

Year 4 Fiction and Stories: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to fiction and stories can help you support your child's learning at home. Each subject is broken down into manageable chunks, providing you with a simple guide to follow when exploring fiction and stories together, either as part of homework or if you decide to give your child some extra support. Whether your child is reading and discovering a range of different stories, sharing their opinions and views about them and identifying common features that some stories have, or they are using speech to develop characters and their own stories, punctuating correctly and sorting their work into accurate paragraphs, you will find a step that matches where your child is at as well as some ideas for where to go next.

Within **this area of the website**, you will find a selection of resources intended to help your child learn about each step of this guide. Each step also contains a keyword or phrase that you can use to search the Twinkl site for more resources and activities, designed to support your child in achieving that stage. Simply type the keyword or phrase into the search bar and press enter to explore together.

Reading stories



We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. The contents of this resource are for general, informational purposes only. This guide is intended to offer parents general guidance on what subject areas tend to be covered in their child's year group and where they could support their children at home. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. There are some subject areas that we have intentionally not covered due to the nature of how they are taught or because a trained professional needs to teach these areas. We try to ensure that the information in our resources is correct but every school teaches the national curriculum in its own way. If you would like further guidance or are unsure in any way, we recommend that you speak to your child's teacher or another suitably qualified professional.

Fiction and Stories

What Are Stories and Fiction?

Stories are a wonderful way for your child to explore their creativity and imagination.

During year 4, your child will continue to explore a wide range of different stories through shared reading, guided reading, English topics, reading at home and class topics. Your child will look at many different stories; learning about diverse characters, settings and plot ideas. They will discuss their thoughts and opinions about stories, describing what they like and don't like about a narrative, giving evidence and reasons for their feelings.

At this stage, your child will start to identify themes and conventions that occur across different stories. This means that they will start to spot events or recurring themes that happen in stories of a similar type. They will identify similarities between genres of fiction - realising that some sci-fi, action, mystery or myths will have a feel, atmosphere and vocabulary that crosses from book to book. As well as spotting themes that are similar, they will also spot differences between these genres.

As your child's understanding of stories and fiction increases, they will write more and more complex stories of their own. They will begin to realise that they can use dialogue and speech in order to develop characters and move action along in their narratives, not just having to rely on description and narration. They will also start to accurately use paragraphs to sort and organise their stories, changing paragraphs when the time, place, character or topic changes.

As well as using the resources found in this category and the suggested keyword searches to help your child with exploring fiction and stories, a few ideas for games and activities to help your child learn how to find out about language features and vocabulary used in fiction and stories are outlined below.

Read, Read, Read!

One of the best ways to explore stories and fiction is to read as many as you can with your child. This can include not only your child reading books, but by sharing stories with them. As your child's reading skills improve, they will be able to explore stories in more detail. Don't be afraid to ask your children questions about the stories they are reading. Ask about character's feelings, events that have happened in the story and your child's thoughts and opinions of the story.

Genre Switch

Can your child change the genre of their favourite story? If they enjoy a thrilling adventure story, can they turn it into a spooky tale? What about turning an ancient myth into a sci-fi story? Split a piece of paper in half. On one side, create a record of the setting before and on the other side the setting after the change. They could record the changes using pictures, notes, sentences etc. Repeat this for characters in the story, recording how they have changed with the genre. Finally, can they use this information to write a new version of the story in the new genre.

Mixed Up Genres

Can your child create a character that is a combination of different genres? A pirate in space? A modern day ancient Greek god? Ask your child to create a character fact file for their new hero/villain. Create an image of their character and a written description of what they look like and their personality. They could even use playdough or craft materials to build a representation of their character.

Three Unknown Words

Throughout the day, ask your child to make a note of three words that they come across that they aren't sure what they mean. This could be words they hear someone say or words they see written down. Later that day, when your child has found three words, work together to use a dictionary to find out what those words mean.

Reading Stories

During year 4, your child will continue to explore and discover a wide range of stories. They will read stories from a variety of different genres, including sci-fi, adventure, action, spooky and fantasy. As they read, they will start to express opinions and thoughts about the book; saying what they like and dislike about the story and using evidence from the text to support their thoughts and ideas.

As they read more types of books, they will begin to recognise features, language, events and character types that appear across certain genres. Your child will use this information to identify things that are the same and things that are different between stories. You could take a look at some bumper reading resource packs with your child and find a range of different story types to read together, comparing the similarities and differences between them.

Dictionary Skills

As your child reads a greater variety of stories, they will be introduced to a greater range of interesting vocabulary. They will be able to identify how the language being used has an effect on the story and the reader. This will help them to choose more adventurous words to use in their own work.

Part of helping your child to develop their understanding of language further is using a dictionary to find the definition and meaning of words. Being able to use a dictionary accurately is a key skill for checking spellings, finding what type of word it is (verb, noun, adjective etc.) and discovering definitions. Why not challenge your child to this dictionary scavenger hunt to practise how to use one effectively?

Reading Comprehension Year 4

In year 4, your child will continue to develop their reading comprehension skills. They will carry on using prediction (what they think will happen next), recall (finding answers that are directly stated in the text) and inference (reading between the lines and finding answers not stated directly in the text) to understand texts in more detail.

However, the stories they will be reading in year 4 will be longer and more complex. Your child will begin to be asked questions about different paragraphs and how they link together. They will recall information from a number of paragraphs, summarising what is found in each one and how they affect the course of the story. Reading comprehension packs are a good way for your child to practise the different types of questions and to help improve their stamina for reading.

Dialogue

As your child becomes more familiar with more complicated stories, they will start to write longer and more complex stories of their own. They will plan out characters, settings and plots in detail, using themes and conventions from the stories they have read to create ideas that are appropriate to the genre of fiction they are writing.

When they begin writing their own stories, they will use dialogue (character speech) to develop the action and people in their stories. Also, they will plan out the use of different sentence structures, using short sentences for effect, simple, compound and complex sentences. There are a number of guides to using dialogue in stories for your child to explore. Why not take a look at this pack which focuses on using dialogue to advance action and develop characters together?

Planning a Story

When writing stories, your child will learn to use paragraphs accurately. They will group information together and create longer narratives using these paragraphs. Your child will understand that when the time, place, topic or character focus changes, the paragraph needs to change too. Use some paragraph display posters with your child that will remind them of when to change the paragraph in their stories.

Edit Writing

After writing their own stories, your child will begin to focus on editing and improving their writing. They will begin to assess their own writing, spotting features they like and think are effective and making suggestions for ways to change or improve their work. They will proofread (read their writing back to themselves) their stories to check for potential spelling mistakes and to check if any items of punctuation are missing.

This activity encourages children to fix mistakes in a range of sentences. It includes a focus on checking spelling, grammar and punctuation and suggests ways to fix and improve these.