

Let's Focus on...

# Improving Reading



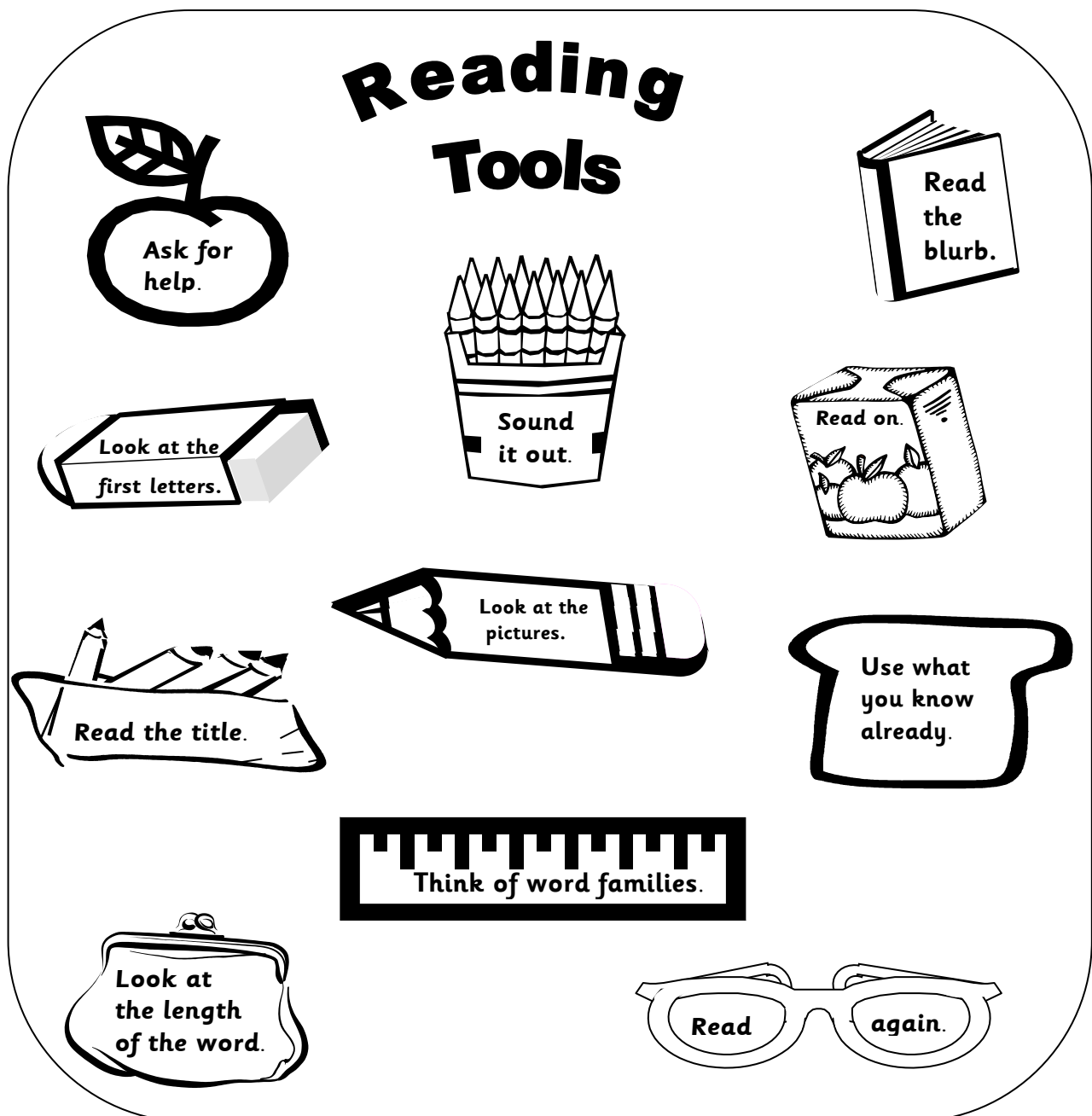
Reading skills are a vital as they impact on so much in life. Reading “*gives pupils access to the rest of the curriculum, underpins exam success and is an important pathway for social mobility. Reading and writing are important for employability in almost all sectors of the modern job market.*” (Professor Sue Ellis, Strathclyde University)

Our approaches to teaching reading include the use of **‘Reading Tools’** and **‘The Thinking Reader’**.

## **The Reading Tools**

Strategies to support children’s early reading development are used from the beginning of P1. They are introduced as a set of ‘reading tools’ in a schoolbag (see below) and are intended to build children’s confidence in decoding texts. Each ‘reading tool’ is taught and children are encouraged to identify and use the most suitable to help them read unfamiliar words. These tools are in use to help children until the end of P3. You can use these strategies to help your child as you read with them at home.

Reading strategies continue to be consolidated in P4-7 where they are represented as tools in a toolbox. All children are encouraged to refer to these tools to support their continuing development as independent readers.



# The Thinking Reader

'The Thinking Reader' strategies explained below are used to support developing comprehension skills. Children are taught how to be 'thinking readers' to help them gain a better understanding of texts.



These strategies can easily be used at home to help your child to talk about the book and improve their reading comprehension.

## **Before Reading - What is this book about?**

### **'Take a walk' through the book:**

- Look at the front and back cover. Talk about the title, pictures and blurb.
- Look through the pictures in the book. Talk about what is happening.

### **What I know already:**

- Talk to your child about the subject of the book. Can they tell you anything they already know about this?

### **What I wonder:**

- Does your child have any questions they hope the book will answer?
- Discuss how they may find this information in the book?

## **During Reading - Do I understand what I am reading?**

### **Reading tools:**

- Use the 'Reading Tools' to help with tricky words.
- Encourage your child to ask, 'Does this make sense?' as they read.

### **Predicting:**

- At suitable points in the book ask, 'What do you think will happen next?' (fiction).

### **Explaining:**

- Ask, 'Can you tell me what has happened so far in the book?' (fiction)
- Help your child to find information in non-fiction texts by asking, 'Where may we find information about...?' (non-fiction)

## **After Reading - Can I explain what I read?**

### **Summarising:**

- Ask your child to retell the story, focusing on the key points/information. (fiction)
- Ask your child to locate a particular piece of information from the text. (non-fiction)

## Engagement In Reading

In order to help children improve their reading skills they need to enjoy reading and engage with texts regularly. Research tells us that “engaged readers read frequently, voluntarily and with understanding. They get additional practice and improve their vocabulary, general knowledge and verbal reasoning. The academic, social and emotional benefits give a learning advantage across the whole curriculum and a real skill for life” (Professor Sue Ellis, Strathclyde University).

### What can you do to help your child develop a love of reading?

**Read stories together every day**  
so reading becomes part of your child's daily life and something you enjoy together.



**Talk to your child about their favourite stories.**  
Talk about favourite characters, authors, types of story, etc.



**Encourage your child to read lots of different texts**  
- in the house and out and about e.g. menus, roadside signs, game guides, food labels, etc.



**Help your child choose books which interest them** – use the library for a wide selection.



**Let your child use e-readers** – the use of technology can encourage reading.



**Be a reading role model. Talk to your child about the kinds of books you like to read and show interest in your child's reading** - Your feedback will support your child's interest in reading and encourage perseverance.



**Let your child choose what they want to read,** regardless of whether it's a novel, a comic book or a magazine – personal choice is an important feature of reading for pleasure.

