

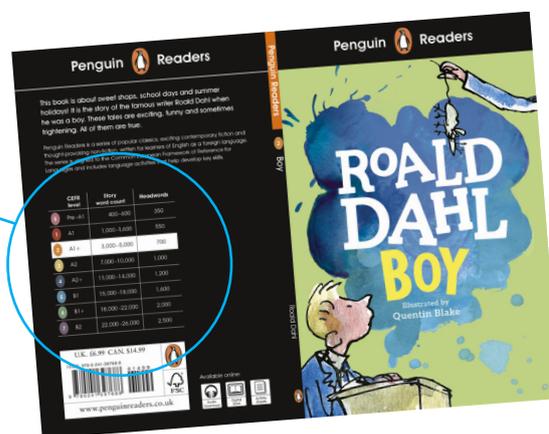
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Welcome to Penguin Readers

Penguin Readers is a new series of readers developed for students of English from age 12+ across the world. It is published by Penguin Random House, the world’s biggest trade book publisher. The series includes many of their most famous contemporary fiction titles – from Jojo Moyes to Roald Dahl, and from James Patterson to John le Carré, as well as the best of their essential non-fiction. It also includes popular classics as well as folk tales, history, thrillers, and business books. The series, for learners of English as a foreign language, is published at eight levels, from pre-A1 (Starter) to B2 (Level 7), and continues on from Penguin’s highly successful Ladybird Readers series for younger children. Each level of Penguin Readers corresponds to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and features activity types aligned to international exams including Flyers, PET, KET, FCE, CAE, CPE and TEOFL.

	CEFR level	Story word count	Headwords
5	Pre-A1	400–600	350
1	A1	1,000–1,600	550
2	A1+	3,000–5,000	700
3	A2	7,000–10,000	1,000
4	A2+	11,000–14,000	1,200
5	B1	15,000–18,000	1,600
6	B1+	18,000–22,000	2,000
7	B2	22,000–26,000	2,500



What are graded readers and why use them?

Graded readers are books that have been written or adapted especially for learners of English as a foreign language. Penguin Readers also come with streamable audio. Some are retellings of well-known modern or classic stories. Some are adaptations of classic and contemporary fiction, some are stories which have been written specially for students of English, and some are factual.

The language used in each reader is strictly controlled and corresponds to the level of the student who is reading it. The grammar syllabus for the relevant level, and permitted vocabulary, correlates to that in the CEFR syllabus, with a small number of new words being allowed. These new words are explained in a glossary at the back of the book. Readers at the lower levels include a large number of illustrations, which help to explain the story or new vocabulary. Essential background information to the story or text is given in a note at the beginning of the reader, and the flow of information during the telling of the story is carefully controlled so that students do not become overwhelmed.

Extensive reading

Graded readers encourage “extensive reading,” which means reading texts for pleasure, to extract information and to develop reading skills. This contrasts with reading with the objective of closely examining vocabulary, grammar and phrases, which is known as “intensive reading”. When reading extensively, students read the story or text in much the same way as they would in their own language – to enjoy and to learn about something that interests them and also to consider the themes and issues that are being presented in the text. As a result, extensive reading helps to rapidly increase reading speed and fluency. Students can read much longer texts when reading at their own speed and ability level than they can when reading higher-level texts intensively. When students read a lot, they are passively exposed to hundreds of new words and many new sentence structures which are often not taught in formal lessons. New vocabulary, which has been specifically introduced and explained in the glossary, is also recycled as much as possible through the text, thus increasing its exposure.

Extensive reading also helps to consolidate any vocabulary and grammar that the student has already encountered through previous lessons or from coursebooks. The reader allows students to examine and absorb the use of these features in a more natural context and therefore deepens their understanding of them as used “in real life”. In addition to this, although the readers are carefully graded, students are likely to come across some words and structures that are unfamiliar to them, and that they observe passively, much as someone does when immersed in another country and its language. They are learning without realising that they are learning.

