



Love Learning Together

READING JOURNEY



GUIDANCE FOR HOME

60 by Year 6

Read 60 amazing books before you leave
King's Cross Academy.

WELCOME TO THE KCA READING JOURNEY

At King's Cross Academy, we want every child to develop a lifelong love of reading. Our KCA Reading Journey has been designed to help children discover brilliant books, encounter new ideas and characters, and develop the skills and confidence they need to become thoughtful, enthusiastic readers.

At the heart of the Reading Journey is our 60 Books Challenge: we challenge every child to read and explore 60 specially selected books before they finish Year 6. The journey begins in Nursery, with books shared and enjoyed together, and continues throughout each child's time at KCA as they grow into increasingly confident and independent readers.

The 60 books have been carefully chosen to provide a rich and varied reading experience. Children will encounter picture books, stories, poetry, non-fiction, modern favourites and much-loved classics. The collection introduces children to different authors, characters, cultures, experiences and perspectives, while providing plenty of opportunities simply to get lost in a brilliant book.

But the challenge is about much more than reaching 60. Talking and thinking about what we read is an important part of becoming a reader. We want children to notice things, ask questions, make connections, share opinions and think about the characters, events and ideas they encounter.

That is why each book is accompanied by a short Reading Journey activity. These activities develop alongside the children. Our youngest pupils share books with an adult and talk about what they see, hear and enjoy. As children become more independent readers, the activities gradually develop their ability to retrieve information, explain their thinking, make inferences, interpret ideas and evaluate what they have read.

Our Reading Journey also connects books with the KCA values of Courage, Respect, Kindness, Integrity, Endurance and Aspiration. Stories provide wonderful opportunities for children to explore the choices characters make, consider different points of view and connect what they read with their own lives and experiences.

Most importantly, the 60 Books Challenge is a journey, not a race. We want children to take their time, revisit favourite books, talk about their reading and experience the excitement, comfort, curiosity and joy that great books can bring.

By the time our children finish Year 6, we hope they will have completed all 60 books. More importantly, we hope they will leave KCA seeing themselves as readers: curious about books, confident in talking about what they read and excited to discover what they might read next.



WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Learning to read is one of the most important things a child will do at school, but becoming a reader is about much more than being able to recognise the words on a page.

Children develop their understanding of books through talking, listening, wondering and sharing ideas. When an adult reads with a child and talks about what is happening, they help them develop vocabulary, understand characters and emotions, make connections and begin to think more deeply about what they hear and read.

For our youngest children, sharing a book with an adult is particularly important. Children do not need to be able to read the words themselves to experience a rich and challenging story. Listening to books allows them to encounter language, ideas and vocabulary that may be far beyond what they can yet read independently.

As children become more confident readers, reading together remains valuable. Asking a child what surprised them, which character they liked, why something happened or what they think might happen next can turn reading from simply getting through the words into genuinely understanding and responding to a text.

You don't always need to know the answer

Some of the best conversations about books do not have a single correct answer. Try questions such as:

- What did you notice?
- What do you think?
- Why do you think they did that?
- How do you think they are feeling?
- What do you think might happen next?
- Which part did you like best? Why?

Give your child time to think. It is fine for them to change their mind, return to the pictures or go back to an earlier part of the book to find something they remember.

Reading it again is a good thing

Don't worry if your child wants to hear the same book again and again. Rereading is an important part of learning to read. Familiar books allow children to notice new details, remember language, join in with repeated phrases and develop a deeper understanding of the story.

Above all, reading together should be a positive experience. There will be plenty of opportunities to practise reading skills at school. At home, one of the most powerful things you can do is show your child that books are worth making time for.

THE READING JOURNEY FROM NURSERY TO YEAR 6

The way children read, understand and talk about books changes enormously during their time at primary school. Our Reading Journey has therefore been designed to grow with your child.

The activities that accompany each of the 60 books are deliberately different at each stage. In Nursery, the emphasis is on sharing, looking, listening and talking. As children become more confident readers, the activities gradually introduce more challenging comprehension skills.

Year group	Our Reading Journey focus	What this might look like
Nursery	Share , Look, Listen, Talk	Enjoying a book with an adult, exploring pictures, noticing characters and talking about favourite parts.
Reception	Listen, Remember, Talk, Enjoy	Remembering key events, talking about characters and feelings, using pictures and beginning to explain ideas.
Year 1	Retrieve, Understand	Finding simple information, remembering what happened and showing understanding of characters and events.
Year 2	Retrieve, Explain	Finding information and beginning to explain why things happen or how characters might feel.
Year 3	Retrieve , Infer	Using clues from the book to think beyond what is directly stated.
Year 4	Infer, Connect, Explore	Making connections across a story and beginning to explore characters, relationships and themes.
Year 5	Analyse, Infer across the text	Drawing together evidence from different parts of a book and thinking more deeply about characters and ideas.
Year 6	Interpret, Evaluate, Explore authorial choices	Developing interpretations, evaluating ideas and considering how and why an author has created a text in a particular way.

