READING AHEAD

# Reading Aloud

Reading aloud is all around us and can play an important part in our lives.

What we read aloud varies widely: newspapers, social media posts, books and poems, religious texts and prayers, crossword clues, birthday cards, graffiti, recipes and instructions.

Our reasons for reading out loud or listening are equally varied. We read aloud to share information, to be together, and to use and hear our voices. We do it to entertain, to inform or to help others. Some read aloud to memorise, learn, understand and write. Many people read aloud with other adults, some with children and some even read aloud to pets.

Reading aloud is one of many ways to develop a love of language and reading. You can use these tools to help you think about the different ways you might be reading while taking part in Reading Ahead, and how you might benefit from reading aloud (even if no one is listening!).

## *Reading aloud, alone or with others, can…*

- build our confidence as readers.
- help us understand complex writing. That might be difficult words, difficult sentence structure or complex ideas.
- support our writing process. It can help to read our writing aloud to hear how it sounds and think about any changes needed.
- help us remember, learn or to 'take in' the full meaning of a text. This could be because it slows us down and makes us think about every word, saying it and hearing it.

## *Thoughts and questions as readers*

- We often find ourselves reading aloud without realising it. For example, reading an interesting news article aloud.
- Reading aloud, and listening to others, can form an emotional connection. This relates to the intimacy of the voice, of being together, of memory.

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- Are we forgetting the potential joys of reading aloud and listening to others read? Is this because of a focus on silent, individual reading?

- At what age do we decide we do or don't enjoy reading aloud, and what causes this? Is it to do with confidence, experience, personal preference or something else?

### *...on confidence*

- Reading aloud can develop our confidence as readers. And yet, we need confidence to read aloud well. Without confidence, we may rush through it and others may have trouble understanding us.

- Being asked to read aloud can also make many people nervous or anxious. One way around this is to practice reading aloud in a friendly, supportive environment. Reading aloud should always be optional and never forced. Not everyone likes or values reading aloud, and of course this is just fine!

- Gaining confidence in reading aloud in front of other people can also be the first step in becoming confident enough to give a talk, speech or presentation in front of others.

- Reading aloud with others can be an important tool to develop reading skills and confidence. More than this, it can help us think through things together, as groups. If you are not keen on reading aloud yourself, try listening to others and sitting together talking about a text. This can be a wonderful way to explore understandings and points of view.

## About this resource

Reading Aloud in Britain Today (RABiT) is a two-year project researching whether, what, where, how and why adults read aloud.

This resource is based on a discussion with adult learners and teachers at the Pontypool Community Education Centre, Wales, in December 2018 and with teachers and trainee teachers at the Nottingham Institute of Education, Nottingham Trent University, in March 2019. Sam Duncan would like to thank everyone at the Pontypool Community Education Centre and to Sheridan Brown, John Everson and everyone in the Post-Compulsory Education and Training teacher education team, NTU.

Sam Duncan and Carina Spaulding, May 2019

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