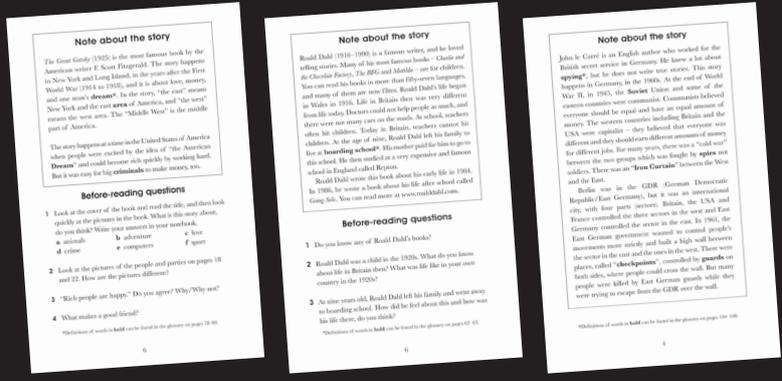
Another purpose of graded readers is to prepare students for authentic, ungraded texts. But readers also build confidence and motivation through independent learning. Finishing a book gives students a great sense of achievement that, in turn, rapidly increases their progress – not just in reading but writing, speaking and listening as well. The availability of audio recordings of readers means that the students become attuned to listening to larger chunks of text in a way which is not stressful or intimidating. The Before-, During- and After-reading questions encourage group discussion and the chance to reflect on how the story or factual text connects to elements in the students’ own life experience. Finally, exercises and extension work give the opportunity to consolidate understanding of grammar points and vocabulary, and for freer speaking and writing.

Visit the Extensive Reading Foundation’s (ERF) webpage <https://erfoundation.org/wordpress/evidence/> to read studies on how extensive reading significantly accelerates a student’s vocabulary and grammar acquisition.

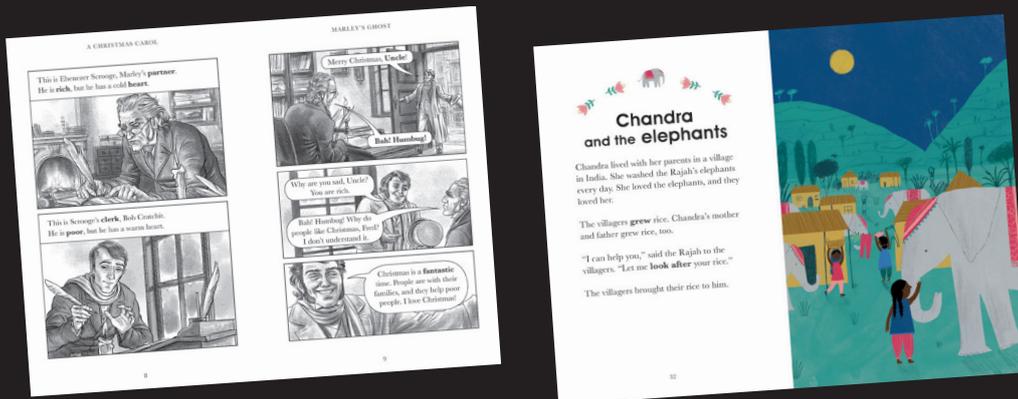


The structure and content of Penguin Readers

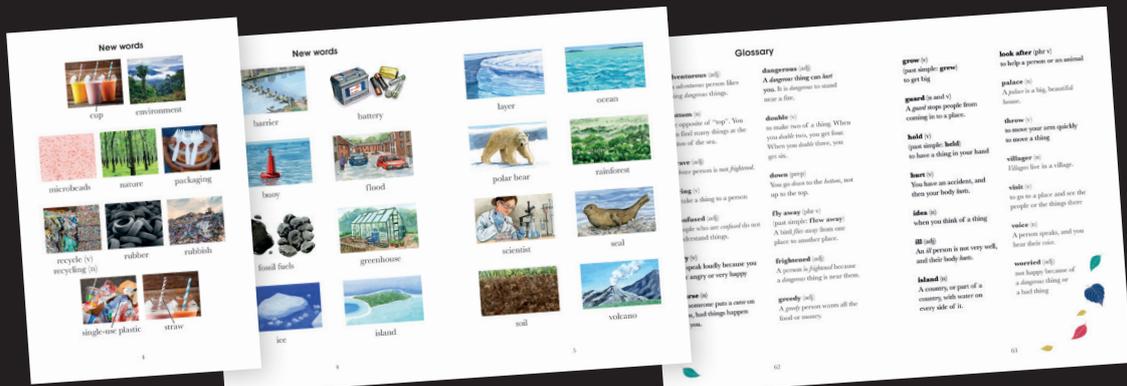
Each Penguin Reader begins with a short introduction to the story or text, and some introductory questions to help orientate the students towards the subject matter of the story or text.



