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# Our Impact 2023

Changing lives through a love of books and reading.

World Book Day® is a charity sponsored by National Book Tokens

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Photograph from World Book Day 2022

# World Book Day's vision and mission

## Vision

More children, from all backgrounds, developing a life-long habit of reading for pleasure, and benefitting from the improved life chances this brings them.

## Mission

World Book Day's mission is to promote reading for pleasure, offering every child and young person the opportunity to have a book of their own. Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than their family circumstances, their parents' educational background or their income\*.

Through our annual event in March with its joy, celebration and fun, we encourage more children to read and raise awareness of the difference reading makes to their lives. Through our year-round activities, we support families, schools, libraries, booksellers and communities to help children love reading.

## A note from World Book Day's Chair and Chief Executive

We want World Book Day to be a joyous celebration for everyone and to have an impact long after the day has passed. For many children, choosing their £1/€1.50 book for free with their book token or taking part in a World Book Day activity, can be the spark that starts their reading journey. Our work with schools, nurseries, libraries, families, booksellers and in communities, helps children make that vital connection; to see themselves as readers all year-round.



With the cost of living crisis ever present, we asked you to celebrate World Book Day in a way that worked for you. Thank you to everyone who embraced the fun and magic of reading in 2023.

**Emma Scott**  
Chair

Research shows that only 25% of children read every day or nearly every day for pleasure. Children who choose to read in their spare time are more likely to succeed in life, so – through our annual campaign and year-round activities – we encourage more children to read for fun.



We have been focusing on how our annual campaign and year-round activities can do more to encourage children to choose to read. In 2023, we were delighted to see a shift in the conversation, with reading for pleasure sitting at the heart of everyone's World Book Day celebrations. We'll build on this to reach even more children and young people in the future.

**Cassie Chadderton**  
Chief Executive

\* Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development. Evidence from the National Literacy Trust, BookTrust and others shows that reading enjoyment and literacy levels are associated with educational attainment and employability skills as well as health, social, emotional and intellectual benefits.

# Why do we have World Book Day?

## 1 Why is reading for pleasure so important?



Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than their family circumstances, their parents' educational background or their income.

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development. Evidence from the National Literacy Trust, BookTrust and others shows that reading enjoyment and literacy levels are associated with educational attainment and employability skills as well as health, social, emotional and intellectual benefits.



## 2 Reading for pleasure is in decline



Reading for pleasure is at its lowest level since 2005 with fewer than 3 in 10 (28%) children and young people aged 9 to 18 saying that they read daily.

Source: 2022, National Literacy Trust, Annual Literacy Survey

For many children, access to books is a serious issue. In the UK, up to 500,000 children don't have a book of their own and 1 in 5 pupils (20.7%) said the book they 'bought' with their World Book Day book token had been their first book of their own.

Source: 2023 National Literacy Trust, Annual Literacy Survey

## 3 What encourages reading for pleasure?

We have developed six reading behaviours that encourage children to read for pleasure:

- Being read to regularly
- Having books at home/school
- Having a choice in what to read
- Having trusted help to find a book
- Finding time to read
- Making reading FUN!

## 4 World Book Day promotes reading for pleasure by:

- Celebrating the joy of books, authors, illustrators and reading for pleasure.
- Transforming attitudes and changing behaviours by providing content to promote reading for fun.
- Ensuring every child gets to choose a book of their own with the World Book Day £1/ €1.50 books and tokens.



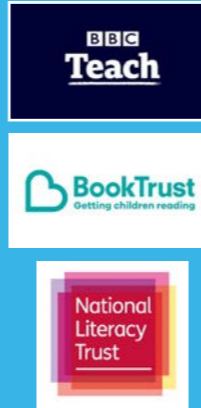


Image: Chris Jackson/Getty Images

The Queen Consort spoke about the importance of reading at an early age in an OK! magazine feature to celebrate World Book Day.

