Objective of this Handbook

In India, 96.8% of children (ages 6-14) go to school, but only 50% of Grade 5 children can read Grade 2 level text in their mother tongue*.

The factors preventing children from achieving minimum proficiency in reading include:

1. Lack of resources in small towns & villages
2. Lack of access to good quality reading material
3. Low literacy among parents

Inability to read has serious long term consequences for these children and their ability to reach their full potential.

*Source: ASER 2018 report
At Google, we believe technology can help children around the world, which is why we created Read Along, a free AI-enabled Android app to help children improve their reading skills.

This handbook is designed for teachers and educators to help them use Read Along both inside and outside the classroom to help their students learn and practice reading.

For more information, visit our [website](#).
Introducing Read Along

Read Along is a fun and engaging Android app that encourages young learners ages 5+ to have fun while learning to read.

Using Google's advanced text to speech and voice recognition technologies, Diya, the helpful and friendly in-app reading assistant, helps children by listening and responding to them in real time as they read out loud.

With Read Along, children can practice, gain confidence, and grow a love for reading.
Independent Reading with Friendly Assistance

Children get real time feedback from Diya, the friendly in app assistant, as they read aloud.

Select Stories from a Growing Library

Keep young minds engaged with over 700 unique stories in 10 languages, including English, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Urdu and Arabic.

Playful Learning

Children can collect stars and badges as they read stories and play fun word games.

Learn Without Wi-Fi

After the initial download, the app works offline, relieving worries of unsupervised internet access.
How does Read Along Assist in Reading

Like a personal reading tutor—Diya assists at every step.

**Read Words**

Children can tap on any word to hear it pronounced. When they practice reading a word, the app will show them if the word was read correctly by making it blue, and incorrect words with a red dotted line.

**Understand Words**

For non-native speakers of a language, Diya explains the meaning of a word or the sentence in the native language on tapping for help.

**Read with Diya**

Diya can read the entire sentence, highlighting each word as it’s read so that the child can follow along.

**Proactive Feedback**

The app tracks the progress on the sentence and proactively offers support if it detects that the child is struggling.
Helping both Students and Teachers

Benefits for Students

Helps Students become Star Readers
Kids can earn stars and badges as they read out loud.

Friendly Assistance
Diya, the in app assistant helps children when they get stuck and offers positive feedback when they read well.

Wide selection of Interesting Tales
Over 700 stories and games to choose from.

Student Testimonial Video
Benefits for Teachers

**Personalised Attention**
Read Along provides an opportunity for schools and teachers to provide each student with personalised 1 on 1 support for reading practice.

**Effective and Easy to Access**
Read Along is fun, engaging and effective with minimal tech investments.

**Easy to Track Progress**
Teachers can track individual student progress through individual profiles:

- Stars earned
- Minutes read
Incorporating Read Along in your School

Ways to incorporate Read Along both inside and outside the classroom based on the technology adoption of your school. Our 3 key models cover:

- Schools without tablet/chromebook/smartphone lab
- Schools with tablet/chromebook/smartphone lab
- Schools with smart TVs or projectors
1. Use Read Along in Classroom Activities

Use your own smartphone in class for a group reading activity as a fun, interactive learning session.

Example
2. **Assign as Homework**

Introduce parents to Read Along during parent teacher meetings or through social media groups like Whatsapp. Recommend using the app daily for at least 10 minutes.

Assign story reading as homework and ask parents to share the daily report card through social media groups like Whatsapp.

Q&As in school on the stories read for better student engagement.

3. **Create a Classroom Competition**

Display a physical chart in the classroom and track each child’s daily usage and stars earned.

Weekly / monthly rewards can be given to the child with the maximum number of stars.
1. Use Read Along in Language or Remedial Classes

Depending on the number of devices available in your school, you can adopt an individual or shared tablet model.

By setting up individual profiles on the device, you can monitor each child’s progress on the app.
Individual Device Model (30 Minute Class)  Reference video

- Each child gets access to one device.
- 2 classes per week, 30 mins per class.
- 30 mins class:
  - 10 minutes for distribution & collection of the device
  - 20 minutes for reading
- 9 months engagement in class (36 - 40 weeks)

Shared Device Model (60 Minute Class)  Reference video

- Two children share a device between themselves.
- 2 classes per week, 60 mins per class.
- 60 mins class:
  - 10 minutes for distribution & collection of the device
  - 20 minutes for reading
  - While student 1 reads on the app, student 2 can do reading related activities
- 9 months engagement in class (36 - 40 weeks)

To get your school started on any of these models, please refer to the onboarding steps.
2. Assign as Homework

Introduce parents to Read Along during parent teacher meetings or through social media groups like Whatsapp. Recommend using the app daily for at least 10 minutes.

Assign story reading as homework and ask parents to share the daily report card through social media groups like Whatsapp.

Q&As in school on the stories read for better student engagement.

3. Create a Classroom Competition

Display a physical chart in the classroom and track each child’s daily usage and stars earned.

Weekly / monthly rewards can be given to the child with the maximum number of stars.
1. Use Read Along in Classroom Activities

Connect a smartphone to the TV or projector available in the school.

