities for research and testing creativity and design skills through the exploration of the web;
- **interactive activities** cover all types of exercises, from comprehension to vocabulary, from grammar, to listening;
- in addition to text-related activities, graded readers offer a wide range of training exercises for recognised English certification exams, which are also interactive.

In short: every graded reader can be transformed into a true interactive digital experience, suitable for all learning styles.



Tell a story in a mobile world

1 Read the text and answer the questions.

It was the white rabbit, not the mouse. ‘The Duchess! The Duchess!’ cried the white rabbit, looking everywhere. ‘She’ll be so angry – so angry! Where did I lose them?’ Alice understood immediately. The rabbit was looking for his white gloves. Alice started looking for them, but suddenly everything was different. The room, the glass table and the little door were not there any more. The rabbit saw Alice and said to her angrily, ‘Mary Ann, what are you doing here? Go home and get my white gloves! Quickly!’ Alice was frightened. ‘It thinks I’m its servant,’ thought Alice, running to the rabbit’s house. She went into a little room and found the white gloves, but she also saw a little bottle. She looked at it and didn’t see the words ‘DRINK ME’ on it, but she decided to drink from it anyway. ‘Every time I eat or drink anything here, something interesting always happens,’ she thought, ‘so I’m going to drink from this little bottle.’ Alice took the little bottle and started drinking, and soon she began to grow again. She grew and grew, and soon she filled the whole room! She was so big that she couldn’t move; she put one arm out of the window. Then she heard a loud voice outside. ‘Mary Ann! Mary Ann! Where are you?’ said the loud voice, ‘Bring me my gloves right now!’ Alice knew it was the rabbit. The rabbit tried to open the door but it couldn’t. Then it tried to come in through the window. Alice tried to catch it in her hand. Suddenly she heard a cry, a fall and a crash of broken glass. Then she heard the rabbit call his gardener, ‘Pat! Pat! Where are you?’ Another voice answered, ‘I’m here, working in the garden!’ ‘Come and help me, quickly!’ cried the rabbit angrily. ‘And now tell me, Pat, what’s that in the window?’ Pat looked at the window and said, ‘It’s an arm, sir!’ ‘What! An arm! Don’t be stupid! It’s too big! It fills the whole window!’ exclaimed the rabbit. ‘Yes, it fills the whole window, sir,’ said Pat, ‘but it’s still an arm.’ ‘Well, take it away immediately!’ cried the rabbit.

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll,
(Reading and Training B1.1)

- 2 Read the text and summarise it to make it a post for your personal blog. Don’t write more than 500 characters.
- 3 Sum up the text in a 140-character tweet (you can write up to 210 characters).
- 4 Turn the text into a text message or an instant message, without writing more than 50 characters.





STORYTELLING

Video 12

12 STORYTELLING

Activity suggestions with Max and Maggie!

1 Put these words in the correct position on the picture.

summer day • Max • Maggie • visit the castle • trees

2 Where could the following two words be hiding? Put them in the place you think would be best!

haunted • ghosts

3 Look at the picture below and answer the questions.

What's Maggie looking at? Choose from these words.

a ☐ a painting

c ☐ two swords

b ☐ a sculpture

d ☐ a wall

How do you think Max feels?

a ☐ he's scared

c ☐ he's hungry

b ☐ he's surprised

d ☐ he's worried

How many swords are there in the room?



- 4 Lots of things are out of place, put them back where they belong by writing the correct word in the castle or next to Max and Maggie.



- 5 Max and Maggie are in a room of the castle, looking at paintings. There isn't anything else in the room and the place looks a bit empty. What could you add? Choose from the list below and say where you would put the objects.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| a <input type="checkbox"/> a bed | e <input type="checkbox"/> a ghost |
| b <input type="checkbox"/> a ticket | f <input type="checkbox"/> a picture |
| c <input type="checkbox"/> a sword | g <input type="checkbox"/> a suit of armour |
| d <input type="checkbox"/> a horse | h <input type="checkbox"/> a rucksack |

- 6 Why does Max look surprised when he sees the painting?



Black Cat readers	CEFR	External Examination Boards					
		Cambridge Exams	Cambridge English Scale	IELTS	Trinity	TOEFL iBT	TOEIC
EARLYREADS							
Levels 1-5	Below and up to A1	Starters and Movers	/	/	1, 2	/	/
GREEN APPLE							
Starter	A1	Exam preparation: Flyers and/or Key	100-119		1, 2		
Step 1	A2	Exam level: Flyers and/or Key	120-139		3, 4		
Step 2	A2 / early B1	Exam level: Preliminary	130-145	3.0	4, 5		
READING & TRAINING; READING SHAKESPEARE and READING AND TRAINING DISCOVERY							
Step 1	A2	Exam level: Key	120-139	3.5	3, 4	30-56	Up to 325
Step 2	B1	Exam preparation: Preliminary	140-150	4.5	5	57-66	Up to 450
Step 3	B1	Exam level: Preliminary	151-160	5.0	6	67-86	Up to 550
Step 4	B2	Exam preparation: First	161-170	5.5	7	87-97	Up to 650
Step 5	B2	Exam level: First	171-180	6.0 to 6.5	8, 9	98-109	Up to 700
Step 6	C1	Exam preparation: Advanced	181-190	6.5 to 7.0	10, 11	110-120	Up to 780
AUTHENTIC TEXT (i.e. texts with unsimplified language)							
Interact with Literature; Reading Classics	B2 / C1 / C2	Exam levels: First; Advanced; Proficiency	170-230	6.5 up to 9.0	8, 9, 10, 11, 12	110 and above	850 and above