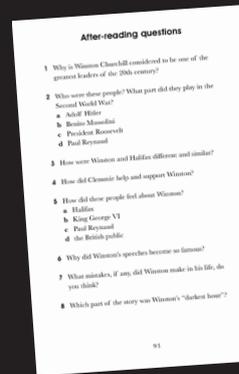
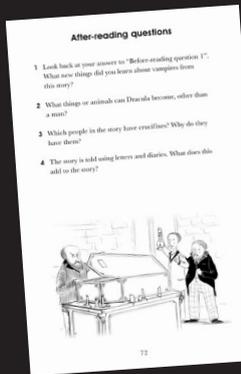
The story or text (especially at the lower levels) contains clear and attractive illustrations. At Starter level and Level 1, many stories are in the form of graphic novels so that the text is well supported.



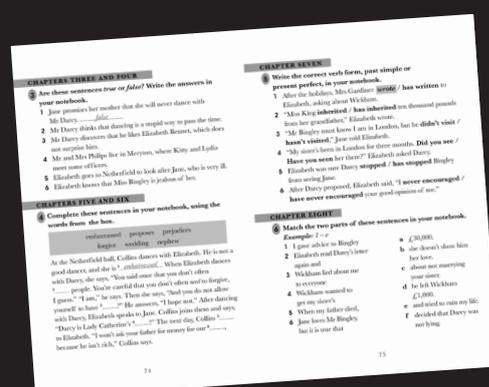
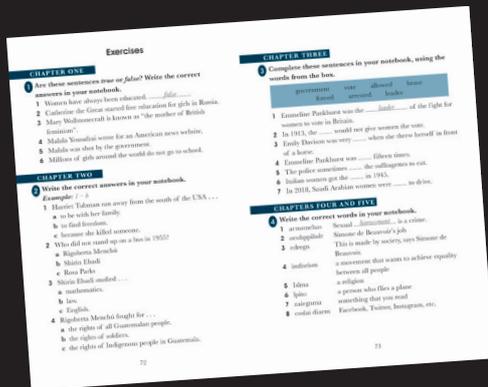
Any difficult vocabulary is explained in a picture dictionary (at lower levels), and in a glossary at the back of the book. This new vocabulary is also recycled in the text where possible to increase its exposure.



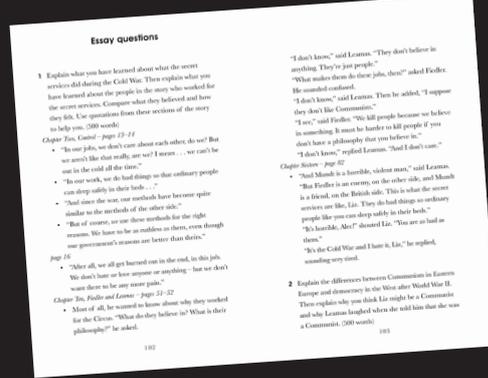
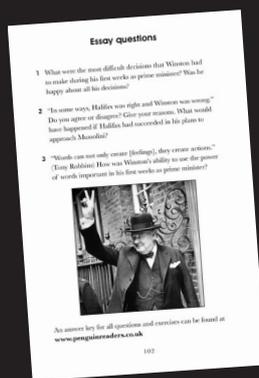
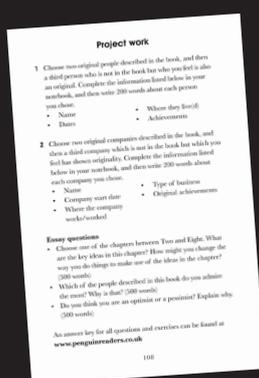
Comprehension questions directly follow the text and test the students' understanding of each chapter. When students have finished reading the entire book there is a set of questions that test their understanding of the story or text as a whole.



An exercises section follows the comprehension questions. Most chapters have either a grammar-, vocabulary- or comprehension-orientated question dedicated to them.



Finally, the students are given extension work in the form of written projects, often suitable for group work, and, at higher levels, in-depth essay questions.



How to use Penguin Readers

Unlike many coursebooks, graded readers are very versatile and can be used either in class or for self-study at home. They can also be used for supplementary study over holiday periods.



