**Reading**

As I’ve told all of you plenty of times, reading **good quality fiction** is the absolute **best** way to improve every aspect of English. We might not be able to go much further than our front doors in the coming weeks but through reading we can travel the world, slip back through time or zoom into the future, become monarchs or soldiers or explorers, discover unforgettable characters and access great minds. What a gift! Since Friday I have finished one book and started two more (as well as doing lots of other things). Can you beat me?

Reading also means that you do not need to access a laptop or pc if your parents/carers are trying to work from home and you don’t have enough equipment to all work at once. If you already have some books at home, fantastic, otherwise please see below.

**Places to access books:**

1. You can of course order on the internet but do not spend any money without your parents’/carers’ permission.
2. As a result of the crisis, some online bookstores are making their books available online for free. **Gutenberg.org** provides thousands of online books that are out of copyright (meaning they are bit older). Another great source is **worldbookonline.com**. You should be able to download these onto your phone.
3. A Kindle can also be a great way to access books more cheaply.
4. Aylesbury Library appears to still be open at the moment and may also offer some online resources too.
5. Swap with friends by leaving them on the doorstep or pushing through the letterbox.
6. It is quite comforting to listen to stories on apps like *Audible* but this will not improve your English skills in the same way as reading yourself.

Please find suggested reading lists attached separately. I will be adding to these later.

**What to do as you read:**

Make a note of any new words and look up their meaning. Keep a notebook of all your new words. You could even make your own dictionary by putting them in alphabetical order.

Look out for any words or phrases that you think are particularly powerful. Why are they effective?

Has the writer used:

-powerful or unusual **verbs** and **nouns?**

-interesting **adjectives** and **adverbs?**

- **simile?**

-**metaphor?**

-**imagery** or **sound imagery?**

-**juxtaposition?**

**-oxymoron?**

**-onomatopoeia?**

If you’re not sure you remember what these are, look them up and write down the meanings. I will expect **everyone** to know these by the time we get back to school.

**First impressions**

Make a note of how the book opens. Is it clear what’s going to happen or does it keep you guessing? Some of the best books I’ve ever read have had quite slow starts but I’m glad that I kept reading. What **genre** is this story? How does this affect your expectations? (make sure you know what ‘genre’ means and all the main types – make a list)

**Characters**

How are the main characters introduced? Do you have a full physical description? What do you learn about their personalities and how they interact with other characters? Do you like the characters, or are they baddies?

**Plot development**

How does the story unfold? Is there one story or more than one? How does the writer build suspense to keep the reader engaged? Are there any twists?

**Final thoughts**

How does the writer bring the story to a close? Is it what you expected or have you been surprised by what’s happened? Did it match your expectations for the genre?

**After reading:**

Write a review of the book. Do you recommend it to other readers? Who do you think it would most appeal to? Are there any aspects you didn’t think were successful or didn’t enjoy? Pick out particular lines or phrases that you think are very powerful and explain why (PEA if possible). How closely does it conform to the genre? Share your review with friends or classmates. I am asking IT if it is possible for us to share these on a school platform. I will let you know when I get a response.

**Other reading:**

Good quality non-fiction is also a great way to boost knowledge and vocabulary but won’t help your English skills as much as fiction. I will post suggested reading lists later.

Now is a fantastic time to read a newspaper online or bought. The best English skills are found in the broadsheets: *The Guardian* and *The Observer* (free online), *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph.*