

# Taking an active interest in your child's learning



Helping your child do better  
in school and in life

**W**e know that taking an active interest in your child's learning is one of the best ways you can help your child do better in school and in life. The interest parents/carers and families show in their children's schooling has a greater influence on the children's success than just about anything else.

Learning isn't just about what happens at school. Children are learning all the time, through what they see, hear and do. They are learning at home, and when they are out and about with family, friends and neighbours. Parents/carers are their children's first educators and remain their key educators throughout their school career. All parents/carers and families have different ways of interacting with their children and helping them to learn.

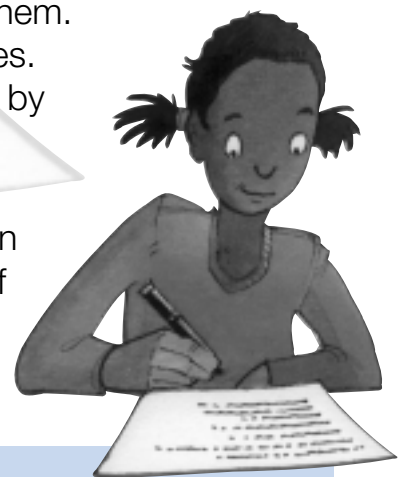
These materials are designed to support you and your child working together at home. We hope that you will find them a useful addition to what you do already. They complement the activities already provided by your child's school, for example homework and home reading. These notes provide information about the focus of each area of learning and the way your child will have heard that described in school.

**This leaflet introduces some:**

- **key areas in literacy and mathematics that children will be working on in Year 6;**
- **related activities to support your child's learning with you at home;**
- **'I can' statements of targets for children to work towards, to help them understand better what they need to learn.**

The 'I can' statements indicate some of the things most children will be able to do by the end of Year 6 and the suggested activities will help children work towards these. Children learn at different rates – some children will find the activities easy, other children will take longer to be able to do them. You might wish to talk to your child's teacher about the activities. Don't forget that if your child is bilingual you can support them by talking about the activities in your home language.

When encouraging learning at home, a good approach is 'little and often'. Sometimes though it is useful to plan a time to learn together. We hope that you and your child enjoy using some of the activities in this leaflet, and that these activities will spark off ideas and approaches to learning that you can use together wherever and whenever you want to.



For further information visit [www.parentcentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentcentre.gov.uk).

You may also find the following publications useful: *A little reading goes a long way* (ref: LRGLW), *It all adds up* (ref: IAAUMY), *Open doors: Helping you help your child* (DfES 0137-2004) and *Learning Journey aged 7–11* (DfES 0023/2000). These and other relevant publications are available free from the Department for Education and Skills, telephone 0845 60 222 60. To order materials please go to the Primary National Strategy website: [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary)

## Year 6 Reading: Fiction

**I can say whether a writer has been successful in their purpose, e.g. to make me laugh, cry or think**

### *Notes for parents/carers:*

Writers reflect the purpose in their writing by the words they use and the way they tell their story.

## Reading activities

After your child has read part of their book discuss how they feel, e.g. if they thought they were going to read something funny, has it made them laugh? What did the writer do to make your child feel a particular way?

Find two books that are written for different purposes, e.g. a humorous story and a spine-chiller. Compare the books and discuss what the authors have done differently to create particular effects.

Discuss a book or film that you and your child know well. Which character does the writer/director want you to like or dislike? How have they done this? Have they succeeded?

## Year 6 Reading: Fiction

**I can explain how a writer has created a mood or feeling making reference to the text**

### *Notes for parents/carers:*

Writers choose carefully what they write so that we can picture in our head and relate to events and characters. Often the writer leaves us to try and guess what characters feel or why they have done something.

Watch a film with your child and talk about how the atmosphere is created by the location (setting), the words that are spoken (dialogue) and the music or background noises.

Freeze-frame a scene from your child's favourite video or DVD. Encourage them to write down as many words as they can to describe the setting and mood.

While reading encourage your child to try to identify which words are used to create the mood in the story. Ask how this makes the reader feel.