Choosing the correct Penguin Reader

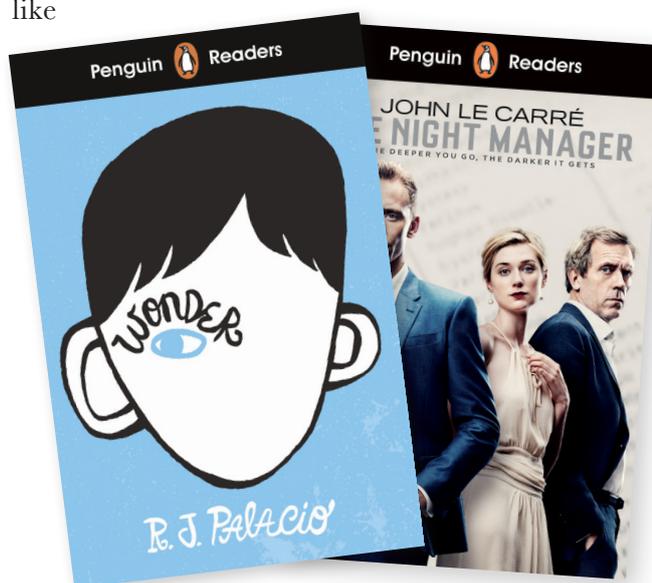
If you are a teacher, it is important to make sure you choose a reader(s) that is appropriate to your students' needs and interests. You may decide to create a class library (from which students choose different books to read in class or at home) or you may decide to select a class reader (where students all read the same book in class). Ideally you would do both. The first thing to consider when choosing a reader is matching it to your students' level of English. We usually encourage teachers to choose readers which are either at the same level as their students or one level below, in order to help build their confidence and consolidate their learning. So, for example, an A2+ class should ideally be reading an A2 reader (Penguin Readers Level 3).

If you need more help with assessing your students' reading level, the Extensive Reading Foundation has developed a placement test at <http://erfoundation.org/wordpress/graded-readers/>

The next thing you need to consider is what type of reader would be suitable for your class. Think about the following: How old are they? What are their key interests? What language areas or topics are they studying in their coursebooks that a reader could help to consolidate? Are there any language points that a particular reader can help them practise? Is there a reader that contextualizes vocabulary that will be particularly useful to them? Are there any discussion points likely to arise from a reader that will be particularly stimulating to them?

Choosing a reader is like choosing any other book. The subject matter must be interesting and stimulating. It might be a good idea to start by asking your students questions, or even give them a questionnaire about what kind of stories or texts interest them. Involving the students in the choice of reader means they are less likely to see them as “set texts” and students may well feel more motivated to read them. Ask, whether they want to read fiction. If so, are they interested in contemporary fiction or stories linked to TV series and films? If the answer is “yes”, then you could read them the catalogue descriptions, or back cover text (if you have the reader) from books like

The Night Manager, *Me Before You* or *Wonder*. If they like spy stories or thrillers, you could do the same with *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* or *Private*. If they like classic books, you could look at *The Great Gatsby* or *Wuthering Heights*, and if they are interested in factual texts, you could look at *Plastic*, *Darkest Hour* or *How to Turn Down a Billion Dollars: The Snapchat Story*.



Using graded readers in the classroom

In classroom teaching, students usually read the same reader together as a group. Group reading brings about a deeper and more complete understanding of the story, and also allows the class to focus on both vocabulary and language points as they read, as well as comprehension work. Remember that many students may not practise extensive reading in their mother tongue and may feel intimidated and overwhelmed by being faced with a long and dense text. Therefore, it's important – particularly with less advanced students of English – to engage their interest in the story or text first, and introduce them to it gradually.

Note that if there are not enough copies of one reader for a whole class, you can put the students into reading groups with a smaller number of books for each group. Each group reads their particular reader and carries out tasks on it set by you, and then moves on to another group's reader until all of the books have been read. You can then plan a follow-up class discussion.

You could start a lesson by orientating the students to the subject matter of the reader. It is a good idea to pre-teach the terms for different genres (adventure, romance, thriller, etc.). You give the students a copy of the book and ask them to look at the front cover and the text on the back cover and ask them to say which genre they think it is. You can then ask the students to read the Note about the story/book at the beginning of the reader (not available at Starter level) and then ask a few general questions about the background to the story or factual text. For this, you can use your own questions or take them from the Before-reading questions at the start of the reader. For example, for *The Call of the Wild*, you could ask questions about the Yukon in Canada, the Gold Rush, and the role of huskies. Or if they are reading *Jane Eyre*, you could ask about the life of women in 19th-century England and in the students' own countries, and how it has changed.

