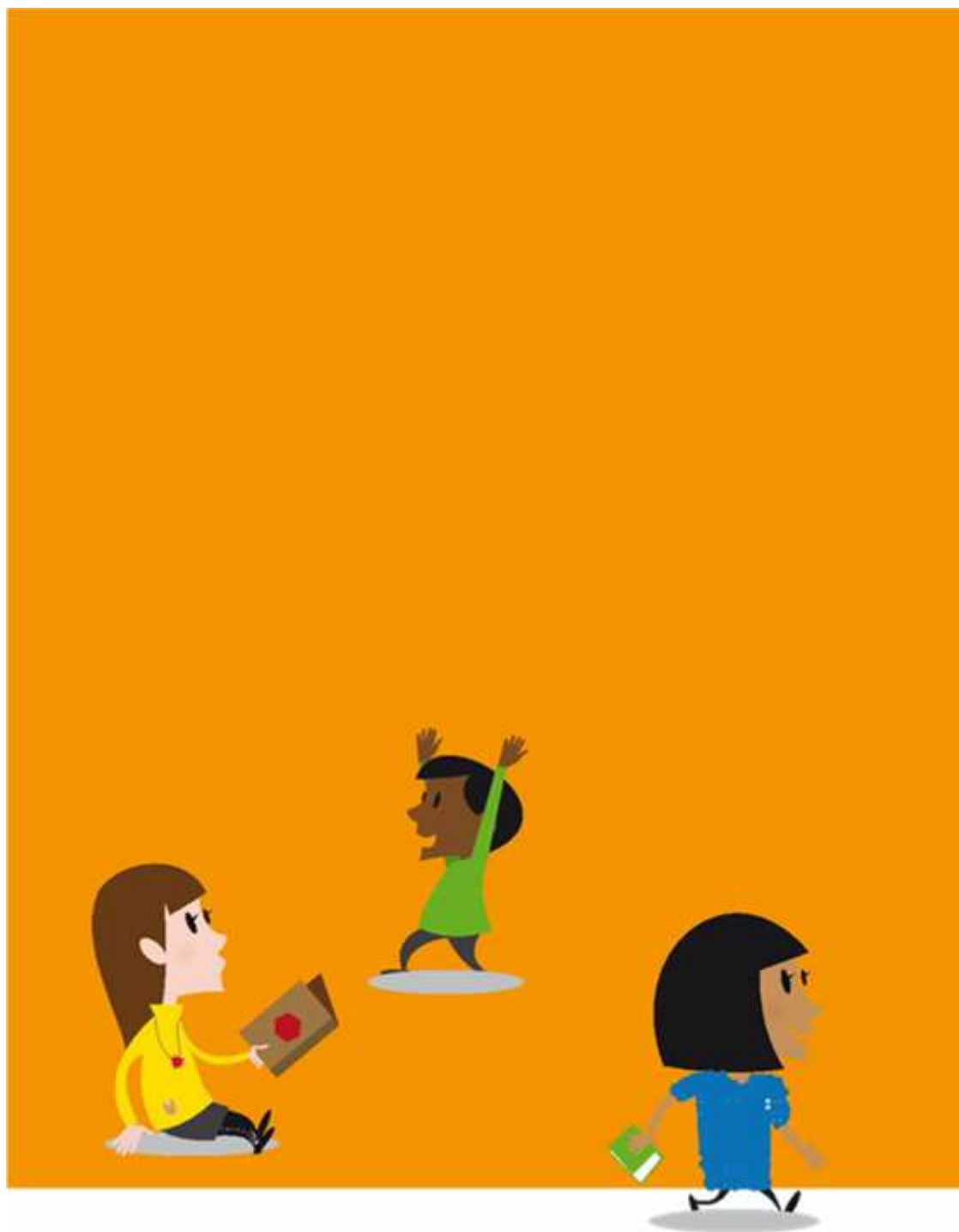


Helping my child at home in English.

A guide for parents



Why this guide?

This guide helps parents and carers understand how children progress in English at each stage of their child's primary curriculum. Also included are ideas for what you can do with your child to support their development in English at home and help them make progress.