Over **960k**

children enjoyed in-person and digital events in partnership with the National Literacy Trust and BookTrust; and tuned in to the World Book Day BBC Teach Live Lesson.



#worldbookday and #readingforpleasure trended on Twitter

**713k**

social media impressions



Reception at 10 Downing Street and cross-party support from

**119**  
MPs

**45.7k**

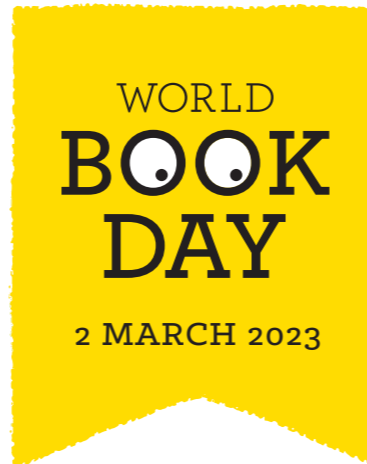
£1/€1.50 token packs sent to schools and nurseries.



**30k**

downloads of schools and early years packs.

**59%** say WBD is effective for engaging reluctant readers.



The **London Eye**

donated £1 from every adult ticket purchased on World Book Day and gave free entry to children dressed in costume.



**90k**

£1/€1.50 books donated by publishers distributed directly to children in disadvantaged communities across the UK and ROI with support from McDonald's.



**World Book Day 2023**  
in numbers.

In March, every year, World Book Day becomes the national conversation.



**3,000**

pieces of media coverage including... Extensive online and print broadcast including BBC Breakfast, ITV London, CBeebies Bedtime Story and Steph's Packed Lunch.

Sir Lenny Henry joined BBC Breakfast Live to discuss the importance of reading and finished the day with CBeebies Bedtime Story, reading Luna Loves World Book Day by Joseph Coelho.



BBC Breakfast

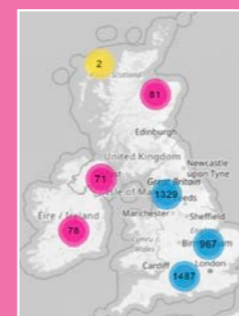
**1,930**

libraries joined in the celebrations with story telling events, displays and activities sharing the joy of reading, choosing and book discovery.



Over **4,000**

booksellers participated and got involved with colourful displays, events and pop-up bookshops. World Book Day saw the largest uplift in sales of books of any week of the year, including Christmas. Total Consumer Market +38%, Children's Books +35%.



**50 million**

book tokens distributed through schools, magazines & partnerships including

**5.3 million**

book tokens on Happy Meal® boxes

# World Book Day's strategy and impact

**Increasing the reach and impact of the World Book Day campaign:**  
Giving every child the opportunity to be a reader by increasing reach and addressing behavioural and economic barriers.

Every March, World Book Day, shines a spotlight on the importance of reading for pleasure. By creating a buzz and excitement around reading we inspire a new generation of children to choose to read. Through family reading corners in libraries and bookshops, fun football reading sessions with McDonald's, book parties in the sky courtesy of the London Eye, books popping up on Manchester trams, and free audiobooks through our partnership with Yoto, we invited everyone to celebrate World Book Day in a way that worked for them.



"It is a moment where we say publicly that reading is important, playful and social."

(Teacher, World Book Day 2023 survey)

**In 2023, we focused on:**

## Embedding our 6 principles of reading for pleasure



Our school and early years resources are created to encourage children to discover a love of reading. This year, we worked in ten schools in areas of high deprivation (supported by The Mercers Company) to understand what prevents, and motivates, a child to read. Our teacher seminars in partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, The Open University and The National Literacy Trust advised teachers on how to develop a reading for pleasure culture in their school.

"The teachers packs and digital activities offer a huge number of different ways to engage with children in an easy-to-access format."

(Teacher, World Book Day 2023 survey)



"Even the most reluctant readers are able to enjoy World Book Day as it isn't about their ability to read but about what they enjoy reading. It makes it a level playing field."