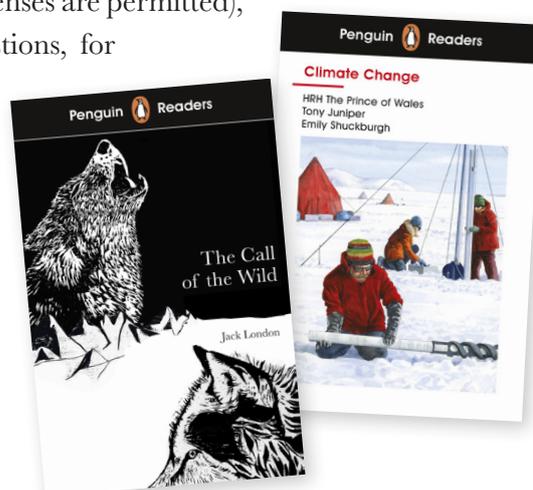
Any new or difficult vocabulary that features in the story can be written up on the board beforehand. The Picture dictionary pages and the Glossary can help in identifying some of these key topic words. You can also show some of the key illustrations in the book and ask some general questions about them. You might even want students to do some background reading for homework. For Level 2 and above (where future tenses are permitted),

it is also a good idea to ask some predicting questions, for

example: *What do you think will happen to the dog in the story? What do you think will happen to Jane?*

You may also want to try and touch on students' own experiences. For *Climate Change*, you could ask whether the students think the climate is changing in their country and give examples of how this is happening.

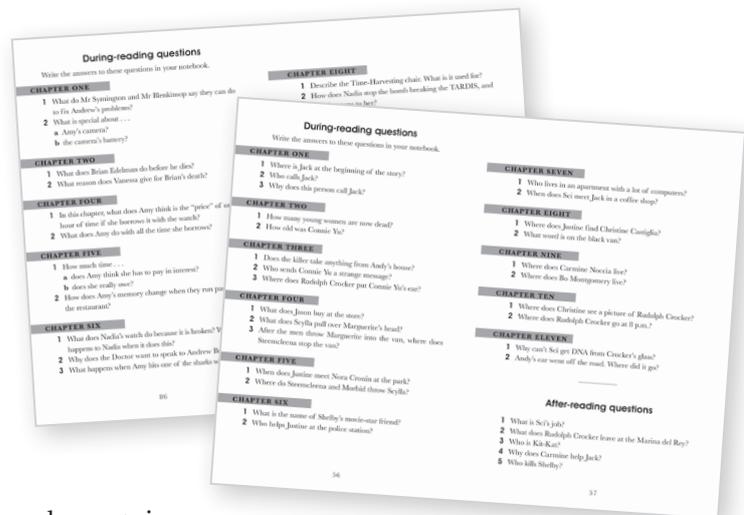
Class reading may also make use of listening (either using your voice or the audio recording –



see page 11 for a more detailed look at how to use the audio) or simply consist of sustained silent reading, where students read individually, encouraged to do so by the fact that their classmates and teacher are doing the same. In the case of sustained silent reading, it may be helpful, especially at lower levels, for you to read the first part of the text aloud, or possibly play a section of the audio recording, before the students embark on their own reading.

Once the students have heard this short section, you should check the students' comprehension of what they have read and heard; you can either set them questions or use the During-reading comprehension questions at the back of the book. You can also point out illustrations and ask questions about them to reinforce new vocabulary and check understanding of the characters and actions.

You may want students to keep a record of any new vocabulary they come across. Students can also make notes about the characters and their development, and keep a journal of their feelings and reactions to the story. Alternatively, and especially with higher levels, you might orientate the students towards the reader while in class, and then ask them to read a certain number of chapters, or even the whole book at home in a set amount of time. You can then check their understanding with the comprehension questions the next time the students come to class, and set some follow-up work either in class or at home.



You can dedicate whole lessons to a reader if you wish and have enough time, but the preferred method is to dedicate a chosen amount of time at the end of the lesson, covering the whole book over a period of time.

When the students have finished reading a book, you can use follow-up activities to check their understanding of the whole story and to work on any new vocabulary and structures that they have come across.

When developing listening skills in class reading, the least intimidating option at very low levels is for you to read the text aloud to begin with, before moving on to the recording. This is because the class already know their teacher's voice and will be able to follow the text more easily. For stronger students, you may prefer to use the recording straight away, as this exposes them to authentic English or American voices and can be more engaging. The students will enjoy hearing the characters' individual voices spoken by an actor. If students have access to the recordings outside class, they may also enjoy listening to these at home as well as reading.