Values at the Heart of Questioning

The KCA values sit at the heart of each questionnaire asking children to draw upon their understanding of the value in the context of the book. This provides another lens for pupils to explore their understanding of personal development.



ONE JOURNEY, GROWING EXPECTATIONS

This progression is important. A Nursery child should not experience the Reading Journey in the same way as a Year 6 pupil.

Our youngest children are not tested on the books they share. Their Reading Journey activities provide simple prompts for an adult and child to enjoy talking about a book together. Children might respond by speaking, pointing, making a sound, acting something out or finding something in an illustration.

As children move through the school, they take increasing ownership of the challenge. Questions become more demanding and children are increasingly expected to return to the text, use evidence and explain their thinking.

This means that while every child is working towards the same exciting goal — completing all 60 books before they finish Year 6 — the challenge remains appropriate to their age and stage of reading development.

WHERE DO WE GET THE BOOKS?

You do not need to buy the books in the KCA Reading Journey.

At King's Cross Academy, every class has access to adequate copies of all the Reading Journey books for their year group. Children can borrow these books from school, take them home to enjoy and return them when they have finished.

Borrowing a Reading Journey book

Children can choose their next Reading Journey book from the copies available in their class. Once they have finished reading or sharing the book and completed the accompanying Reading Journey activity, they should return it so that another child can enjoy it.

If the book your child would like to read is already being borrowed by somebody else, they can simply choose another from their year group's collection and come back to it later.

You can use your own copy too

If you already own one of the books, borrow it from a local library or have access to it elsewhere, your child is very welcome to use that copy. There is no requirement to use the school's copy.

Please look after our books

Our Reading Journey collections are there for everyone to enjoy. Please encourage your child to keep borrowed books safe at home and return them to school when they have finished.

NURSERY: SHARING BOOKS TOGETHER

In Nursery, the KCA Reading Journey is all about enjoying books together. At this stage, we are not interested in scores, tests or whether children can answer a set of questions independently. We want children to develop positive relationships with books and grow in confidence when talking about what they see, hear and think.

Each Nursery Reading Journey book has a short set of discussion prompts for parents and carers to use after sharing the book. These are there to support conversation, not to test your child's memory.

How to use the Nursery Reading Journeys

Share the book together first and enjoy the story! When you have finished, use the questions to have a short conversation about the book.

You do not need to ask every question exactly as it is written. Read the prompts aloud, give your child plenty of time to respond and follow their interests. You might look back through the pictures together to help them remember.

Your child might answer by talking, pointing, making a sound, acting something out or showing you something in the pictures. All of these are valuable ways of responding to a story.

There are no right or wrong answers and no pass mark. If your child gives an unexpected answer, talk about it! Ask them to show you what they noticed or tell you a little more.

Talking about our KCA Values

Each Nursery Reading Journey also includes a simple opportunity to connect the book with one of our KCA values.

At this age, we do not expect children to explain abstract ideas about values. Instead, the prompts help children recognise them through things characters actually do — perhaps helping a friend, keeping going when something is difficult or being brave when they feel frightened.

You can help by connecting these ideas with your child's own experiences: “That was kind. Can you remember when you helped your friend?” Making these connections helps children begin to understand what our values look like in everyday life.

Completing a Nursery book

Once you have shared the book and enjoyed talking about it together, simply tick:

☐ We have shared and discussed this book.

That's it! There is no score and nothing to pass. The book will then count as completed on your child's journey towards the 60 Books Challenge.

RECEPTION: TALKING AND THINKING ABOUT STORIES

In Reception, the KCA Reading Journey continues to be about enjoying books together, while beginning to encourage children to remember, talk about and respond to what they have heard.

Children are developing rapidly as readers at this age, but there can be a big difference between the books they can read independently and the stories they can understand and enjoy when shared with an adult. Please continue to read the Reading Journey books to your child where needed. The challenge is about understanding and enjoying great books, not proving that they can decode every word themselves.

How to use the Reception Reading Journeys

Share the book together first. Enjoy the story, explore the illustrations and talk naturally about anything that interests your child.

Afterwards, use the Reading Journey activity to have a short conversation about the book. The prompts might ask your child to: remember a character or event, find something in an illustration, put simple events in order, talk about how a character feels, explain why something happened, share what they liked about the story.

Read the questions aloud to your child. They should not need to read the questions independently.