Set up individual profiles of your students on the app and monitor each child’s progress.
2. Assign as Homework

Introduce parents to Read Along during parent teacher meetings or through social media groups like Whatsapp. Recommend using the app daily for at least 10 minutes.

Assign story reading as homework and ask parents to share the daily report card through social media groups like Whatsapp.

Q&As in school on the stories read for better student engagement.

3. Create a Classroom Competition

Display a physical chart in the classroom and track each child’s daily usage and stars earned.

Weekly / monthly rewards can be given to the child with the maximum number of stars.
A Step by Step Guide for Setting up Read Along in Classrooms

Step 1. School Infrastructure Requirements

- Access to internet, needed to download the app and add new stories.
- Dedicated tab lab or room where classes can be held and devices can be stored in locked cupboards.
- Multiplug chargers or multi-charging secure trolley to store the devices.
- One dedicated teacher responsible for the safety and charging of devices.
Step 2. Tablet or Chromebook Requirements

- A folding cover for the device for a book like feel.
- Screen guards for protection from daily wear and tear.
- All devices should be numbered to help keep track of them.
- [Optional] Tech interventions in class for teacher and student training (Required in schools where tech interventions have not been used before)
  
  Training involves how to: Switch on a tablet, connect to the internet, navigate the tab, increase/decrease volume & brightness, download apps etc.

- Tablets to be accompanied with good headphones with a mic.

Step 3. Teacher Training on Read Along

- In person or digital 2 way training from the Read Along team.
- Whatsapp & Hangout groups with the Read Along team to answer any additional Q&As.
- Training on profile creation and Diya’s role.
- Educating teachers on their role in class as that of an enabler as well as a mentor.
Step 4: Implement Read along in Language Class and Monitor Children's Progress

• Maintain a sheet with the tablet/chromebook number along with the name of the student to ensure every student gets the same device in each class and the child’s reading progress can be monitored.

• Ensure all children get necessary amount of time practicing and there are proper handoffs between children.

• [Optional] Be involved in monitoring or directing what specific books children are reading and give them any 1 on 1 help.

• [Optional] Implement reward systems like star charts to track progress.

• [Optional] Recommend using Read Along at home.
Getting the Most Out of Read Along

When it comes to improving a child’s reading, the child, their parents and teachers all have a role to play. Here are some reading related activities each of you can participate in.
Reading Related Activities for Children

Spot the Letter
Children can learn the alphabet by spotting different letters in short stories.

Picture the Story
Show children different pictures and ask them to create their own stories.
Storytime and Questions
Divide children into groups and have them read a story. After this, each group prepares questions from the story for the other group.

Sentences with Alphabets
Each child gets an alphabet and 2 minutes to come up with a word and sentence using that letter.

Read Along Antakshari
Present children with words from the app and have them think of a new word with the last letter of the previous one.

Word Games
Make children identify words on Read Along that they already know.

Story Writing
Children can write stories that they remember from Read Along in their own words.
Activities Parents Can Do with their Children

Rhyme Time
Get children to find rhyming words to the ones they have read in a story.

Spot the Letter
Create letter cards and ask children to find them in the app.

Word Forming
Parents can get their children to add letters together to form new words.

Story Recitals
Parents can get their children to recite their favourite story from the app.
Activities for Teachers

Speed Reading
A game where each child has to read maximum words possible within 20 seconds.

Jumbled and Flashcards
Activities involving word jumbles and flashcards to build vocabulary.
**Story after Story**
Students are given different stories from the app and made to change the story name by changing the story ending.

**Moving the Block**
Divide students into groups and give them sets of word puzzles to solve.

**Story Chain**
Students sit in a circle and each child adds a sentence to a story to create a unique tale.

**Word Jumbles and Sentence**
Give students jumbled words to organise into a sentence.

**Cover Page and Storytelling**
Students are given books and made to write their own story based on the cover page.
A Look at the Impact Read Along has had

Impact on learning outcomes from the pilot study by ASER Center in 2018:

Pilot Details

A 3 month study across 200 villages in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh with over 1500 children

Pilot Approach

920 children were placed in a treatment group with the app installed.

600 children were placed in a control group who did not get the app.

ASER assessed reading levels of children in both groups at the start (baseline), after 45 days and after 90 days (endline)
Key Findings

More participants improved their reading levels in the treatment group.

64% of those in the treatment group saw an increase in scores.

Results of Parent Survey

92% noticed some improvement in their child’s reading skills.

95% would let their children continue to use the app.

Detailed Report here
Impact on learning outcomes from 3P led assessment across 4 partners

Study Details

We partnered with 4 NGO’s, went to 25 districts across 5 states and 1 UT, and worked with 5000+ children.

Study Approach

ASER assessed reading levels of children in both treatment and control groups at the start (baseline), after 45 days and after 90 days (endline)
Key Findings in Treatment Group

English: 32.8% improved by at least one reading level.

Hindi: 40.6% improved by at least one reading level.

Marathi: 20% improved by at least one reading level.

Reading ability more pronounced in Hindi and Marathi. Non-native languages (English) saw greater improvement with external impetus.

Difference in % of Kids Improving by 1 level or more

Intervention models with NGO Partners

Saajha
Pratham
KAIVALYA Education Foundation
Room to Read®
Learn to read with the magic of your voice.