

# Supporting learners to read for pleasure

A CPD module for Skills for Life practitioners

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“No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting.”

**Mary Wortley Montagu**



## Background and welcome

Welcome to the Reading for Pleasure CPD module for Skills for Life practitioners. This is a self-study module which should take you around three to six hours to complete. It should help you to think about the benefits of reading for pleasure as a means to engage and motivate your learners, and provide some ideas and resources for you to use reading for pleasure in your practice.

By the end of this module you will have:

- explored your learners' attitudes to reading and their reading habits
- Identified some ways in which reading for pleasure can support the engagement and motivation of learners;
- Identified some ways in which reading for pleasure can support learners to develop their reading skills; and
- explored some of the resources available to practitioners to support them in using reading for pleasure with their learners.

“Master was a little crazy; he had spent too many years reading books overseas, talked to himself in his office, did not always return greetings, and had too much hair.”

**Half of a Yellow Sun**  
**Chimamanda Naozi Adichie**



## Activity 1

### What is “Reading for Pleasure”?



Before you go any further it’s a good idea to spend some time thinking about what you mean by “reading for pleasure”. Make a note here of your definition of “reading for pleasure”, and what you don’t include in that definition:

### Our definition

This is the definition of reading for pleasure that we have used in developing this material:

**“What we mean by reading for pleasure is reading where the purpose is primarily that of enjoyment.”** This definition does not specify the type or level of text that is being read. It is possible, for example, to read a cook book as an instructional text – with the aim of cooking a particular recipe. It is equally possible to read a cook book for pleasure – in order to look at and think about food and cooking, without the intention of making any of the recipes.

 **Activity 2****What do your learners read for pleasure?**

It is important to be aware of the kinds of “reading for pleasure” that your learners engage in, or would like to engage in. This activity helps you to find out that information.

Spend some time talking to a group of learners. Ask them to think about what kinds of reading they do, or would like to do. It is possible that many of your learners will already read for pleasure. Find out what they enjoy; it may be useful to compile a group list which could include:



You could also use the checklist below, perhaps adapting it to suit your learners:

### Attitudes to Reading Checklist (agree/disagree)

- I love reading
- I read a lot
- I have favourite authors
- I like reading fiction
- I like reading non-fiction
- I only read on holiday
- I read occasionally
- I have read some Quick Reads
- I would like to read for pleasure but I don't know what to pick
- I read things I have to but not for pleasure
- I don't have time to read
- I find a lot of texts difficult to read
- I find jargon and/or long words off-putting
- I fall asleep if I read
- I don't like reading fiction
- I hate reading
- Other ..... (write in)

If your learners are unsure about what they'd enjoy reading, ask them to think about the TV programmes, hobbies or websites they enjoy, as this may give an indication of topics or genres.

You may be able to extend your discussions with some groups or learners to consider what it is that's pleasurable about a particular kind of reading. For example, the illustrations and photographs are an important part of the enjoyment of magazines, for many people.



Record your observations here:



Reflect on the discussions you had. Were there any surprises? Anything that makes you reconsider the kinds of reading material that you use with learners? Record your reflections here:

“Fifteen seconds later he was out of the house and lying in front of a big yellow bulldozer that was advancing up his garden path.”

**The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, Douglas Adams**

## Why is reading for pleasure important?

NRDC carried out research into the use of oral reading with adults. Download the report here: [http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications\\_details.asp?ID=109](http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=109)

Research suggests that oral reading is an effective way to develop adults' skills but many practitioners have reservations about using this technique. Read the report from NRDC and use these questions to help you reflect on what you read:



### Activity 3

What are your initial reactions to using oral reading with your learners?

How can you use oral reading with your learners?

“The skies were dark with ice-filled clouds the day Elsie Cameron first spoke to Norman Thorne. Perhaps Elsie should have taken the gloom as an omen of what was to come. But could any girl predict that a man she met in church would hack her to pieces four years later in a place called Blackness Road?”

**Chickenfeed, Minette Walters**  
**Winner of the Quick Reads Readers’**  
**Favourite Award 2006**

NRDC also carried out some research into the teaching of reading in Skills for Life programmes. Download the research summary here: [http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications\\_details.asp?ID=82](http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=82)



## Activity 4

Read the summary and answer the following questions:

1. Look at the information on teaching strategies on page 9 of the summary. Think about your own practice and assess whether and how frequently you use the strategies identified, including those that were not used frequently in this study.
2. Think about your own experience of teacher education and CPD. How were you taught to teach reading? Were you given advice about using particular strategies or approaches? Having read this summary report, is there any technique that you would like further information or training about using?
3. Pick out two new approaches and discuss using them with your learners. Practise each approach and reflect on how it went using the table below:

Approach	What went well	How did the learners respond?	What would I do differently next time?