Encourage your child to think before answering. If they are unsure, return to the book together and look for clues in the words or pictures. Finding the answer together is part of the reading experience.

There is no writing test

Children should be encouraged to answer orally. They might talk, point to an illustration, act something out or show you the part of the book that helped them answer.

We do not want a child's writing ability to limit what they can tell us about a story. At this stage, talk is an important part of developing comprehension.

Thinking about our KCA Values

Each Reception Reading Journey includes an opportunity to connect something that happens in the story with one of our KCA values.

The important part is the conversation. Help your child notice what the character did and why that reminds us of the value.

Completing a Reception book

Reception remains a supported Reading Journey, not a formal test. There is no expectation that children complete the activity independently, and the emphasis remains on talking, remembering and enjoying the book.

Once you have shared the story and completed the activity together, the book can be recorded as another step towards completing the 60 Books Challenge before the end of Year 6.

YEARS 1–6: COMPLETING THE READING CHALLENGES

From Year 1 onwards, the KCA Reading Journey gradually moves from adult-supported book talk towards increasingly independent reading and comprehension.

Each book is accompanied by a short online Reading Challenge. The questions are carefully matched to the age of the children and become progressively more demanding as they move through the Academy.

How the challenges work

For each book, children complete eight questions about what they have read.

Children need to answer at least 6 out of 8 questions correctly to complete the challenge for that book.

The questions are not designed to catch children out. They are there to encourage children to remember, understand and think about their reading. Depending on their year group, children might be asked to retrieve information, explain a character's actions, make an inference, consider a theme or think about choices made by the author.

What if my child doesn't get 6 out of 8?

Please don't worry. Not reaching 6 out of 8 simply means that your child should return to the book, revisit some of the story and then have another go. There is no limit on the number of attempts.

In fact, going back to a book to check something is a valuable reading habit. Rather than simply telling your child the correct answer, encourage them to find it:

- “Shall we go back and look?”
- “Where could we find that in the book?”
- “What happened just before that?”
- “Is there anything in the picture that might help us?”

The aim is understanding, not getting everything right first time.

How much help should I give?

This will naturally change as your child gets older. In Years 1 and 2, children may need an adult to read some or all of the questions and answer choices aloud. This is absolutely fine. We want to find out whether children understand the book, not whether they can independently decode every word in the challenge.

From Years 3–6, children should become increasingly independent. You can still discuss the book together, but encourage your child to make their own choices and return to the text when they are unsure.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD AT HOME?

You do not need to be a reading expert to support your child with the KCA Reading Journey. One of the most valuable things you can do is simply make time for books and show an interest in what your child is reading.

The level of support your child needs will change as they grow. A Nursery child may want you to read the whole book aloud, while a Year 6 pupil may read independently and then want to debate a character's decision with you. Both are valuable forms of reading support.

Enjoy the book first

The Reading Journey activity should always come after enjoying the book.

Try not to stop after every page to test your child's understanding. Talk naturally when something interests you, laugh together, wonder what might happen and enjoy the illustrations.

The book comes first. The challenge comes afterwards.

Give your child time to think

Children do not always need an immediate prompt or answer. Give them a few moments to think.

If they are unsure, try:

- “Have another look.”
- “What do you notice?”
- “What makes you think that?”
- “Can you find something in the book that might help?”

These prompts encourage children to do the thinking rather than waiting for an adult to provide the answer.

Use the pictures

Illustrations are an important part of reading, particularly for younger children.

Talk about what you can see, notice facial expressions, look for details and consider what the pictures tell you that the words might not. Even older children can benefit from discussing illustrations, diagrams, maps and other visual features when they appear in a book.

Talk about new words

Books introduce children to an enormous range of vocabulary. If you come across an unfamiliar word, talk about it. Explain what it means, use it in another sentence or connect it with a word your child already knows.

There is no need to turn every unfamiliar word into a lesson. Sometimes a quick explanation is all that is needed before continuing with the story.

Don't give the answer too quickly

If your child gets a Reading Challenge question wrong, resist the temptation to simply tell them the correct answer. Instead, go back to the book together.

Finding information, checking an idea and changing your mind are all things good readers do.

Let children have their own opinions

You and your child do not have to agree about a book. They might dislike a character you love, find a part funny that you don't or have a completely different interpretation of an ending. Ask them why. Some of the richest reading conversations begin with disagreement.

And finally... keep it enjoyable

The 60 Books Challenge is not a race.

There may be books your child adores and wants to read repeatedly. There may be others that challenge them or take longer. That's okay. Celebrate each completed book, but also celebrate the conversations, discoveries, new words, favourite characters and moments of excitement along the way.

