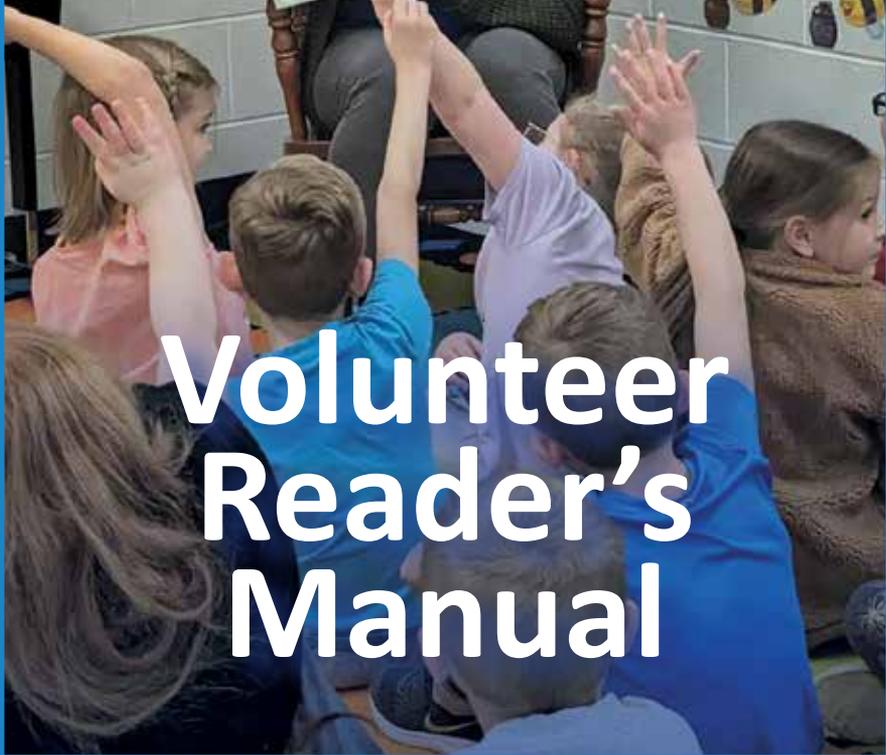


**READ ALOUD**  
WEST VIRGINIA



# Volunteer Reader's Manual

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# Mission

Read Aloud West Virginia motivates children to want to read.

Motivation is necessary to develop any skill. Read Aloud engages families, schools, businesses, civic groups, health care professionals, and community members to model reading for fun because children imitate the important adults in their lives.

Children who discover reading for pleasure become motivated to read on their own, both inside and outside of school. As they read, they build background knowledge and skills that serve them throughout school and life.

Read Aloud West Virginia keeps books in the hands and on the minds of children to nurture a state full of skilled readers.

*“Next to hugging and talking to children,  
reading aloud is the greatest gift we can give them.  
Beyond the positive role modeling and physical bonding that  
takes place, we are stimulating imagination,  
enriching vocabulary, building listening skills and  
whetting an appetite for a love of reading.”*



— Jim Trelease  
*The Read-Aloud Handbook*

# Why Read Aloud?

For years, less than half of West Virginia children read on grade level by third grade, and that was true even before the Covid pandemic disrupted reading instruction.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

The good news is that researchers estimate as many as 95 percent of people can learn to read. How to teach children to read is well understood. What works for children who have dyslexia, or for people from low-income communities, is good for everyone.

Children need good, intentional instruction on how sounds, letters, and words work. Teachers provide those lessons. Students also need books and reading/listening experiences that draw them in and propel them. They need words and ideas in their spoken vocabulary to make sense of what they read. Families and communities provide those experiences.

That's what reading aloud does. When children listen to books for fun, their brains form neural networks needed to read well on their own. They amass background knowledge that will make future texts comprehensible. All while they are laughing, gasping, or otherwise enjoying books with adults.

So, even a child from a low-income family (or a low-income state) can learn to read well. West Virginia children have the ability to rank among the best readers in the nation.

It starts with reading aloud to children, from birth and even after they can read on their own.



A Berkeley County first grader reads to her sister.