Creating a class library

Class libraries are an invaluable addition or alternative to the class reader. If you always use the same classroom, you could ask the students to make a space for their own class library where readers can be displayed and chosen. Alternatively, if you move from class to class, you could use plastic holders, a trolley or book boxes, all of which can be taken away at the end of the lesson. While the level of the books should generally correlate to that of your class, some books should be a little lower, while some can be a little higher, remembering that their English will improve over the year. Ensure also that the library covers a range of genres and story types to suit varying tastes. You need to have at least as many books as you have students in your library, and preferably 20–30% more than this.

You can create a library “loan” system where library cards are placed in the books and students write their names on the cards and give them to a library monitor, who files them. This is a good way to check on which books are most popular. Alternatively, you can create a list of books in table form. The students write their names next to the book giving the date when they took it out from the class library and when they returned it.

You could also keep a chart for students to write their thoughts about the readers they choose. For example:

Name	Title of book	Type of story	What did you think?	Marks out of 5
Toby	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>	A love story	A beautiful book, but very sad. I really enjoyed it.	4/5

Self-study reading programmes

When students select their own readers to read at home, they are reading what they want to read and at a speed that is suitable for them. This allows them to enjoy reading, as they would enjoy a normal book in their own language, while consolidating their English. They can also listen to the audio recording if they choose to. The main advantage of this approach is that it takes up very little class time and adds greatly to the students' exposure to English. The ideal would be for students to read one reader per week, although that may not be possible and it may be more realistic for them to read one reader over a two or three week period. When they have finished, they can complete either some or all of the written exercises at the back of the book in their notebooks.

Students could also complete online worksheets and test sheets on their choice of reader at www.penguinreaders.co.uk.

Holiday reading

You might also want to recommend graded readers for your students to read on their holidays. Ask them to select some appropriate readers to take home with them (these should not be too challenging as they will not have the support of a teacher) and to keep a reading journal or portfolio over the holiday period. Alternatively, they could create a "holiday reading network" where they can share ideas online and arrange to swap books with other students. Encourage them to work through the Before-, During- and After-reading questions together online, either in pairs or small groups. You can also encourage them in the same pairs or groups, do the Project work, and at higher levels, answer the Essay questions, for you to look at when they return to school.

For all self-study programmes, you can encourage the students to fill the book review templates (see the self-study worksheets on the website) to make sure that reading is taking place. You can also encourage the students to talk about their reading in class and to recommend particular readers that they have enjoyed. Finally, students should keep a list of all the new vocabulary that they have learned.

Audio

Every Penguin reader is accompanied by an audio recording read by an actor, which you can access online. You can use these in class with the reader as outlined previously, but it can also be useful for the students to listen to the audio alone at home, just as they would an "audio book". Their interest and prior knowledge of the story will help them navigate their way through longer passages. This gives them great listening practice. We recommend that you choose a story (preferably one that the student has already studied) one level below the student's, in order to make these large listening chunks more accessible.

Reading groups

Students can also arrange to meet in a “book group”, either in school or at their homes, with or without a teacher present. Students read some chapters from the same book and then get together to discuss them; they can use the During-reading questions to help them check their understanding. They are encouraged to sit in a circle and talk about the plot, the type of language and structures used, and how the story relates to their own life experience. Either you choose the books for the students to read for their group, or the students can take it in turns to choose a book.

Students can also allocate roles in their groups and names can be given to these roles. For example, the **questioner** checks the group’s understanding of the text. The **researcher** finds background information about the book’s topic. The **wordsmith** looks up and explains difficult vocabulary in the text. The **grammar doctor** looks at difficult grammar. The **theme master** looks at the themes in the book. Students should be encouraged to choose their own names for the roles. Students can keep notes about their discussions on report sheets.

Reading groups can take place from Level 2 upwards, and the more student-led they are, the more a feeling of autonomy is gained. These groups are also excellent for students who have difficulty with their reading as they are more informal and less pressured than class-led reading.

Extension work

When students have finished a reader and consolidated their understanding in class, or by using the questions and exercises provided, you may want to do further work to help develop their writing or oral skills and broaden their understanding of the book’s key themes. This can be done with project work, using suggestions from the Project work pages in the reader, and/or in the case of Levels 6–7, by directing them to the Essay questions. Note that essay writing should be treated differently to other guided writing exercises in the reader, as it should follow a recognized essay structure, with an introduction, main body, and conclusion.

In addition to projects and essays, discussions, role plays, interviews and games can be used to help build upon what the students have learned. More guidance is provided for extension work in the lesson plans on the website.

