

SEPTEMBER 2026

LITERACY NEWSLETTER



WELCOME TO THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR!

Reading is strongly linked to increased wellbeing, greater academic achievements, and better life chances. This is why we are prioritising reading at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda. During the last academic year, we held book fairs, a 'Readathon' to raise money for charity, author visits, a trip to the Hay Festival, reading interventions, and more. We also made reading a key part of tutor time and every subject, with pupils reading individually and aloud across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 read for 5 minutes at the start of every lesson, so please make sure that your child has an English and Welsh reading book with them every day.



WHAT'S COMING UP?

- **By 23rd September** - Apply for a chance of being in the Brilliant Club's 'The Scholars Programme' (Year 9 and 10). If successful, pupils will experience university-style learning with PhD researchers. They will also visit a university to graduate from the programme. Details about how to apply will be shared in class. Year 7 and 8 will have this opportunity later in the academic year.
- **13th October** - Literacy day (Year 7 and 8), with sessions delivered by Alex Wharton, Siôn Tomos Owen, Aneurin Karadog and Keith Temple.
- **16th - 20th October** - Scholastic book fair (All year groups).
- **By 11th December** - Reading challenge: 'Throughout the term, read three English books and three Welsh books. Record them in your reading logs in registration.' (All year groups.)



How can I support my child's reading skills at home?

Let them read what interests them. Whether they are reading novels, comics, recipes, or news articles, everything counts!

Encourage them to read at home for at least 20 minutes a day. They can build up gradually to 20 minutes if this seems daunting at first.

Ensure they bring an English and Welsh reading book to school every day.

Make reading a shared experience - read aloud to them, and allow them to read aloud to you.

Model reading at home - if they see you reading, they are more likely to become readers!

Ask them open questions about the books they are reading, such as what they like or dislike, or which character they can relate to most and why.

Visit local libraries to choose new and exciting books.

Buy them books as gifts.

Limit their screen time so that they are more likely to pick up a book.

How can I support my child's writing skills at home?

Encourage them to write at home, such as by writing a diary or letters to family or friends.

Support them to read more - good readers usually become better writers!

Encourage your child to use the resources on BBC Bitesize to help them improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Urge your child to read over their writing carefully to check for any errors.

Praise their writing.

Assist your child with their spelling by helping them to:

- use the 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' strategy to practise spellings
- master the spelling of all of the most common words in English and Welsh (using the strategy above)
- learn rules, such as 'i before e except after c'.

Suggest that your child redrafts their writing to make improvements.

Help your child to develop their vocabulary by:

- using a dictionary to define any new words they encounter when reading, and writing these in a word bank
- using a thesaurus to discover new and interesting words when writing
- playing word games, such as 'Scrabble' or 'Boggle'.

Ask your child open-ended questions about their life and opinions, such as what the best part of their day was and why, or something they found challenging today.

Discuss a range of different topics together in depth.

Use the vocabulary strategies on the previous page to help them use a wide range of vocabulary when speaking.

Urge your child to speak clearly and in full sentences, using correct grammar.

How can I support my child's oracy skills at home?

Limit your child's screen time at certain times of the day so that they can focus fully on speaking and listening rather than being distracted by their screen.

Read books or articles together and discuss each other's opinions and predictions.

Ask your child open-ended questions about what books they are reading, films they are watching, or music they are listening to. Probe their ideas by asking them to provide reasons for their views.