## Year 6 Reading: Non-fiction

**I can identify the purpose, audience and organisation for different non-fiction texts**

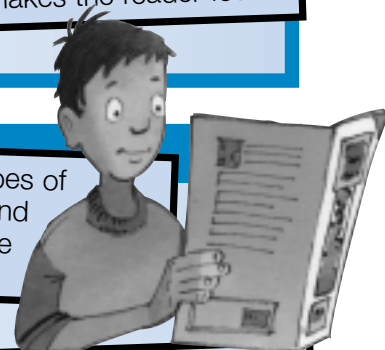
### *Notes for parents/carers:*

Non-fiction (information) texts cover a range of types: they can retell events, give instructions, provide information, explain something, try to persuade the reader or simply put forward an argument. Non-fiction texts use tables, pictures and diagrams to add extra information so it is important to take notice of these when reading.

With your child, find different types of non-fiction texts in your home and compare them. Identify their type and list the different features.

Think about the types of non-fiction text that you couldn't find. Discuss where you might find some examples.

Use some non-fiction writing from around the home and talk about who you think it is written for (audience), why it has been written (purpose) and how it has been organised so that the reader can read it easily (organisation).



## Year 6 Writing: Stories

**I can create interesting characters in my stories by mixing action, description and dialogue**



## Writing activities

While watching a favourite TV programme encourage your child to write down some of what the characters say, then encourage them to use different words to describe the characters' emotions, e.g. are they angry, frightened, caring?

Ask your child to think about a character in a story they know well, write down a list of words to describe that character's personality and think about how they might respond in different situations, e.g. when visiting a friend, going on holiday, having an argument.

Write a story with your child, then highlight, in different colours, action, description and dialogue. How has using these features made the story more interesting?

### Notes for parents/carers:

Writers tell us about their characters by how the characters speak to each other, how they behave and the decisions they make as well as by what they look like and what they say.

## Year 6 Writing: Non-fiction

**I can use a range of connecting words and phrases to organise my non-fiction writing**

Collect some non-fiction books, e.g. specialist magazines, cookery books. With your child identify the different connectives used at the beginning of and within sentences.

Try taking out some of the connectives and then read the text aloud for your child to try and guess the correct word or phrase for the writing to make sense.

Ask your child whether they can sort the connectives you have found into the following groups:

- time, e.g. *meanwhile, eventually*
- order, e.g. *first of all, furthermore*
- a result, e.g. *therefore, because of this*
- explaining, e.g. *for example, in other words*
- tell me more, e.g. *in addition.*

### Notes for parents/carers:

A connective is a word or phrase that links parts of sentences or whole sentences together. Non-fiction writing is often characterised by the use of connectives, e.g. discussion/arguments often include connectives such as *on the other hand, nevertheless, however* and instructions include *first, next, etc.*

## Year 6 Writing: Sentence structure

**I can use a variety of simple and complex sentences in my writing**

Ask your child how many different ways they can find to link the following three simple sentences. It was raining. Fred went for a walk. He was eaten by a monster. Remind them to use *because, whenever, if, so, when, although.*

With your child, find five complex sentences in their reading book. Turn these back into simple sentences, e.g. *I walked down the street. Lights came on. A dog howled.* Discuss whether the simple or the complex version sounds most effective, and why.

Ask your child to rewrite the opening paragraph of their favourite story using only simple sentences. Explore the effect this has on the story and on the reader.

### Notes for parents/carers:

Complex sentences link information and ideas, e.g. *I walked down the street. A dog howled. Changed into a complex sentence this becomes: As I walked down the street, a dog howled.* Connectives help children write more complex and longer sentences.

Year 6 **Mathematics**: Multiplication

*Mathematics activities*

**I can approximate (estimate) first, and then I can use compact written methods for multiplication with decimals, up to two decimal places, e.g.  $4.92 \times 3$**

With your child, work out some of these problems. A toy costs £4.76; how many can you buy for £26? Check your answer using a written method. Can you and your child make up some more questions like this?

With your child, make up some multiplication problems involving decimals, like  $3.14 \times 4$ . Estimate first and then work them out. Check your answers on a calculator.

**Notes for parents/carers:**  
It is important to make approximations before using written methods to calculate answers, e.g.  $4.92 \times 3$  is approximately 15.