(Teacher, World Book Day 2023 survey)

**52.1%** of teachers reported that World Book Day is extremely or very effective for children who are not interested in reading (up from 35% in 2019)

## Making World Book Day celebrations inclusive and available to all

With the cost of living crisis making it harder for many families to access books and reading materials, we encouraged everyone at school, nursery and home to celebrate World Book Day with low/no-cost reading ideas, from whole school reading activities to games and free audiobooks.

"A focus on reading for pleasure rather than just dressing up was transformative this year. We used lots of ideas from the website to create opportunities for children to read, talk about reading and share stories with friends."

(Teacher, World Book Day 2023 survey)



CEIX Art Post

## Spotlight on early years



The early years are crucial for a child's reading journey. We partnered with BookTrust to host engaging story time sessions for preschoolers with our £1 book authors and illustrators. At the three events, all held in libraires in areas of low literacy and high deprivation, children chose a £1 book to take home. Participants reported feeling more comfortable exchanging their tokens in a place with no onward spending pressure. BookTrust also distributed 90K £1 book tokens through BookStart Co-ordinators in library settings.

**Improving life chances for children through reading: ensuring our activities meet the charity's purpose and the needs of beneficiaries – particularly those from lower socio-economic groups.**

## Working in partnership to widen access for all children

We collaborated with partners including the National Literacy Trust, BookTrust and BBC Teach to create inspiring digital events featuring the authors and illustrators behind the £1 books. **960k children** experienced these events bringing the excitement of World Book Day to schools, nurseries and homes across the country.

We also ran live events in partnership with the National Literacy Trust, Bradford Literature

"After [Lenny Henry] reading parts of the book, I want to read the book. So I'm going to ask my parents to get the book for me."

(Child after attending a live author event)

## Giving every child the chance to choose and own their own book

In 2023, we worked with over **4,000 booksellers** who buy 2 million of the £1 books from publishers (who fund the printing and distribution of the books), to gift to children for free in exchange for their £1 book tokens. Families found their nearest bookseller with our new interactive map.

"In our disadvantaged area, it is a special experience for children to take their token to choose a book in a shop."

(Participating bookseller)



Festival and Waterstones, showcasing our £1 authors to over **4,000 children** and giving every child a book to take home.

We want every child to be a reader. To encourage access we work with the RNIB, Blind Dogs, Calibre Audio and NCBI to distribute the £1/£1.50 books in large print, braille and audio. We also work with Books Council of Wales and Foras na Gailege in the Republic of Ireland to provide a £1/£1.50 book choice in the Welsh and Irish languages respectively so that all children are given the opportunity to choose a book that speaks to them.

"Kids were proud to come in with their tokens and to choose a book."

(Participating bookseller)



Many children look forward to celebrating World Book Day by going to choose a £1 book with their £1 book token. To make this exciting occasion accessible to more children we gifted **90K £1/£1.50 books**.

Through our targeted partnerships with publishers, booksellers and community partners including the National Literacy Trust, and with funding from McDonald's, we reached more of the country's most disadvantaged children and young people through prisons, foodbanks, libraries and other community settings.

Children's Books Ireland and AnPost delivered **14K** World Book Day books to children in Irish hospitals, direct provision centres, homelessness services and Travelling communities.



World Book Day and National Literacy Trust event in Peterborough

"In the current economic climate both the schools and us were keener than ever to make sure all local children got a book and the amount of happy kids leaving the shop reading was gratifying."

(Participating bookseller)



World Book Day author event in Number 10 Downing Street

For **1 in 5** children receiving free school meals, the book they chose to buy with their £1 book token was the first book of their own.

## Spotlight on libraries

Over 1,930 libraries joined in World Book Day with displays, activities and events offering children and families an accessible way to enjoy reading and discover new books for free.



"World Book Day is a great way to engage children with books and develop a positive relationship with the library. The book tokens allow children to engage with books and parents to buy them a book without financial pressure."

