



10 things to do with any book during transition

Activities to support pupils during the transition from primary to secondary school

Suitable for P7-S1

Resource created by Scottish Book Trust

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Contents

About this resource	2
Primary activities	3
Secondary activities	5
Further resources	7

About this resource

This resource offers ideas and activities for using books and reading as part of the transition from primary to secondary school, specifically focusing on supporting pupil's health and wellbeing.

We've split the activities between primary activities and secondary – if you can, we recommend partnering up with the local primary schools to introduce the activities to create a continuation between primary and secondary. However, if this isn't possible, you can also use these activities independently in your setting.

Using books for transition is a great way to create a shared experience for all new entrant pupils, creating common ground for conversation. Books also offer excellent opportunities to support health and wellbeing outcomes. For advice on titles see our book list of [Great books for children starting secondary school](#).

If you are taking part in [Reading Schools](#), the activities in this resource could support delivery of Key Area:

- 1.2.2: Learner role modelling
- 1.3.2: School environment
- 2.2.1: Regular opportunities to read for pleasure
- 2.3.3: Creating learner social networks
- 2.3.4: Opportunities for learners to respond to what they're reading

Primary activities

Activity 1: Create a dream board

LIT 2-25a, LIT 2-26a, EXA 2-04a

After reading a few chapters of your chosen transition book, ask pupils to create a dream board for one of the characters. They could do this individually or in small groups. Ask them to imagine the character's aspirations and where they would like to be in 10 years.

After they have done this for a character, ask them to create their own dream board and think about where they would like to be in the future. What would they like to be doing? What are their future dreams and aspirations? Reassure pupils that they don't need to share this with anyone. It's their own board for them to create and keep.

Activity 2: Write a character postcard

LIT 2-24a, LIT 2-26a

If you are reading a book together in primary ahead of secondary transition, ask pupils to write a character postcard and send it to the English Department at their new secondary school. It could be written from the character's perspective about their thoughts and feelings, or it could just tell the new teachers what pupils like about the book. Encourage the English Department to display these in the first week, so there is something familiar on display for pupils.

Activity 3: Write an alternative ending

LIT 2-24a, LIT 2-26a, ENG 2-27a

This activity is great if you are working with a secondary school that will be finishing your transition books, so pupils will only hear half of the story in P7. Read the first half of the book, and when you reach a dramatic moment, stop reading. Ask pupils to write their own ending to the story. What do they think will happen? How will it end? Encourage pupils to be as creative and inventive as they like!

You could read these aloud to each other in class and talk about the various ideas

created (everyone will see the story in a different direction). Pupils could share their alternative endings with each other in S1 or create a display. The alternative endings can be used to start conversations about the book before the end of the story is finally shared with them. You could ask pupils:

- Did it end how they expected?
- Did it end how they or anyone predicted?
- Which ending did they prefer?

Activity 4: Create a reading wall

LIT 2-11a, LIT 2-16a

A reading wall is a great way to show reading progression, and is a brilliant visual reminder of a book. Ask pupils to write their thoughts and feelings on their transition book on a brick-shaped piece of paper (ideally red in colour and oblong). They could write a short review, or give it a star rating. The brick could be written in P7 and displayed in the classroom until the end of term, and then passed to the secondary school to create an even larger wall with bricks from all the feeder primaries. Pupils can hunt for their brick on the display once they start secondary and see all the contributions from other pupils.

Activity 5: Hold an outdoor read

LIT 2-11a, HWB 2-10a

Outdoor learning is important for pupils and offers an enjoyable, shared experience. Holding an outdoor reading event can be a great way of combining a transition book with outdoor learning activities. For example, if you run an adventure or outdoor learning week for your P7 pupils, integrate this event into that week. After completing the task, pupils could hear a chapter read as a reward. Or challenge them to create a shelter fit for some storytelling!

Why not hold an after-school campfire read? Have a small fire (or a TV fire display in the school), invite secondary staff and pupils to join, as well as parents and carers, and hand out bonfire treats like marshmallows and hot chocolate. Get pupils and

staff into small mixed groups to read the book together, or be read to. Make sure the groups are mixed with S1 and P7 pupils to get conversations started. Ensure there are staff on hand to answer any questions parents might have about transition too. A campfire-read is a great, cosy way to get pupils and families involved in reading.

Secondary activities

Activity 1: Ask for a creative response

LIT 3-24a, LIT 3-26a

If you can support all entrant pupils to read the same book across the year group, ask them to respond creatively to the book in any manner they choose. Rather than asking for a review or set task, ask all pupils to create something inspired by the book. It could be fan fiction, an alternative ending, a piece of art, a cake or other food item, a poem, a dance video – their minds will come up with much more! These creative responses could be displayed around the school or shared in class. Varied and creative responses to the same task will encourage pupil discussion and enable them to learn about their peers' interests in the first few weeks. These can be displayed throughout the school, making great displays, but could also be shared with parents at the first parent's evening to showcase the variety of work pupils have produced.

Activity 2: Write a letter

LIT 3-26a, HWB 3-12a

You could invite an author or other creative practitioner to lead a session (physically or digitally) and share letter writing tips with pupils. You could invite your new S1 pupils and current S2 pupils to attend. The S2 pupils can then write letters on themes such as 'my first year in high school' or 'what I wish I had known a year ago' for the new S1 pupils. Letters could be shared on or offline, physically or digitally. This activity could support a buddy system you already have in place or could be used with other years to create connections and conversations between different year groups.

Activity 3: Use Bookzilla

LIT 3-11a, LIT 3-14a

Bookzilla is an app developed by Scottish Book Trust with teens from across Scotland. Ask pupils to download the app and explore the different genres and collections. They can add books they would like to read later or borrow from the school library to their virtual shelf. The app also allows pupils to create their own 'reading dare'. Pupils could set a reading dare to complete over the summer, such as reading a book from a new genre, or reading an old favourite, and share this with peers during discussions facilitated in their new school. For more fun ideas on using Bookzilla to create a buzz around reading, explore our [Bookzilla resource](#).

If you have pupils who are confident using Bookzilla, support them to model using the app with feeder primary schools, and have conversations about books, genres and their own reading journeys.

Activity 4: Welcome to the library

HWB 3-12a, HWB 3-13a

If you have a library in your secondary, work with current S1 pupils to create a 'welcome to the library' information pack and/or video that describes how to find books, what facilities are available in the library (clubs, audiobooks, games nights and so on) and the range of books available. Ask S1 pupils to give a reading recommendation, perhaps a book they came across in the library that they especially enjoyed, or maybe a new genre they have found or a club they have joined. Share this information pack or video with your feeder primaries. You could also do this for classroom libraries if you don't have a school library.

Activity 5: Create a story or class book

LIT 3-20a, LIT 3-24a, LIT 3-26a, HWB 3-12a

Work with pupils to create a class or year-group book. It could include stories, poems or artwork from new pupils. It could be inspired by the transition book they have shared or the experience of starting at secondary. You could workshop ideas for the

book's theme in the first few weeks of term, take votes across the group to make decisions, and then work on pieces to contribute to the book over the rest of term. Pupils could set and format the book and (if appropriate) plan a release event or celebration. For guidelines on creating anthologies, read our [anthology guidelines](#). To support pupils in personal writing, explore our [guide to personal writing](#).

Further resources

- On the Scottish Book Trust website, you can also find [a transition journal](#) that's been designed to support pupils during the primary to secondary transition
- Our [Great books for children starting secondary school book list](#) shares our top picks of books for transition projects
- For more ideas on reading across your school, our [Building a reading culture resource](#) shares ideas on supporting pupils to read for pleasure and how to create reading groups and events