



Getting curious, finding out: reading non-fiction at Level 1

This guide is full of ideas for helping children read and enjoy non-fiction at Level 1. The topics are full of child-appeal, with fascinating detailed photos and illustrations, so the books may also be appropriate for younger and older children.

Before children read

Wherever possible, let children pick whichever book they like from a selection at Level 1. When children are engaged with topics that really interest them, the whole process of reading becomes more enjoyable, and they will naturally extend their confidence and reading experience whilst having fun.

Start by looking at the cover together, and link it to children's interests and existing knowledge. For instance, if a child picks *Ponies and Horses* to read, say, 'What sort of pony or horse would you most like to ride?' Ask the child what they already know about horses, and what they are hoping to find out from the book. If there are particular things the child wants to know, look out for information on these as the child reads.

During reading

Support children to use their reading skills as they read. If they choose to read out loud, listen and support them as they read. Remind them to use the phonics they know to work out any unfamiliar words, and if they struggle, read the word for them.

If the child chooses to read silently, encourage them to pause during the reading and talk about the pictures and information in the book. You could ask them to choose a favourite section and read it out loud, so you can check their reading.

Be guided by the child's interests, encouraging them to talk about any aspect of the book that appeals to them. Encourage them to ask questions as they read, and look for the answers in the book if possible. Support them by asking open questions such as 'I wonder why ...?' and 'What do you think ...?'

After reading

Flip through the book and talk about it together. Which part did the child find most interesting, and why? Were they surprised by anything they read? Do they have any unanswered questions about the topic now that they've read the book? (If so, help them to find the answers either in other books or online.)

Encourage children to reread the book as often as they want - returning to a well-loved book is a great way of deepening reading skills and increasing children's pleasure in reading.

Children can also answer the quiz questions at the end of each book, or explore the online resources for more fun book-linked activities.

Developing super non-fiction reading skills

At Level 1, children will continue to develop their non-fiction reading skills. Here are some ideas for helping them.

- **Answering 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', 'why' and 'how' questions about a book** Turn to a favourite part of the book and ask the child a question beginning with 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', 'why' or 'how', for instance, on page 14 of *Ponies and Horses*, ask, 'Why do you think the chestnut horses need to wear bridles?' (E.g. so their rider can control them.) Invite the child to choose another section and ask you a question about it.
- **Making connections within a text and between texts** Ask children to choose two sections of the book and say what's similar or different about them. For example, in *Ponies and Horses*, many of the sections have labelled pictures to show what different items of equipment are called.
- **Identifying and finding out about new words** Encourage children to look out for words they don't know in the book. Can they work out what the words mean? Help them to look up the words in a dictionary if necessary.
- **Understanding the main purposes of a book** After reading, share ideas with the child about why the author might have chosen to write the book, for example, to give information, to explain about different aspects of the subject or to entertain the reader.