“Teaching reading IS rocket science.”

**Louisa Moats**

Quick Reads are short, exciting books by bestselling writers and celebrities for adults who are new to reading, have lost the reading habit, or who prefer a quick read.

NIACE has carried out a twin-track evaluation process via questionnaires and focus group interviews to gather views on Quick Reads. The sample of 1,500 literacy tutors and 30,456 learners represented 8.7% of all Skills for Life classes, for those aged 19 and over. The results were startling. Tutors reported leaps in confidence, progression to higher levels of literacy and improved communication skills.

The evaluation revealed that Quick Reads were instrumental in fostering a positive attitude towards reading and getting learners to read more. Learners also reported an increase in personal confidence and more positive social interaction at work and home.

## Activity 5

The following quotations are from learners and practitioners using Quick Reads and highlight a number of the potential benefits of reading for pleasure. Read the quotes and identify the benefits. The first one is done for you.

“I don’t really like to talk in front of people or to read in front of them, which I did last week, and that was the first time, reading in front of seven other people. So it’s nice to go home and say I was confident enough to do that in front of people because I would never have done that a couple of years ago.”

**Kim, Widnes Focus Group**

- Improved confidence and self-esteem
- Enjoyment of reading
- Sharing a story with others
- Motivation

“I think to me personally, when the book was first given to me, I thought I’m not a reader. I have trouble reading. I’ve never kind of sat down and read a book, so when we were in class and started reading it, it was really good, I really enjoyed it.”

**Christine, Widnes Focus Group**

“I never used to enjoy reading but I’d still read to my kids even though I didn’t enjoy it. Since I’ve read a Quick Read and understood it, I enjoy reading with my kids and alone. It’s really changed my life.”

**Mina, Tooting Focus group**

“I’ve read one other book that my daughter gave me and said ‘read that mum’ when we were on holiday. And I managed to get through it, not reading everything, not reading all the big words but I managed to get through the story. And then when these came along, I found these were much easier, really good, and I’ve read most of them now. I read the first one, which took me a long time, I must admit ... but then slowly I got more into them and more into them. And now, I keep saying to David [tutor], ‘Have we got any new ones? I’ve read them, have we got any new ones?’ So yeah, I think they’re blimmin’ brilliant!”

**Sylvia, aged 65+ from the Roehampton focus group**

“We read the Richard Branson book and I went on a Virgin train for the first time! I feel more confident in talking and being able to start other courses. I’ve started a T shirt design course in February. I started a maths course on Monday. I’m just doing a mock exam for E3 in literacy. My writing is getting better. I can proofread and am learning how to use commas and other punctuation.”

**Learner from the Baytree Centre**

Taking a set of new books into class and talking them up can generate a lot of excitement. My group have been exposed regularly to the previous Quick Reads titles and are more than ready for the new titles.

- Motivating learners to continue to read
- Building on positive experiences
- Creating a fun environment for learning
- Generating enthusiasm for new books and new topics
- Sharing opinions

East End Tales will be a good book for class use, because you can take a single chapter and read it together. There is so much potential for discussion and everyone can get something out of it.

I took a group to the library at the end of the summer term. By this time they had read most of the titles which I possessed. Also I wanted to encourage them to continue reading over the summer break. I have found in the past that a library visit can fall flat if unstructured. I gave the group the task of researching more about their favourite authors online (I pre-booked library computers and the librarian set them all up ready for us), then they had to find more of those authors' titles on the shelves and report back to the group which ones they thought they would like (using the sampling techniques we had practised earlier in the term). The students found other Quick Reads and easy read material which supplemented my own meagre stock and they had the opportunity to loan them for the summer holiday. Some of them also tried a web quest on [www.literacytrust.org.uk/vitallink/index.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/vitallink/index.html)

### Further ideas:

A Skills for Life tutor has developed a scheme of work to introduce reading for pleasure and Quick Reads to her learners:

[www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/admin/article/LP\\_Reading%20for%20Pleasure.pdf](http://www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/admin/article/LP_Reading%20for%20Pleasure.pdf)

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Reading for pleasure in the classroom provides a host of opportunities to increase a range of literacy skills. The challenge for the literacy practitioner is to introduce the idea of reading outside the learning situation without suggesting homework, to encourage learners to include reading in their leisure activities without appearing to be setting tasks. The starting point should be learners' own interests in order to engage them in reading as an enjoyable activity that can fit into their everyday lives.

