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Virtual Reality: Creating reading communities online

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Context

I am the Reading and Phonics Lead at Mayflower Community Academy in Plymouth. We are located in the fabulous South West of England, 2 miles from the centre of “The Ocean City Plymouth”. We have just over 420 pupils at our school, including children in our Nursery and Support Centre.

Reading is at the **heart of everything** that we do. During these times of remote, home learning, our children still need to read as much as they possibly can. They still need to experience a **love of reading**. They still need to have the **huge array of possibilities** that reading brings. They still need to feel the **excitement, the imagination and the discussion** that a good book brings.

The question is, how do we do this remotely?

OU Research Inspiration and Rationale



As this is a unique experience for many people, my inspiration for creating remote reading for pleasure community came from the Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research findings (1-5). To be able to enable, encourage and enthuse children and families at home to read, I wanted to pay attention to all the findings.

In order to effectively foster RfP, the TaRs research showed that teachers need to develop:

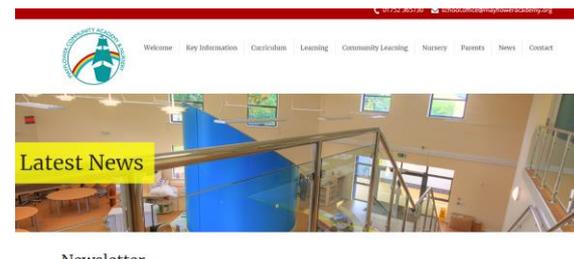
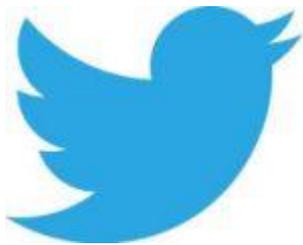
1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts
2. Knowledge of children's reading practices
3. A reading for pleasure pedagogy which includes:
 - Social reading environments
 - Reading aloud
 - Independent reading
 - Informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations
4. As Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach
5. Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive. (Cremin et al., 2014)

Aims



We are aiming to:

1. remotely connect with as many families as possible to continue daily reading and to encourage the love of reading.
2. show the children that this is an ideal opportunity to explore reading via different media.
3. create online platforms for our children and families to create reciprocal and interactive remote reading communities.



Outline

Using the online platforms of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, Mail Chimp via email and the Academy website, we share ideas everyday to support reading at home. Here are some of the ideas that we have been using so far...

MailChimp- Twitter- Facebook- Instagram- Website

Newsletters via Mail Chimp – As well as providing information for the community on how to keep safe and statutory information, the newsletter provides daily updates from teachers and allows us to share stories, reading challenges and examples of reading at home. This newsletter is shared via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram as well as parent email.

YEAR 2



@JessicaryanMCA offers an afternoon story for all of KS1. Sit back and enjoy listening to Miss Ryan and pupils sharing one of our favourites, 'The Gruffalo'. Let her know, via [Twitter](#) which story you'd like next (or share your versions of the story).

Your Challenge! This week you will be a magazine editor...



@evevollansMCA @jonlossMCA share Y4's reading and writing challenge. There is 4 days worth of resources here, so explore, share and use as you see fit throughout this week and beyond.



