



13 October 2023

Dear Families

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of how the Accelerated Reader programme that we use in year 7, 8 and 9 English works and how you can support your child to make the most of it. In addition, there is also some information further down on the extra-curricular clubs and activities available during the autumn term.

### Reading at Sackville

It is a well-established finding that students who read more achieve more in school, across all subjects. Reading helps students when they encounter different texts, helps them to express themselves, enhances and improves their vocabulary, improves their general knowledge as well as reducing stress and improving literacy. At Sackville, we place a great importance upon reading and for that reason it is important to us that you, as parents and carers, are informed of the programmes we use and the role they play in your child's education.

### What is Accelerated Reader and how does it work?

We use the Accelerated Reader programme to track and monitor students' reading progress. Every Key-Stage 3 class has one timetabled library lesson per fortnight, they will also begin all English lessons with ten minutes of silent reading. It is essential, therefore, that every student has a reading book with them every day that they are in school. This can include books taken out from the library.

### Accelerated Reader Levels

Each book in our library collection has a level (e.g. 3.5) which relates to the complexity of the book. Through 'Star Reading' tests, each student is designated a reading range (e.g. 2.6-5.1). We recommend students begin reading books lower in level and progress towards the higher, more challenging texts as they progress throughout the year.

### How you can help...

Discussing with students what they are reading and engaging in dialogue about the plot and characters will help them to deepen their understanding and engagement with texts. On the back of this letter are some suggested questions you might use to begin and develop these conversations.

Checking your child has a reading book as part of their basic equipment every day will also ensure they can participate fully in their English lessons.

### Extra-Curricular Clubs and Activities

We also have a number of extra-curricular clubs and activities running during the autumn term to help students to flourish in their English lessons.

- **Key-Stage 3 Creative Writing Club** (Friday lunchtime – D06 – students will need to bring food).
- **Key-Stage 3 Book Club** (after school Mondays, Week A – in the library).
- **Poetry By Heart & Performing Shakespeare** (Monday lunchtime – D11 – students will need to bring food). These are national competitions which involve performing a monologue or a famous poem for the opportunity to perform onstage at the Globe Theatre in London.
- **Junior Debate Club/Public Speaking** (Monday lunchtime – D11).

If you have any questions about our extra-curricular clubs, literacy programmes or any other queries about English at Key-Stage 3, please contact me at [zangella@sackvilleschool.org.uk](mailto:zangella@sackvilleschool.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Mr Z Angella  
Leader of Key Stage 3 English



## Talking about texts

Below are some examples of the sorts of questions you might use to encourage discussion around a text.

### Structure and Comprehension Questions

*These explore a student's understanding of the key features of the text, particularly the way it is put together.*

- How did the story start?
- What is the story 'about'?
- Who is telling the story?
- Who are the important characters in the story?
- What have you learned about them so far?
- What is the main event of the story so far?
- Where does the story take place?
- What is the 'conflict' in the story?
- What 'genre' is the story?

### Prediction Questions

*These explore student understanding by asking them to use their knowledge of what they have read so far to predict further events in the story.*

- What do you think will happen next? Why?
- How do you think the story is going to end? Why?
- What do you think will happen to the main character? Why?
- Do you think the story will have a 'happy' or 'sad' ending?

### Inference Questions

*These ask students to explore beneath the surface of a text.*

- Why do you think the author wrote this story?
- What do you think is the message of the story?
- Why do you think the main character chose to \_\_\_\_?
- Why do you think the story started the way it did?

### Opinion Questions

*These explore the students' attitudes and opinions on the text.*

- What is one thing you like about the story?
- What is one thing you would change about the story?
- Which characters do you like/dislike? Why?
- Would you read another book by this author? Why/why not?
- Did you find anything challenging about this book?
- Was there anything you didn't understand?
- Have you read any books like this before?
- Did you enjoy the opening of the story? How did it try to interest you?