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The importance of reading for pleasure in literacy is acknowledged in the revised Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (due to be published in April 2009). The revised curriculum specifically mentions reading for pleasure as an activity that may be used to develop the following elements:

**Rt/E2.1** Example Read a short story to a child.

**Rt/E3.1** trace and understand the main events of chronological, continuous, descriptive and explanatory texts of more than paragraph. Example includes: read and understand the main events in a continuous text encountered in their own life, e.g. (amongst others) short story or poem.

**Rt/E3.6** skim read title, heading and illustrations to decide if material is of interest. Example includes choose a book from a display in a library or a bookshop.

**Rt/E3.8** obtain specific information through detailed reading. Example Check for specific information from a narrative to be discussed with a reading group, e.g. Quick Reads

**Rt/L .2** last bullet point: understand that readers can choose different sorts of texts to read for pleasure depending on their tastes and interests, e.g. imaginative texts; stories; novels; poems; factual texts: biographies; travel writing; information texts. Examples: be able to describe features of a particular text they have enjoyed reading.

**Rt/L2.1** trace and understand the main events of continuous descriptive, explanatory and persuasive texts. Example: read and understand an extract from a narrative, e.g. a description setting the scene for a story line (Quick Reads: Chickenfeed) and understand the visual picture drawn in words.

**Rt/L2.2** identify purpose of a text and infer meaning which is not explicit. 3rd bullets understand that format, structure vocabulary and style provide clues to the purpose of a text. Examples: Make links between structure, language and rhythm of poems ... Read and interpret the spoken lines and stage directions in a drama script.

**Rt/L2.3** identify the main points and specific detail Examples (one of many) note the main points from an article of interest.

**Rt/L2.6** use organisational features and systems to locate texts and information. Examples (amongst others): choose texts to read for pleasure from a library/bookshop/on-line bookshop/book club.



## Activity 6



Think of an activity for your learners using song lyrics.

Describe the activity:

What are the curriculum link(s):

How will you introduce it to your learners?

How can this activity be adapted for different learners?

What follow-up work could you do to develop writing, speaking and listening skills?

What could you suggest that learners do at home?

'cause I don't know if  
you've been loving  
somebody.  
I only know it isn't mine.

**Elvis Costello**



## Inspiration

Read about the work carried out at Tamworth & Lichfield College by Gill Moore, a literacy tutor using Quick Reads:

[www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/admin/article/LP\\_How%20I%20Used%20QR.pdf](http://www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/admin/article/LP_How%20I%20Used%20QR.pdf)



## Further sources of help

**BBC Learning English** [www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/)

This BBC site has material which is useful for learners for whom English is a second language. Includes news English, an online interactive soap opera, music and quizzes.

[www.literacytrust.org.uk/vitallink/readingforpleasureideas.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/vitallink/readingforpleasureideas.html)

The Vital Link has developed a number of information and ideas sheets to help practitioners develop reading for pleasure with their learners:

[www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/](http://www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/)

For more information about Quick Reads.

[www.nrdc.org.uk](http://www.nrdc.org.uk)

For information on research and development projects to improve literacy, numeracy, language and related skills and knowledge.

[www.readingagency.org.uk/adults/the-vital-link/](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/adults/the-vital-link/)

The Vital Link connects library staff and Skills for Life staff to inspire new readers. The website contains information on the reading for pleasure campaign and resources to support reading.

[www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk](http://www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk)

The Six Book Challenge encourages readers to read for pleasure.

[www.readingforlife.org.uk/](http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/)

2008 was the National Year of Reading and this website takes forward this year-long celebration of reading, in all its forms. It aims to increase awareness of the many values of reading – anything, anytime, anyplace – for children, families and adult learners alike.

## The Reading for Pleasure suite of materials:

- CPD modules: Reading for pleasure in a number of contexts
- Storytelling: CPD unit with lesson ideas
- Families, Learning and Storytelling: Using archives for community cohesion
- Take Your Partner: Engaging emergent adult readers
- Technology and Reading: How to use blogs, wikis, iPods and e-books to promote reading
- Putting two and 2 together: Creating a bridge between literacy and numeracy learning
- Resources for libraries: Guidance on how to engage families to read for pleasure