For more detailed information on our 5 year strategy, visit [worldbookday.com](http://worldbookday.com)

# Measuring World Book Day's impact on our beneficiaries

As part of our 2020-2025 strategy we are looking at the impact that World Book Day has and understanding how to reach our beneficiaries more effectively.

NB Data from the Nielsen and National Literacy Trust reports for 2021 and 2022 relates to World Book Days that took place during the pandemic. World Book Day activity returned to normal in 2023. This data will be represented in the 2024 impact report.

**86%** of UK adults (16-75) have heard of the event 'World Book Day'

Among those who are aware of World Book Day

- **91%** believe World Book Day aims to encourage children to read for pleasure
- **78%** agree World Book Day is a fun event
- **79%** agree World Book Day is a good way of making children feel more enthusiastic about reading

On behalf of World Book Day, Ipsos UK interviewed a nationally representative sample of 2,241 adults aged 16-75 in the UK within which 1,950 were aware of World Book Day. Interviews took place on the online Omnibus between 24 and 27 March 2023. Data were weighted to the known offline population for age, gender, social grade, working status and region.

**World Book Day is the leading source of book discovery for 5-10 year olds. For less affluent families, it is the second source of offline book discovery after supermarkets (28%)\*.**

From the 2023 NLT, Annual Literacy Survey, (relating to World Book Day 2022), we can see:

**95.4%** of children and young people have heard of World Book Day.

**2 in 3 children (77.2%)** took part in a World Book Day event or activity (up from **64.8%** in 2020). This rose to **81.5%** for children in key stage 2.

**1 in 7 pupils (16.1%)** said that the book they 'bought' with their World Book Day book token had been their first book of their own. Among children receiving free school meals, this number rose to **1 in 5 (20.7%)**.

From the Nielsen, Understanding the Children's Book Consumer, 2022, data we can see:

STATEMENTS RELATING TO WORLD BOOK DAY (% TRUE)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
World Book Day makes children more enthusiastic about books and reading	27%	24%	27%	24%	27%
There is a good selection of World Book Day books for children to choose from	26%	24%	24%	24%	23%
The World Book Day voucher encourages children to go in to bookshops	28%	23%	24%	23%	26%
Parents say World Book Day is more about school than home reading	22%	21%	22%	19%	24%
World Book Day encourages parents to read to their child	22%	19%	21%	21%	22%

\* Nielsen, Understanding the Children's Book Consumer, 2022. Figures relate to the year the data was taken and refer to the World Book Day that took place the year before.

As a result of World Book Day, primary children said they:

	2020	2021	2022
Read more with their parents	30.5%	36%	28.5%
Talk more about books with their family and friends	45.3%	46%	35%
Make more time to read	45%	54%	42.6%
Find reading more fun	63%	59%	47.9%
Have more choice in what they can read		55%	43.2%

National Literacy Trust, Annual Literacy Survey. Figures refer to the year World Book Day took place. The survey for 2020 was conducted during lockdown so figures need to be considered in this context

From our survey with parents (2023) we can see that as a result of World Book Day:

- **39%** of children find reading more fun
- **43%** of children talk more about or recommend books
- **32%** of children make more time to read
- **37%** of children feel they have more choice in what they read

What children like best about World Book Day:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Being read to	17%	16%	14%	17%	14%
Receiving book voucher /getting a new book	25%	25%	26%	24%	25%
Being able to choose a book themselves	24%	23%	24%	24%	22%
Dressing up at school	33%	35%	34%	34%	39%
Nothing: don't like/ take part in World Book Day	26%	30%	27%	31%	25%

Nielsen, Understanding the Children's Book Consumer

World Book Day's annual survey to schools/nurseries taken just after World Book Day 2023 shows awareness/agreement levels for the following statements:

	EARLY YEARS	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
World Book Day is extremely/very effective in fostering a reading for pleasure culture in your setting.	81% 70% in 2022	84% 77% in 2022	73% 50% in 2022
World Book Day is extremely/very effective in reaching reluctant readers.	59% 61% in 2022	53% 40% in 2022	18% 24% in 2022

What best helps children perceive reading as fun?