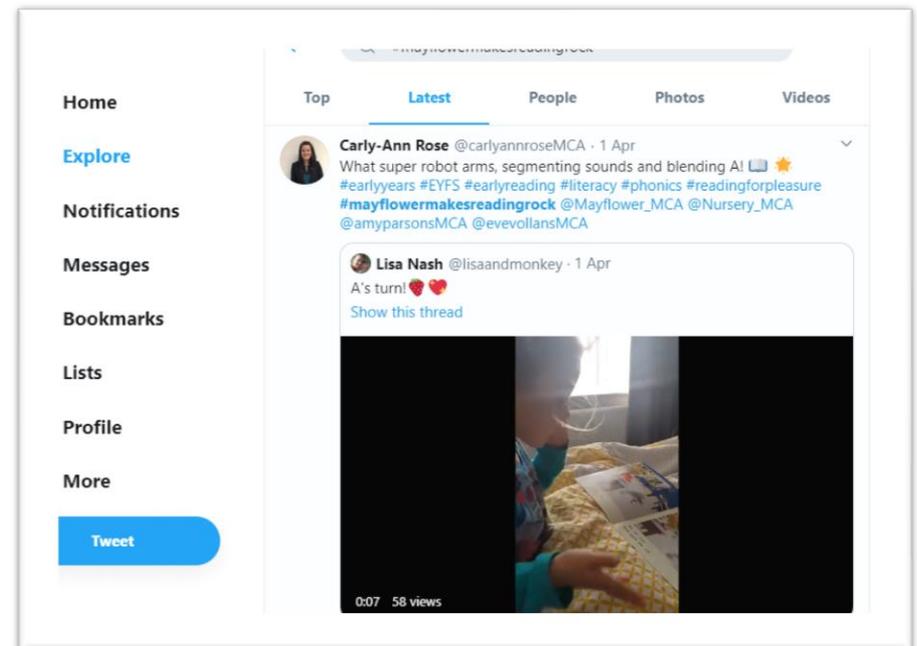
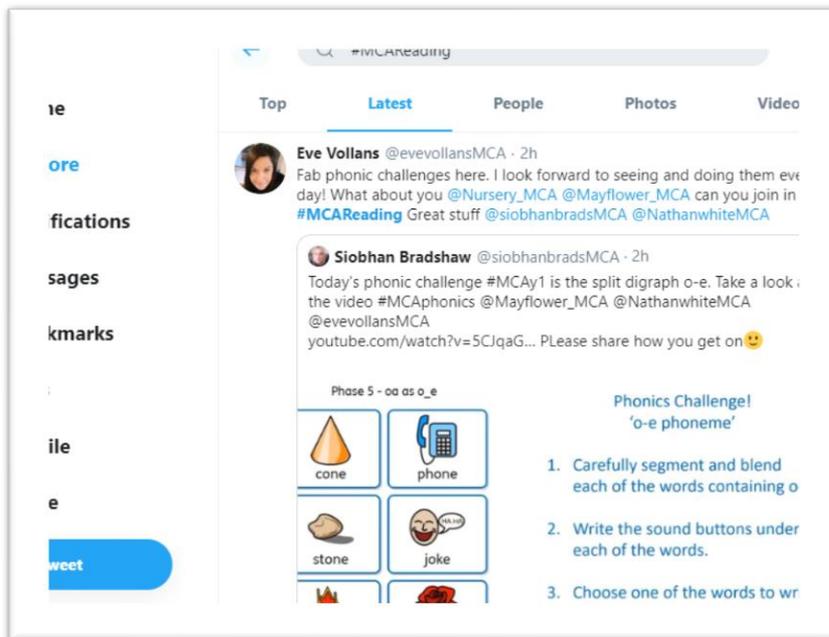
MADE IN MAYFLOWER

Made In Mayflower | Together We Can...Delay COVID-19
Thursday 2nd April

MailChimp- Twitter- Facebook- Instagram- Website

All teaching staff have school Twitter accounts, linked to the main Mayflower Academy Twitter account and Nursery account. For each subject, we created a # handle. For reading, it is **#MCAReading**. So examples of reading can be easily found instead of having to navigate through everyone's tweets!

We also established **#mayflowermakesreadingrock** where the community are also invited to share examples of reading practice.



MailChimp- Twitter- Facebook- Instagram- Website



Reading Challenges- In “normal” circumstances, the children at Mayflower receive termly Reading Challenges. **These challenges are optional and are designed to encourage families and the community to come together to enjoy reading, promoting reading for pleasure.**

Extra Reading Challenges have been created for the next few weeks of remote learning. *They were created by the children in Y4-* trying to think of how reading could be accessed at home for all, no matter how many books are available in their homes.

We are encouraging the children on a daily basis to complete as many Reading Challenges as they can and share their experiences via the online platforms with us so that we can celebrate their reading.

An example of the Extra Reading Challenges created by Y4 children to promote remote reading at home/ RfP opportunities.



SPRING TERM 2020 EXTRA CHALLENGES



Reading Journal Challenges "Can I read a book that...?"