You will find this guide helpful when discussing your child's progress with their teachers.

Please read this guide alongside the Parents Guide to the New Curriculum booklet available in this pack.

What you can do to help your child make progress

Speaking and listening

Ensure that:

- they have plenty of opportunities for talk
- you listen to them with attention, and respond
- they hear and listen to sustained talk by others.

Encourage them to speak at length, by:

- helping them take a long turn in a conversation
- prompting them to help them keep going
- asking them to tell you about some event in detail or explain to you how something works.

Help them understand how speakers help listeners, by:

- using repetition and different voices for different characters when telling a story
- encouraging them to think about how to organise what they want to say
- changing their pace.

Encourage them to notice and talk about:

- interesting/unusual words
- some of the different ways people speak.

Reading

Ensure they have:

- access to books, magazines and newspapers from home, school and library
- somewhere quiet to read
- time to read regularly
- opportunity to see you as a reader – reading, choosing books, going to the library, talking about what you read.
- Read to them and take turns with them in reading a section each of the text, supporting and prompting their reading in positive ways.

Talk with them about the books they read:

- their favourite part or character and your favourite part
- discuss the use of techniques used by the author.... Similes, exaggeration, repetition, sentence length
- discuss the use of, and effect of punctuation.
- how the illustrations support the story
- their favourite author
- what makes a book different from (or similar to) others they have read.

Talk about the meaning of what they have read. Ask them, for example, to explain:

- how they know that X is the villain (antagonist) or Y the heroine (protagonist)
- Recall what has happened
- why they like or dislike a particular character
- what will happen next – and why they think so
- a character's actions or motives.

Writing

Ensure they have:

- opportunities to write at home
- pencils, pens, crayons, but also card or folded paper to make booklets

- opportunities to see you as a writer, for example, writing emails or lists.

Read and talk about their writing:

- ask them to read their writing aloud to you
- respond to the writing and praise what you like
- ask them to explain why they wrote particular sections as they did.

Help them with planning their writing:

- ask them to talk through their ideas with you before they write
- prompt them to include more detail, sequence things more clearly, vary the pace.

Help them to think about the person who will read their writing:

- do they want the reader to like the main character?
- should they include some clues about the ending?
- does the writing build up to a climax?

In Reception and Year 1 help your child by:

Speaking and listening

- ✓ listen attentively to what they say and respond
- ✓ help sustain their talk by prompting, asking questions and repeating
- ✓ encourage imaginative play by taking a role yourself
- ✓ point out and talk about how different people speak.

Reading

- ✓ read books regularly together
- ✓ talk about the parts you both most enjoyed
- ✓ ask them to point to words they recognise
- ✓ talk with them about how words and illustrations work together in what they read
- ✓ point out words in the world, for example, road signs, shop names, building names.

Writing

- ✓ encourage them to have fun with writing, for example, drawing cartoons and writing captions or speech bubbles
- ✓ write with them, prompting them with suggestions when they get stuck
- ✓ take an interest in what they write, for example, ask them to read their writing aloud to you and respond to it
- ✓ help them reflect on their writing, for example, what they were pleased with, how they might develop or improve it.

In Year 1 and 2 help your child by:

Speaking and listening

- ✓ talk with them about their ideas, for example, when painting or modelling
- ✓ ask them to retell simple stories in their own words
- ✓ encourage their play in different roles
- ✓ listen together to stories on CDs, radio or television.

Reading

- ✓ read books together, reading a section in turn, and talk about:
 - what happened
 - how the pictures support the story
 - which parts they liked best
- ✓ encourage them to choose books independently
- ✓ encourage them to decode unfamiliar words independently, but prompt them if they lose the gist of what they're reading.

Writing.

- ✓ encourage writing in play and what they do, for example, lists for shopping, record the results for their favourite sports team
- ✓ engage with their writing through:
 - saying what you liked in it
 - asking where their ideas have come from
 - asking them to show you where a sentence begins and ends
- ✓ help them to organise and sequence their writing by asking them to talk about their ideas or to draw a sequence of simple pictures to show how the main events in a story might be organised.

