



## TEACHERS' READING CHALLENGE WEBSITE LAUNCHES

Initiative created by The Reading Agency in partnership with The Open University

- This initiative is the first teachers' reading challenge of its kind, utilising research and resources from the OU's [Reading for Pleasure](#) programme and The Reading Agency's [Summer Reading Challenge](#).
- Teachers can sign up to take part in the Challenge from 9am on Friday, 14 August.
- The online platform aims to create a reading community for teachers, supporting them to deepen their knowledge of children's books and reading.
- Modelled on the popular Summer Reading Challenge, the Teachers' Reading Challenge invites teachers to read and review books, promote best practice on supporting reading for pleasure in the classroom and join discussions to share advice and recommendations.

**Friday, 14 August, 2020:** The Teachers' Reading Challenge website, created by national charity [The Reading Agency](#) in partnership with [The Open University](#), has launched today, encouraging teachers to sign up to the challenge and create a reading for pleasure teachers' community, to discuss children's literature and share strategies for developing children's reading habits.

The initiative aims to help teachers develop their reading repertoire of children's texts and offers resources and advice on enhancing children's reading experiences. Teachers who sign up to the Challenge will be invited to access a downloadable reading diary, find book recommendations, save books onto their own wish list, take part in discussions with fellow teachers using the message board, and leave reviews to help other teachers find their next read.

OU research reveals that teachers' knowledge of children's literature and other texts is essential for developing a rich reading curriculum, and when combined with the four-fold Reading for Pleasure pedagogy, effectively nurtures the reading habit in young people (*Cremin et al, 2014*). The RfP pedagogy includes: reading aloud, independent reading time, booktalk and recommendations in a

highly social reading environment. Resources available on the Teachers' Reading Challenge website will include booklists from authors, tips on reading aloud to children, advice on diversifying classroom libraries, and studies and research on the benefits of fostering reading for pleasure habits in children.

As children head back to school and teachers across the country grapple with the effects of the lockdown and social distancing, the initiative will aim to create a supportive hub for teachers, allowing them to access invaluable resources, develop a greater knowledge of their student's reading habits and find an inclusive, representative range of children's book recommendations.

**Karen Napier, CEO, The Reading Agency** commented: *"We're delighted to launch the Teachers' Reading Challenge with The Open University. The resources provided by Research-Rich Pedagogies are an invaluable asset, and we hope that the Challenge platform will provide a fun, collaborative support network for teachers across the country; enabling them to explore children's literacy in depth, exchange advice and recommendations — and enjoy some new books!"*

**Teresa Cremin, Professor of Education (Literacy), The Open University** commented: *"I'm delighted we're launching this Teachers' Reading Challenge in partnership with The Reading Agency. The Open University's research shows that teachers' knowledge of children's literature and other texts is a prerequisite to develop rich practice and keen readers. When teachers share their knowledge, passion and pleasure in reading this has powerful consequences - it motivates young readers and helps build the habit of reading.*

*It is therefore a professional responsibility for teachers to keep up-to-date with books that reflect the realities of young people's worlds, that foster their curiosity and help them to imagine alternatives. It is also a moral and social responsibility - being a reader changes children's lives.*

*So, we need professionals who read children's texts avidly and deeply, and who, through rigorous planned and reviewed practice, develop reading communities within and beyond school. Such communities of connection and conversation are even more critical now in the Covid-19 context.*

*The Teachers' Reading Challenge to widen professional repertoires of knowledge and practice offers a rich way forward for all teachers and student teachers. The pressure on the profession is considerable currently, but by taking the Challenge both teachers and children will benefit and new communities of engaged readers will be built. Bring it on!"*

**Ashley Bates, teacher, creator of The Shed School platform and Summer Reading Challenge ambassador** commented: *"Reading and being read to are fantastic ways to expose children to new words and develop their creative imaginations. The Teachers' Reading Challenge site will provide a really valuable, innovative way for teachers to connect and share advice on encouraging reading habits in children, as well as helping us to understand their reading habits in more depth, and keep up to date with children's books of choice."*

**From 9am on Friday 14 August, you can sign up to the Teachers' Reading Challenge at:**  
[www.teachersreadingchallenge.org.uk](http://www.teachersreadingchallenge.org.uk)