1. Can I listen and watch an author reading his/her book? 	2. Can I make a "Reading Den" to read my favourite books in? 	3. Can I draw and write a book that links with a topic I have learned in school? 	4. Can I read a book that makes me smile and enjoy the day? 	5. Can I read a book that is about my favourite thing to do? 	
6. Can I read a book and watch the film about the same book? 	7. Can I read a book to a grown up and talk about what we liked or disliked? 	8. Can I read a book out loud, using different voices? 	9. Can I re-read my favourite book and explain why I love it so much? 	10. Can I read the song lyrics to my favourite song? 	
11. Can I write a poem about my best friend and record myself reading it?	12. Can I write a book review about a book that I have read in class?	13. Can I draw a front cover for a book or a subject that inspires me?	14. Can I create a reading collage or picture to show what I have read in 24 hours?	15. Can I read a Bug Club book every day for 1 month?	

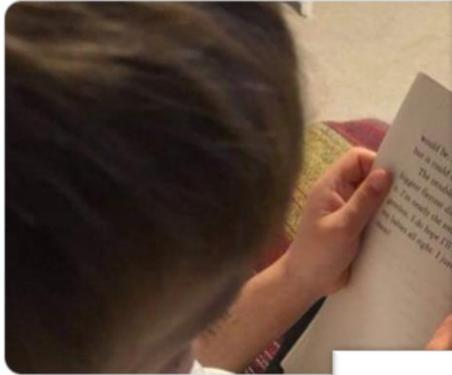


You Retweeted



Natalie Berry @natzeh · 23 Mar

First time reading a chapter book! #mayflowermakesreadingrock #homelearning @Mayflower_MCA @Nursery_MCA



1 2 3 4



John Loss @JohnLossMCA · 23 Mar

1st challenge complete @evevollansMCA . We listened to @MichaelRosenYes perform Chocolate Cake! Ridiculously funny! 🍌 #Mayflowerreadingjournalchallenges @Mayflower_MCA @Nursery_MCA @DavidSammels



This is the first time O as ever completed all 15 challenges! Very proud of his achievement this year and looking forward to putting the gold certificate on my fridge @Mayflower_MCA @evevollansMCA @OloriEm



157 views 0:02 / 0:09



Natalie Berry @natzeh · 17 Mar

Today J picked up Harry Potter and started

#mayflowermakesreadingrock @HarryPottersPg @HarryPotterLand @Mayflower_MCA @evevollansMCA @IanBerryOptom

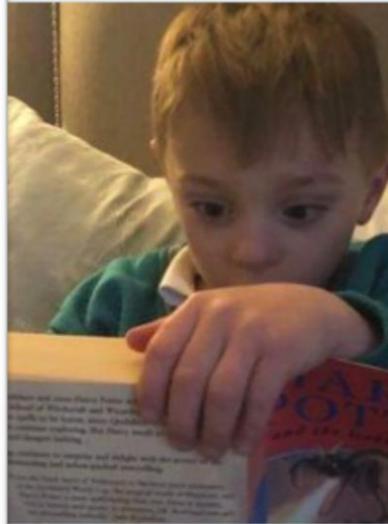


John Loss @JOHNLOSSMCA · 20 Mar

Challenge number 3 ✓ @evevollansMCA The highway Rat met the Queen. Things started off a bit rocky in the beginning but they ended the story as friends! Year 4, have you completed to he challenge? @evevollansMCA @DavidSammels @Year4_MCA @Mayflower_MCA @Nursery_MCA



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



3 children
3 books

@evevollansMCA @Mayflower_MCA we are continuing with our #readingforpleasure on a daily basis. New books curtesy of @beingbrilliant @gavinoattes @spypup .



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Examples of RfP triggered by the Reading Challenges...

- Can I make a Reading Den to read my favourite books in?



These examples show MCA teachers and families, creating Reading Dens in our homes/gardens..

One family even created a Reading Den Library!



Eve Vollans @evevollansMCA · 24 Mar
@Mayflower_MCA @Nursery_MCA Have you made your reading den yet? Here is my son reading Dog Man in his reading den!
@DavidSammels @helenjMCA @sarah_sandey @CatherineactMCA
@JohnLossMCA @OpenUni_RfP @TeresaCremin #MCAReading #garden
#readingforpleasure #readingchallenges Ch 2!