In Year 3 and 4 help your child by:

Speaking and listening

- ✓ encourage them to develop their ideas by taking longer turns, adding detail and thinking about how ideas connect
- ✓ play listening and guessing games where they have to listen and ask questions, for example, 'I spy', '20 questions'
- ✓ encourage them to take different roles when playing in groups.

Reading

- ✓ engage with what they read by asking them to:
 - predict what will happen next in a story
 - describe their response when they know what does happen
 - explain why a character behaves as they do
 - point to particular parts of a text that they like
 - talk about what a text suggests or implies
 - talk with them about their likes and dislikes in what they read
- ✓ encourage them to read a range of texts, for example, fiction and information books, comics and poems.

Writing

- ✓ encourage them to write more, for example, a shopping list, a plan for a party or family celebration, a story that they can email to grandparents
- ✓ talk with them about how they might improve or rephrase sections, for example, by including more descriptive detail or using connectives (such as 'and', 'but') to combine sentences.

In Year 5 & 6 help your child by;

Speaking and listening

- ✓ encourage them to talk clearly and at length about their ideas
- ✓ listen to and talk about things that are not immediately familiar, such as items on the news
- ✓ play memory games, taking turns to answer questions about a story or film they've listened to
- ✓ encourage them to take on specific roles in their social life, for example, in a sports team, after school club.

Reading

- ✓ help them to think about the writer behind the text, for example:
 - why they chose the language they did?
 - why they organised the text in that way?
 - what effect they hoped to have on the reader?
- ✓ when looking for information in print or on-screen, encourage them to scan ahead and think about how helpful the text is, whether it is a biased or reliable source
- ✓ when they talk about their reading encourage them to refer to evidence in the text that will support their views
- ✓ get them to share their opinions in different ways, for example, blogging, social networking site contributions.

Writing

- ✓ ask them to tell you what are the best features of their writing
- ✓ discuss possible improvements, for example, how to include more detail, vary the pace of a story, or rephrase a sentence
- ✓ help them to use their reading to support them as writers, for example, ask them to look at how a writer they like uses varied sentences or organises paragraphs.

In Year 6 help your child by

Speaking and listening

- ✓ find opportunities for them to talk at length about increasingly complicated ideas and situations, for example, explain an experiment they have done in science or a topical subject such as cyber bullying
- ✓ help them take more account of the listener's reaction when speaking, for example, when telling a story to a younger sibling making it exciting
- ✓ encourage them to listen and express their opinions about local and national issues in the news.
- ✓ encourage them to take part in activities that involve presenting to an audience, such as a school assembly, parents' evening, at a place of worship or community centre
- ✓ discuss topical subjects of concern with them, for example, health issues such as diet, drugs and alcohol
- ✓ encourage them to take part in social activities to broaden their experience of using talk, for example, drama groups, making and performing music with others, taking part in voluntary or community work.

Reading

- ✓ give them regular opportunities to make their own choices in what they read at home, for example, visits to the library, magazines that cover out of school interests
- ✓ encourage them to develop their response to a text in more detail, for example, ask them to tell you how their feelings towards a character changed at different points in a story – at all times justifying their answers! At school we say “use the ‘b’ word....” “Because, I know this because.”
- ✓ talk with them about the writer's choice of language, for example, ask them to choose a section they think is good and explain why they think it works well.
- ✓ keep an active interest in what they read by encouraging a wider reading diet, for example, reading more non-fiction, trying different authors or poetry
- ✓ talk to them about why they might either trust or distrust the sources of information they read.
- ✓ be an audience for their writing, feeding back on the impact their writing has had on you

Writing

- ✓ encourage their personal writing, for example, a journal or diary, social networking, a blog

- ✓ talk through their ideas with them before they start to write, for example, prompt them to think about how they intend to tackle a subject
- ✓ help them to reflect on their writing, particularly the effect they hoped to have on the reader, for example, is the reader sufficiently prepared for the ending?
- ✓ encourage them to read through their work, shaping their sentences
- ✓ for clarity and impact and checking their accuracy.
- ✓ take an interest in what they write in other subject areas at school
- ✓ share newspaper, magazine articles or web texts that are written in interesting or engaging ways and explore how they might use these ideas in their own writing.

