

National Year of Reading 2026

2026 has been announced as the National Year of Reading, an initiative from the Department for Education in partnership with the National Literacy Trust.

This nationwide campaign aims to reverse the decline in reading by uniting schools, communities, businesses and charities in a shared mission to make reading a lifelong habit for all.

Though the campaign is for everyone to celebrate and benefit from reading, three specific target audiences have been defined by DfE as:

- **Parents of children under 5**
- **Boys aged 10–16**
- **Families from disadvantaged communities.**

“In a fast-moving, AI-powered world, the campaign will reimagine what reading means, making it modern, meaningful, and relevant.”

“The goal is bold: to inspire thousands of community reading champions, welcome millions of new library members, and help businesses champion reading in their workplaces and communities.”

“From online influencers and social platforms to teachers, libraries, and colleges, everyone has a role to play.”

National Year of Reading 2026 website (<https://www.nationalyearofreading.org.uk/>)

“It’s time for all of us to play our part, put our phones down and pick up a book.” Bridget Phillipson.

National Year of Reading 2026 – useful websites

Government press release for National Year of Reading.

[Parents urged to read more to boost children’s life chances - GOV.UK](#)

The National Year of Reading 2026 is a campaign that will engage new audiences in reading, encourage reading for pleasure and change the nation’s reading culture for good. <https://www.nationalyearofreading.org.uk/>

The National Literacy Trust <https://literacytrust.org.uk/about-us/>

The Reading Agency has been appointed to work with sector partners to deliver and support public library aspects of the National Year of Reading campaign. They will be posting more information on their website from early October.

<https://readingagency.org.uk/>

For a head start on the National Year of Reading, join Empathy Lab on **27 November** as they share cutting-edge research from the University of Sussex exploring how reading impacts children’s empathy skills. <https://empathylab.uk/raising-generation-empathy-conference/>

Month by Month Calendar to Inspire Book Promotion

As 2026 will be The National Year of Reading we have had a look at the year month by month and chosen a few ideas to help inspire you from January right through to December.

Use the calendar below to find a focus for a book display, activity, books to read aloud or special book focused event.

More detailed suggestions are listed below the calendar.

January	February	March	April
Big Schools Birdwatch	Children's Mental Health Week	World Book Day	Earth Day
Winnie-the-Pooh Day	Random Acts of Kindness Day	World Wildlife Day	World Shakespeare Day
National Storytelling Week	International Mother Language Day	British Science Week	Benjamin Zephaniah Day (tbc)
		International Women's Day	National Pet day

May	June	July	August
World Baking Day	Pride Month	Children's Art Week	National Play Day
Elmer Day	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month	Fifa World Cup (Men's)	International Day of Friendship
Outdoor Classroom Day	Refugee Week	Wimbledon	
Devon County Show	Empathy Day Festival	Alligator's Mouth Award	
International Day of Families	Healthy Eating Week		

September	October	November	December
Back to School/Transition	Black History Month	Micheal Rosen Day	Christmas
Talk Like a Pirate Day	World Space Week	World Nursery Rhyme Week	Human Right's Day
International Day of Peace	National Poetry Day	Remembrance Day	
Emergency Services Day	Hallowe'en	Non-Fiction November	
	National Libraries Week		

Ideas to Promote Reading

These ideas could be done in the suggested month but may apply to any time of year.

January

- Pupils writing invitations to parents for a weekly a half hour open classroom at the beginning of the day to read stories together.
- Parents joining the class for story time where the teacher models reading aloud to less confident parents.

February

- Create a display using a word such as 'welcome' in many languages and encouraging adults and children to contribute any languages they use.

March

- Check your biographies include women's contributions to science, sport, art, technology etc. dispose of any book that is a biographical collection that only includes men (or over a reasonable percentage).
- Sponsored reads with all the reading taking place in school.

April

- The focus for Earth Day 2026 is Planet vs Plastic. Find stories, poetry and non-fiction on this subject. See the SLS book list.
- Children can bring in photos of themselves reading to their pet (or toy animal)
- Read some poetry by Benjamin Zephaniah and have a competition to compose and recite some poetry in your own dialect.
- Look at and discuss some of the words Shakespeare introduced into the language.

May

- Picnic blankets can be used to create pop-up outdoor libraries 'staffed' by year 6 pupils, helping year groups connect.
- Create a display of farm books to celebrate rural life.
- Read some cake recipes, create book-themed cupcakes or biscuits.

June

- Visit your local book shop for Independent Book Shop Day. Do they have any events planned for the year? Can the school support/get involved?
- A month for considering marginalized communities, check your book stock positively reflects everyone in our society.
- Arrange a book shelf by the colour of the book jackets and read a book for each colour of the rainbow.

July

- Create a World Cup style competition for picture books
- Read biographies of sports stars
- Read a story set in each country represented in the world cup (as it gets knocked out).
- Celebrate illustrators during Children's art week
- Make art from old books

August

- Send pupils home with a holiday reading challenge
- Create some play ideas for the holidays to foster reading and using the imagination, send these home in a newsletter at the end of term.

September

- Set up some lunchtime book clubs, train some year 6 reading ambassadors to run these, change the theme half termly to appeal to different pupils (eg. Adventure Book Club, Laugh Out Loud Book Club, Graphic Book Club).
- Create pirate puppets and read pirate stories to encourage role play.
- Budleigh Literature Festival
- Appledore Book Festival

October

- National Libraries Week -visit the local library or design your dream library as a drawing, in a shoebox, or on Minecraft.

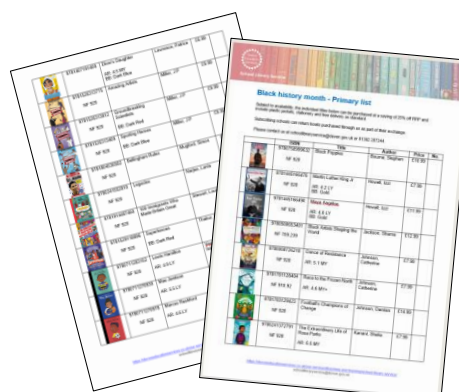
- Create 'black-out poetry'.
- Check your history non-fiction has books that celebrate black figures in history, dispose of those that have dated language and views.

November

- Use the SLS library activity pack to explore non-fiction in your library.
- Put up nursery rhymes around the book corner for children to 'read' and recite.

December

- Reading Advent Calendar – staff record themselves reading a Christmas or winter story for about 7 minutes and these are released through the school portal daily, for pupils to access at home. Could be done for other focus weeks.
- Create Christmas art from old books
- Use the SLS Countdown to Christmas display for KS1, to build anticipation for hearing stories. Resources are available on the SLS website.



Website links for more ideas

[Library Book Display Ideas and Themes Month by Month](#)

[Literacy teaching and school events calendar 2025-26 | National Literacy Trust](#)

[How To Create Engaging Primary School Library Displays | National Literacy Trust](#)

[The Literacy Year | Literacy Calendar | Reading Events Calendar](#)

[Premier League Primary Stars | National Literacy Trust](#)

[Storytelling tips | BookTrust](#)

[Poetry by Heart Competition](#)

[Free Virtual Author Events - Autumn Term 2025](#)

[Michael Rosen Day | Michael Rosen](#)