	EARLY YEARS	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Dressing up	79%	83%	35%
Emphasis on reading for pleasure	68%	70%	74%
Sharing recommendations with peers	53%	68%	51%

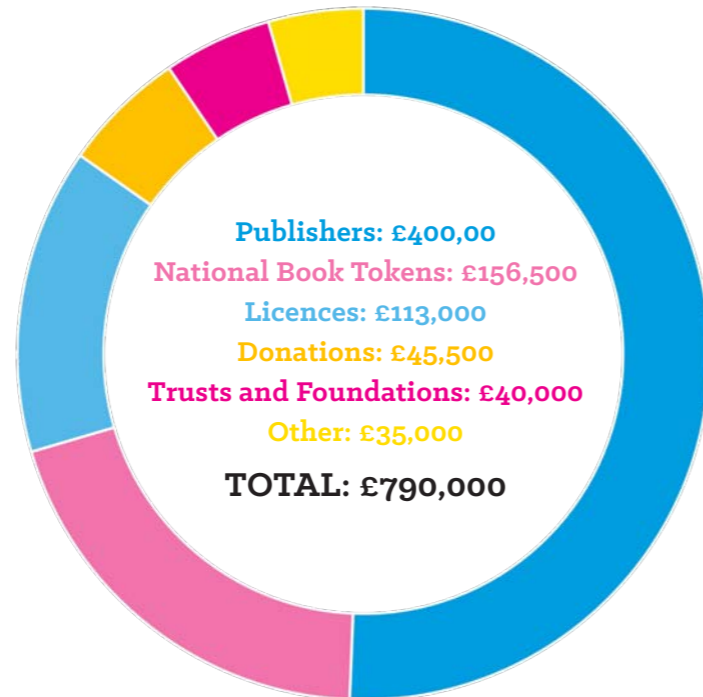
90k World Book Day books donated to:

- Prisons 20,105
- National Literacy Trust literacy hubs 22,630
- National Literacy Trust, Premier League Reading Stars programme 15,640
- Community projects in Republic of Ireland 10,000
- Community projects in Wales 9,250
- BookTrust 2,000
- Scottish Book Trust 2,000
- Other 8,375

# How World Book Day is funded

In 2022/2023 the charity had an overall turnover of £790,000 with a breakdown of funding as follows:

- Publishers
- National Book Tokens
- Licences
- Donations
- Trusts and Foundations
- Other



## How funds are spent

The funds that World Book Day raises through publisher contributions, partner license agreements, grant funders, corporate donations and individual giving are used to:

- Give every child a book of their own**  
A donation of £1/€1.50 helps us get book tokens and books to children across the UK and Ireland. For 1 in 5 children receiving free school meals the World Book Day £1/€1.50 book is the first they have had of their own.  
(2023 National Literacy Trust Annual Literacy Survey)
- Encourage more children to read for pleasure**  
By making books fun and accessible, we transform attitudes to reading encouraging more families, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or experiencing inequality, to enjoy books together.
- Ensure access to books for every child**  
Working with local communities, libraries and charity partners we deliver exciting activities to encourage reading and get books to the children and young people who need them most.
- Create resources for schools, libraries and families to encourage reading for fun**  
By working with trusted partners we provide fun content, resources and activities to support and encourage children to see themselves as readers and help them on their reading journeys.

# With thanks

Thank you to all involved in World Book Day from publishers to booksellers, librarians to teachers, authors to illustrators, and all our amazing partners for their generous support in helping us change children's lives through books and reading.

## Come and talk to us about working together

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Sign up for the World Book Day newsletter:  
[worldbookday.com/keep-in-touch/](http://worldbookday.com/keep-in-touch/)

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Registered charity number: 1079257 (England and Wales)  
Registered company number: 03783095 (UK)



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