

## *Stay Connected!* Reading Friends Toolkit

### Ideas and activities to stay connected

These resources are working documents and we would very much welcome your thoughts and input during this changing and challenging time.

These ideas could also be used to stay connected with parents, grandparents, elderly neighbours, families, or anyone who is self-isolating, in a care home or sheltered accommodation as well as Reading Friends participants and volunteers.

Let's work together to start conversations through reading to help those who need us the most.

- Send a letter, poem, story, postcard, drawing, photo, book recommendations or suggestions, video clip digitally. Maybe take a photo on your phone of a letter you've received and send it to a friend.
- Use our [Spring pack](#), [Foraging pack](#) or [Don't Judge a Book by its Cover pack](#) for inspiration or look out for the ideas we share on our social media.
- Reading Friends projects can use our card templates to write and send messages for [England/NI](#), [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#).
- Share images of the favourite page of your book and chat about your favourite authors.
- Share stories or rhyme times online or by phone through options discussed in our [Different ways to stay connected](#) resource.
- Your local libraries are providing lots of virtual activities and events to get involved with – find your local library service in [England and Wales](#), [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) here.
- Could any classes within schools (key workers' children might still be going to school) write, photograph or video any of the above and you send on to others?
- If schools are teaching any classes online from home, could they write, photograph or video any of the above as part of their online lessons?
- Do you have artwork from your own children that you could photograph and send?
- Encourage small acts of kindness.
- [Dementia diaries](#) Would anyone living with dementia like to take this time of living in self-isolation to record/video their experiences of living with dementia? Or a volunteer might want to use this time to transcribe audio diaries?
- Be there for others – if you haven't spoken to someone in a while – get in touch!

- Could volunteers send electronic letters to any of your isolated participants or would they like to get more involved with <https://covidmutualaid.org/> detailed below?
- Encourage people to stay connected with you and us on social media including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram if they use these platforms.
- Share activities and information via social media. We will be on @readingfriends\_ and @readingagency
- Or maybe you'd like to set up your own [virtual book group](#).

## Resources

Make sure to look at our [Resources Library](#) under [Stay Connected!](#) which contains lots of resources and where we'll be adding more materials. As above, we would recommend any of the following ideas are sent electronically:

- Our resource packs which have activities and readings for volunteers or participants.
- The [Reading Agency hub](#) contains resources across all The Reading Agency's programmes.
- As all major events have been cancelled, try to share resources, poems and excerpts which celebrate and mark special days. Use our [Communications Calendar](#) to help. We'll be sharing resources through social media and in our Resources Library as they are created, so watch this space.
- See our [Top Tips for Living in Self-isolation](#) for ideas to think positive, be healthy and keep busy.
- [Chatterbooks resources page](#) has ideas, resources and activities.
- The [Summer Reading Challenge](#) this year is **Silly Squad**. Find out you can get involved this summer.
- The [Summer Reading Challenge](#) website also has [authors reading excerpts](#) from their stories and also [games](#) for children.
- [Reading Groups for Everyone](#) have lots of reading group guides for books.
- The [Mental Health Awareness Network](#) has collated lots of initiatives for creative isolation.
- [Virtual museum tours](#)
- Archive of poets and poems from the [poetry archive](#).
- Poems to view on video at the [Poetry Station](#).
- Have a look at [NASA](#)'s image and video library and send photos and clips.

### Links to audio media:

- Free e-books and audio books through apps such as [Libby](#), from [Overdrive](#) or [Borrowbox](#)– you just need to download the app/s and sign up with your local library cards.
- Your local library website will also have free digital resources you can access, such as newspapers and magazines.

- The [Anything But Silent](#) podcast from the British Library muses on the power of books and libraries – featuring [Reading Friends](#).
- Radio and podcasts could be different options to watching TV: [BBC Sounds](#) has a wide array of interesting programmes, podcasts, radio and music – you just need to register or sign in with a BBC account.
- Discover the latest season of the [Radio 2 Book Club](#) with Jo Whiley. You can listen to the authors on the Jo Whiley show on BBC Sounds, and get even more recommendations by seeing all the [books featured last year](#).
- Know of any interesting podcasts? Our favourite is Desert Island Discs. Listen to [Pam Ayres](#) here. [Guardian Books Podcast](#), [Metro Book Chat](#), Podcasts from the [publisher Penguin](#) are just a few different podcasts.
- [Poetry Exchange](#) A site celebrating and sharing poems as friends. Listen to people reading and discussing poems.

## Stay connected on social media

Reading Friends Twitter: [@ReadingFriends\\_](#)

Keep up to date with The Reading Agency news [@readingagency](#) on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

## Feedback

- Is there anything we could provide to help during this time?
- What would be useful for you?
- Are there any ideas you'd like to share?
- Are you doing or planning anything which you could share with everyone?
- Does your organisation have any different or interesting ways of keeping people connected?

Please email [readingfriends@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:readingfriends@readingagency.org.uk) if you have any ideas or suggestions.