John Loss @JohnLossMCA · 24 Mar
Well, we have created our reading den @evevollansMCA Day 2 ✓ off the list for the Spring reading challenge! @Nursery_MCA @Nursery_MCA @DavidSammels



Online Reading Books

- Every child at MCA has a log in for Bug Club. Teachers have allocated every child online reading books. As children progress through the books they increase in complexity. There are thousands of books available and no limits on how many they can read. The books are phonetically decodable (they fit with our Academy phonics scheme), cover all genres and reading confidences and can be accessed on phones, tablets and laptops.

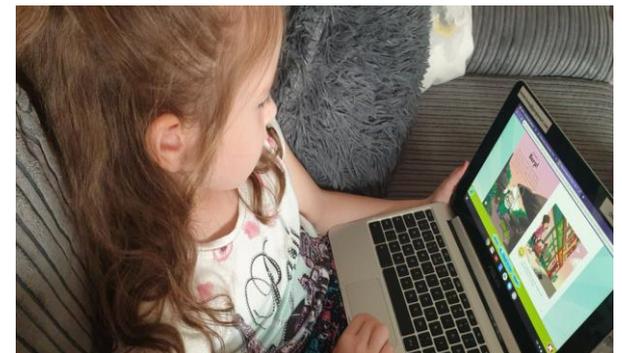


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Like comics? I have allocated every child
[@Nursery_MCA](#) [@Mayflower_MCA](#) 30 comics to read
activelearnprimary.co.uk [#BugClub](#)
ENJOY!
[@DavidSammels](#) [@helenjMCA](#) [@sarah_sandey](#)
[@pennypetersMCA](#) [@carlyannroseMCA](#)
[@LornafrankMCA](#) [@elliebaileyMCA](#) [@CatherineactMCA](#)



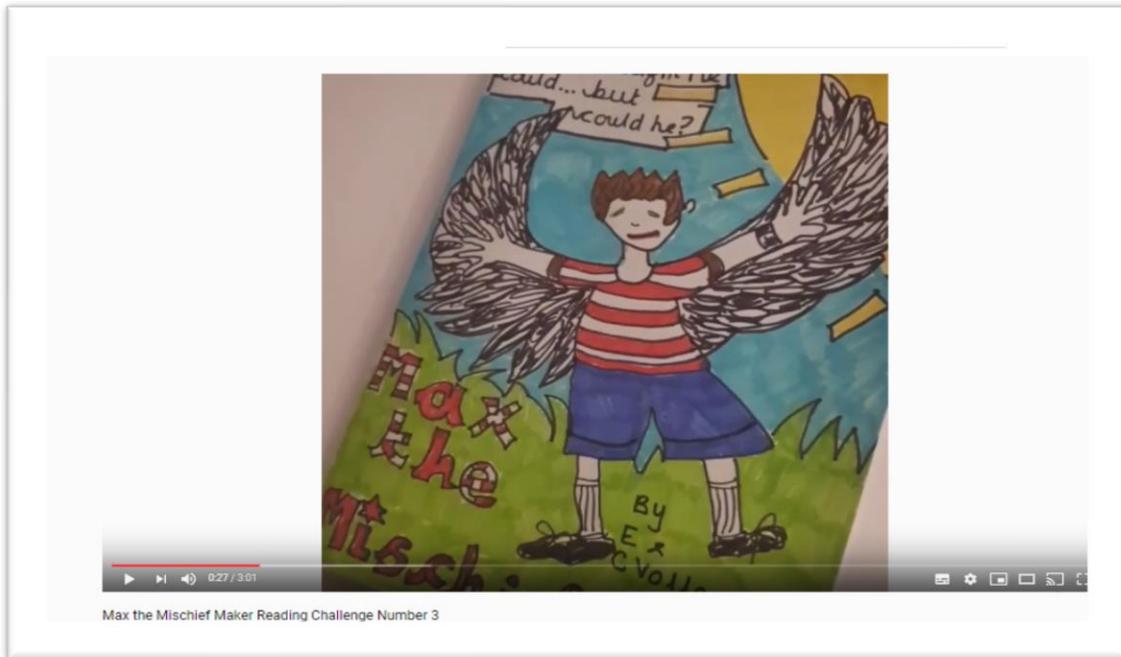
www.activelearnprimary.co.uk



Teacher/ Family Reading

We have found that when as teachers, **we model ourselves reading and reading together with our families- the amount of reciprocity increases via online platforms.** Here are some examples that we've shared from families of staff at Mayflower.