# Why read to babies and toddlers?

It can look like children start learning to read around school age, when they begin to name letters and ask about words. But that's just the visible part of the process. Their brains have been building networks and background knowledge since they were born.

Reading to babies grows their brains. As babies listen to their caregivers talk, sing, rhyme words, and name things, they learn their language. They learn new words and concepts from the rich vocabulary of books. They develop warm, happy associations with reading and books.

Reading to babies signals their bodies to strengthen pathways between brain cells and between different regions of the brain that are important for reading later.

# Why read to little kids?

In preschool and early grades, reading to children continues to build understanding of the world. As children begin to sound out, or decode, words on their own, they match the "new" words to words and meanings they already have in their spoken vocabulary. Children can listen to and understand books that are more difficult than they can read alone, building their background knowledge. Background knowledge is the single biggest driver of reading comprehension. Listening to fluent readers helps to draw students forward into more difficult works.

# Why read to bigger kids?

Adults sometimes think that reading to children who can read for themselves is a waste of time. "It's the kids who need practice," they think. Or they suppose that big kids won't be interested in a "little kid" activity.



Taylor County elementary students enjoy "The Grouchy Ladybug" by Eric Carle.

But older kids still benefit from being read to. And they love it. They may even want to take turns reading. Remember that background knowledge drives reading comprehension. Reading books to children that they cannot yet read perfectly on their own drives growth in background knowledge.

Also, children benefit from discussion sparked by reading together. When families enjoy a story aloud, they often share laughs, suspense, puzzles, and ethical questions. These are opportunities for learning important values, culture, and empathy. Children learn as they take turns in conversation about a shared story.

There are other benefits. Reading or listening can soothe and comfort both kids and adults.

Children of all ages follow the example of their most beloved adults. If their grownups make reading a habit, children are much more likely to do so.



Kanawha County third graders are engrossed in “They All Saw a Cat,” by Brendan Wenzel.

## What does a Read Aloud WV volunteer do?

Volunteer readers read to a class each week, just for fun.

Volunteers are matched with a classroom teacher who has asked for a reader. Readers may already know which room they want.

Volunteers choose and practice their books ahead of time. When they first begin, volunteers may spend more than an hour each week choosing, practicing, and reading. Over time, volunteers develop a collection of favorite titles they are ready to perform.

Volunteers entertain and inspire children. They read stories, both fiction and non-fiction, from many different genres. Students show interest in books that their readers share in class. They look forward to their Read Aloud time.

## Why does Read Aloud ‘train’ volunteer readers?

Reading alone or with family members is different from reading in a classroom. By taking time to get oriented with Read Aloud West Virginia, volunteers:

- Maintain quality of the experience offered to students and teachers.
- Understand Read Aloud’s mission, programs, and goals.
- Know how to answer questions about Read Aloud West Virginia.
- Become community ambassadors for reading to children.
- Learn what is expected before committing to a classroom.

## Rules for Read Aloud WV volunteers

### 1. Practice. Practice. Practice.

Practice each picture book at least three times. Read each chapter book at least once. There is a reason why this is Read Aloud West Virginia’s first rule. Do not grab a book on the run or read whatever someone puts in your hands. That is not the Read Aloud way. A poor read-aloud volunteer is worse than no reader at all.

### 2. Choose good books.

Good books are age-appropriate, in both subject matter and emotional level. Choose books that you enjoy. Remember you are “selling” this book, and you can’t sell what you don’t like.

### 3. Be a good classroom guest.

Arrive and leave on time. Plan for time to sign in at the office. Follow all school rules. Swap contact information with your teacher and let the teacher know if an illness or a schedule conflict arises. Teachers should do the same for readers.



Beverly Richards, Marion County Chapter leader and retired teacher and education professor, reads to third graders at Monongah Elementary.

### 4. Understand your role, and the roles of other professionals.

Remember that you are a guest. You are not the teacher, and not a disciplinarian. The teacher handles discipline issues. The teacher stays in the room throughout your visit. You are not to be left alone with children.

### 5. Respect children’s privacy.

If you overhear personal details at school, forget them. Do not gossip about children. Treat them with the respect and confidentiality that you would want for yourself.