Year 6 **Mathematics**: Division

**I can solve division problems using informal methods and short division and use my approximations to check my answer**

Ask your child: if the answer is 20 to the nearest 10, what could the question have been? (e.g.  $198 \div 9$ , approximately  $200 \div 10$ ) What else could the question have been? Make up some more examples with approximate answers of 20, then 30 and 45.

With your child work out this problem. Zapran had 984 stickers to put into packs of 12. Approximately how many packs will he need? Can your child make up five more questions like this?

**Notes for parents/carers:**  
It is important to be able to make approximations prior to a division calculation, as this can be used as a checking mechanism when the calculation is completed.

Which of these would it be helpful to make approximations to and which could be solved without approximating?  
 $864 \div 12$     $285 \div 19$     $2.35 \text{ m} \div 2$     $777 \text{ ml} \div 11$   
 $2 \text{ kg} \div 0.52$     $204 \div 0.26$     $22000 \text{ miles} \div 3$

Year 6 **Mathematics**: Place value

**I can compare and order decimal numbers using my knowledge of what each digit in a number with up to three decimal places represents**

With your child play 'Shoot the digit'. Use paper and pencil or a calculator. Give your child a decimal number with up to three decimal places, e.g. 4.621. Then ask them to shoot one digit, e.g. shoot the 6. When a digit is shot it changes to zero. So, in this example, 4.621 becomes 4.021. Your child must then decide on the operation to change 4.621 to 4.021, i.e. subtract 0.6.

**Notes for parents/carers:**  
It is important to know how the position of the digit or number affects the value it represents.



### Year 6 Mathematics: Fractions

**I can find unit fractions such as one-sixth of 48 by dividing by 6, and find compound fractions such as five-sixths of 42 by dividing by 6 and multiplying by 5**

**Notes for parents/carers:**  
Fractions are part of a whole, e.g. half, quarter.

### Mathematics activities

With your child find a recipe for 6 people. How much of each ingredient is needed for one person? For 4 people?

Choose a fraction and a quantity from the rows below, and complete the calculation. Repeat with other options.

$\frac{1}{3}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{1}{6}$   $\frac{1}{8}$  of  
24 m 120 240 litres 360 cm

Here is an empty box question:  $\frac{1}{5}$  of  $\square$  is 30. What is  $\square$ ? Make up ten more empty box questions putting the  $\square$  in different places in the number sentence, e.g.  $\square$  of 20 metres is 5 metres.

### Year 6 Mathematics: Measuring length

**I can work out the area and perimeter of L shapes by splitting them into rectangles**

**Notes for parents/carers:**  
An L shape can be divided into two rectangles. This can make calculating the area and the perimeter (measurement round the outside edge) easier.

Look at different shaped rooms in your home. Discuss with your child how the rooms could be split into rectangles.

Together work out how much skirting board would be used to go around a room in your house.

Together draw as many L-shaped rooms as you can which have an area of 30 square metres. Mark on the dimensions.



### Year 6 Mathematics: Solving problems

**I can explain in words and pictures relationships between numbers and test these with examples. I can represent numbers by letters to explain relationships, e.g. in the sequence 1, 4, 7, 10, 13 ..., the next number is the previous number add 3 or  $PN + 3$**

**Notes for parents/carers:**  
By looking at patterns in numbers we can identify and explain the pattern or relationship, and test it with more numbers.

Together try this out: to multiply by 25, first multiply by 100 and then divide by 4. Together use this to work out:  $2 \times 25$ ,  $17 \times 25$ , and  $5 \times 25$ . Does it work with all numbers? What sorts of numbers does it not work with?

Discuss with your child whether dividing a whole number by one half makes the answer twice as big. Together try this out with 100, 200, 500. Does it work with all numbers?

With your child draw a triangle. The sum of the angles is  $180^\circ$ . Use this to show that in a quadrilateral (4 sides) the sum of the angles is  $360^\circ$ . Now draw a pentagon (5 sides). The sum of the angles in a pentagon is  $540^\circ$ . Why is this true? Discuss what the total of the angles of any hexagon could be.