- Creating an *unlisted YouTube channel* and then sharing via online platforms has enabled us to share live experiences... In this example I worked with my son aged 10 to create a book about the Ancient Greeks in 2020 and read it via the YouTube channel.



For this YouTube clip I modelled how to make a magazine, with my son helping- using his favourite magazines as a stimulus.

Your Challenge! This week you will be a magazine editor...



For this YouTube video I talked about my hobby horse-riding and asked children to read along with me whilst I read an online book about it. I then challenged them to find an online/paper book about something they are interested in.

Reading Challenge 5 by Mrs Vollans

One of my favourite things to do is horse riding. I am going to read a book about ponies... Why not read along with me?



My Pony Book
Dawn McMillan

Contents	
My Pony	2
Looking after My Pony	6
I Like to Ride	12
Things to Do for Flash	16

Contents

- My Pony 2
- Looking after My Pony 6
- I Like to Ride 12
- Things to Do for Flash 16

Word Building
Write these sounds on strips of paper:
th i s t r b ng
Make as many words as you can using these sounds, (e.g. thing, sing bring, string).

Skill Builder
As your child reads the book, encourage them to read the labels. How many can they find?

Words like do little some
This book practises
Blending and segmenting adjacent consonants*

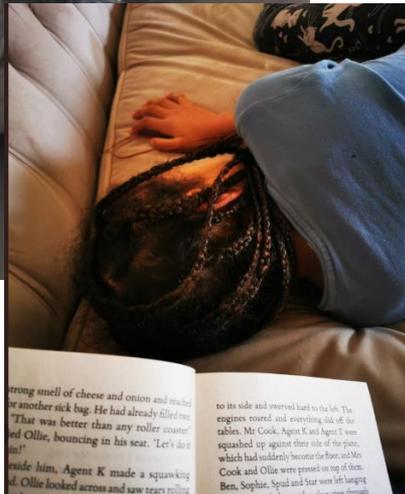
Consonants are letters which are not vowels (a, e, i, o, u).

Top Tip
Before you read the book, discuss what your child thinks a pony might need. This will encourage them to want to read the book to find out if they were right!

Your child may need help with these words:
pony horse mane clean field water

Bug Time Fun is on the back page!

Teacher/Family Reading : by sharing pictures of our family reading times we show the children and the community that we also read at home- it's part of what we do too!



Isaura
@IsauraSroberts

This afternoon R put her feet up and relaxed whilst I read to her.
[#simplepleasures](#)

3:28 pm · 31 Mar 2020 · [Twitter for Android](#)

7 Likes

Eve Vollans @evevo... · 31 Mar
Replying to @IsauraSroberts
Aww I LOVE this ❤️ How lovely

Deborah Scannell @D... · 19h
Replying to @IsauraSroberts
I love the fact that K still asks me to read to her sometimes. Good excuse for a snuggle!

Pictures that show reading is a fun family activity proved to be popular, encouraging reading at home - even involving **reading to family pets!**





Online stories by staff

We have also contacted authors and publishers to ensure that we have permission to share readings of their work.

Every day, there are at least 2 stories shared- one suitable for EYFS/KS1 and one for KS2 #teatimestory





Eve Vollans

CUSTOMISE CHANNEL

YOUTUBE STUDIO

VIDEOS

Uploads ▾ PLAY ALL

☰ SORT BY



8:33

Varjak Paw by SF Said Chapter 8

No views · 21 hours ago

🔒 Unlisted



4:43

Varjak Paw Chapter 6 by SF Said

12 views · 1 day ago

🔒 Unlisted



2:30

Your Challenge! This week you will be a magazine editor...