### 6. Do not proselytize.

Do not read books, even children’s books, meant to advance a particular religious or political goal. Volunteers are there to inspire children to read, not to serve another cause. What is suitable at home may not be appropriate at school, where there may be children of many different backgrounds. When in doubt, leave it out. Or, when in doubt, consult your teacher or a librarian.

### 7. Be professional.

Follow school rules. Be respectful. Do not contradict or criticize the teacher or school in front of students. This extends to social media and in the community. Use good judgment in what you post and how you talk about your school in your role as a Read Aloud WV volunteer.



West Taylor Elementary students enjoy a Dr. Seuss day.

## Are Read Aloud volunteers mandated reporters?

West Virginia law requires all volunteers of entities that provide organized activities for children, who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused, or observes a child being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse or neglect, to report the circumstances to the West Virginia Department of Human Services (WVDHS) within 24 hours after suspecting the abuse or neglect.

Volunteers can report concerns to Centralized Intake of WVDHS at 1-800-352-6513.

In addition, volunteers should report the concerns to a principal at the school where they are reading, as well as to the Executive Director of Read Aloud West Virginia at 304-345-5212.

Moreover, if a volunteer believes that the child has suffered serious physical or sexual abuse or assault, they are required to immediately report that abuse or assault to the State Police and/or their local law enforcement agency.

It is not clear whether volunteer readers for Read Aloud West Virginia are persons mandated under West Virginia law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. However, out of an abundance of caution, we think it is important to advise all volunteers of the law and of the appropriate authorities where suspicions should be reported.

## The ways of a professional reader

*Read Aloud WV volunteers are professionals. We are always learning and improving. Here are some tips for giving your best performance:*

### 1. Practice.

Practice eliminates unwanted surprises, such as words or themes that you do not want to bring into the classroom. It lets you match your voice to the pace of the story. It gives you an opportunity to develop voices or sound effects, if you want. You will spot the laugh lines, suspense, or new words and time your reading accordingly. You will grow familiar enough with the story to look up and make eye contact with your listeners.

### 2. Time yourself during practice.

Your selection of books should fit the time you have. Your listeners should feel a sense of completion when you finish, not interruption.



### 3. Prepare to read more books than you think you will need.

What appears to be a good choice may simply not work, or the teacher may have read it the day before. Children may want to discuss a book with you, or ask to hear a book a second time, which will change your time estimates. If you have multiple options, you will be able to adjust.

### 4. Watch the calendar.

When reading chapter books in installments over several weeks, plan ahead to finish the story before a long break. It is easy for students to lose the momentum of a story if school is out for a week or more.

### 5. When you're in class, introduce yourself.

Point out the book's title and author. Let students know why you want to be there, why you chose the book, or if you know something about the author. Tell them where you found the book. This can be an opportunity to make them aware of their public library or a local bookstore.

### 6. Connect the book to the children.

Connect the book to the experience of your listeners with a short question or two, just enough to get children to think about their own

knowledge. “Anyone here ever been in the woods?” for example.

**7. At the start of the year, invite children to imagine the words you read as real things in their minds.**

Another time, remind them to imagine the action like they are watching a movie in their minds. Another time, invite them to imagine the scene with all their senses: “For example, if the story mentions a school bus, you know what a school bus looks like. You know what a school bus sounds like,” and so on. Children who are not yet accomplished readers may struggle to see mental pictures when they read on their own. But they can practice with you. By making the process more explicit to them, you may help them to improve their reading comprehension.

**8. Mind your pace.**

Slow down so children can follow. In some stories, you may want to slow down or speed up to match the action in the story.

**9. Read as if you are saying the lines in real life.**

For example, if a character asks a question, raise your voice at the end just as we do in actual conversation. If the character would naturally pause before answering, let there be a pause. Of course, do NOT read in a monotone.

**10. Pause for questions or clarifications as needed.**

Check that students are following the story, but don’t delay the action unnecessarily. The book should mostly succeed on its own. If you have to explain so much that the pace of the story is broken, the book is still too unfamiliar for this class.