2 views · 2 days ago

🔒 Unlisted



4:19

Varjak Paw Chapter 6 by SF Said

5 views · 2 days ago

🔒 Unlisted



4:39

Good Morning Year 4 Monday 30th March 2020

11 views · 3 days ago

🔒 Unlisted



5:54

Varjak Paw by SF Said Chapter 5 Read by E Vollans

15 views · 5 days ago

🔒 Unlisted



6:16

Good Morning Year 4 Friday 27th March 2020

17 views · 6 days ago

🔒 Unlisted



8:21

Varjak Paw by SF Said Chapter 4 read by E Vollans

20 views · 6 days ago

🔒 Unlisted

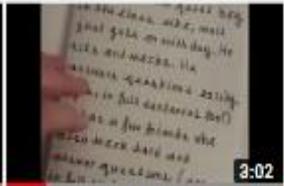


7:07

THURSDAY Y4 Reading and SPaG

10 views · 1 week ago

🔒 Unlisted



3:02

Max the Mischief Maker Reading Challenge Number 3

16 views · 1 week ago

🔒 Unlisted



6:40

Varjak Paw by SF Said Chapter 3 Read by E Vollans

12 views · 1 week ago

🔒 Unlisted



5:47

Good Morning Year 4 Tues 25th March- Reading Tasks

14 views · 1 week ago

🔒 Unlisted



6:33

Varjak Paw Ch 2 by SF Said Read by E Vollans



8:27

Varjak Paw by SF Said Chapter 1





Impact

Although we are still in the “early days” of remote learning and every day brings something new, through the use of online sharing platforms we are able to see how RfP can be encouraged and enabled in our communities.

Reading Challenges

We’ve seen an increase in children and families participating in the Reading Challenges , doing them together as opposed to alone and we’ve seen a lot more children reading outside and creating their own comfortable reading spaces.

Online Reading Books

We’re using Bug Club to track how many and which children are accessing these books, and what their book choices are. Through this media, we allocate new books that may interest them and make recommendations- either personally or to the class / school. The number of children accessing these online books dipped slightly during the “normal” Easter holiday period- but during what would be classed as “normal” days of remote-learning, the numbers increased steadily each day.

Impact



Reading Role-Models

We've been able to produce videos, photographs and PowerPoints showing staff reading together with their families - showing themselves enjoying reading. We've seen that this has created an increase in families wanting to share their reading experiences via online platforms.

Online Stories by staff

We've found that everyday, more children and families are tuning into the online stories being read by staff (with permission from the authors and publishers)- ensuring that more and more children are having access to at least one story being read to them every day.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice and ways forward



We are developing ways and means of connecting with the children and community every day- this is new to us all.

Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts We have a decent repertoires, but now need to expand these into online reading apps/books.

Knowledge of children's reading practices We have an understanding of how and what our children like to read through the sharing of the OU [Pupil Voice reading surveys](#). We've used this to allocate and recommend books, recognising the reading patterns of our children, and adapting the Reading Challenges to suit them and the community.

A RfP pedagogy Through online dialogues and directing families to reading events that are happening e.g author readings, inside book chats etc, participating in online book reviews, sharing their experiences of the Reading Challenges, we are still offering the TaRs RfP pedagogy. Though there is more to do to reach them all.

Reflections cont'd



Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach This is such a powerful tool to use, to model ourselves and families as readers! **We** can model positive thinking about reading. **We** can model the reading behaviours- reading widely and discussing what we read via online blogs/ platforms/YouTube channels. **We** can model strategies to overcome tricky words. **We** can model the meta-cognitive strands of reading. This is an exciting time!

Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive Through this work we are trying to support as many families and children through online platforms. We started with Twitter and have broadened this. Every day, more and more families are sharing their reading experiences with us – there is more interaction and reciprocity.

We call families every day via telephone to see how they are doing, how we can support them and to chat about their learning- we remind them about these fantastic reading opportunities. Anything that we think the children would like to read /listen to/ interact with around reading we post online through different medias. It is small steps. **But, we can do it!**



#Togetherwecan