Jessica Silber of Kanawha County reads at Elk Elementary Center.

**11. Show the pictures.**

Pictures are an important part of the story and help children to make meaning. Children will prompt you if you forget, but build in time to hold picture books still in front of groups of your listeners until everyone has had time to take them in. Practice holding the book so that children can see pictures while you read as much as possible to keep the story moving.

**12. Leave time for reactions and discussion.**

Give children time to process and comment. They may want to see certain pictures again, or relisten to certain parts. Ask open-ended questions to prompt thought, such as “Well, what do you think?” or “Did Jack’s dad make the right choice?” Ask simple follow-up questions as necessary to help students to articulate their thoughts. People make meaning and learn as they discuss. Do not quiz children on the story or make students feel like they are being tested.

**13. Give children a chance to predict what will happen.**

Predicting what comes next supports important reading skills, and gives listeners opportunities to engage with the story. With more complex stories, it can also bring out different interpretations among students and lead to interesting discussions.

**14. For your first visit, consider something funny.**

Laughter is healthy. It relieves stress, and it will make a good first impression on students who don’t yet look forward to being read to. If you make them laugh on your first day, they will be glad to see you the second week.



Volunteer reader Casey Willson reads “Waiting Is Not Easy” by Mo Willems with first graders at Gerrardstown Elementary School in Berkeley County.

**15. Learn what you can about the group.**

How old are they? What are they interested in? How long can they enjoyably sit and listen to a reader?

**16. Until students grow used to being read to and you grow accustomed to them, choose books with lots of action and dialogue.**

For older students, choose shorter books that you can read in one or two sittings, until you get to know them better.

**17. As you get to know the class, you can try stretching their listening muscles with longer or more challenging stories – as long as they are enjoyable.**

**18. Include diverse books.**

It is important for children to see themselves in the stories we share with them. Over the course of the school year, be sure to include books that feature Black authors and characters, and books that include people of many backgrounds.

**19. Include different genres.**

Read what you love, but also learn what children in the class are

Continued on page 10

interested in, and make an effort to find enjoyable books featuring those subjects. Books about their interests will prove the book’s relevance and drive interest in books.

**20. Mix in some poetry.**

Kids love poetry, especially funny and rhyming poems. Consider keeping a poetry book in your bag to fill in those odd few minutes of time that sometimes appear.

**21. Tread gently around heavy subjects.**

Good children’s literature deals with hard things. These books can be great to read aloud, but before taking on a tough subject, check with the teacher. For example, before starting a book about death and grief, make sure there is not a child in the class dealing with a recent death.

**22. Avoid graphically violent stories which may distress students.**

Volunteers evaluate books for the right emotional level, as well as subject and text difficulty.

**23. When in doubt about a book that you really believe in, leave the book with your teacher ahead of time and ask if it is suitable.**

A book may be right for one class, but not another.

**24. Watch your audience for signs.**

Restlessness can mean a poor selection, while rapt attention affirms a good book choice.

**25. Give yourself a graceful exit.**

Once in a while, despite your diligence, you may start a book that is just too difficult, or not connecting. No problem. Just pull a back-up choice from your bag. It’s easy to abandon a book that isn’t working: “You know what? I thought I was in the mood for this book, but I’m not. Would you mind if I read this instead?” Your listeners will let you know.

**26. Thank your audience for being good listeners, and then pat yourself on the back!**

You are giving children a great gift.

**27. Keep a log of what you read – title, author, and comments.**

This will help you with future choices. Pretty soon, people will ask you for recommendations.

**28. Respond to Read Aloud WV surveys.**

Your experience is important. Your responses help us to keep accurate records and to focus efforts on classrooms that still need a reader.



## Where do I get the books?

*Read Aloud WV readers choose and bring the books they read. Some ideal sources include:*

**1. Your public library.**

Reserve favorites or browse the shelves and take home a bagful. Read a couple of picture books at night. Keep the enjoyable ones to practice. Return the rest.

**2. Ask your librarian.**

Most children’s librarians love to recommend books and will make a stack for you to pick up. Practice the ones you like and return the rest.

**3. Your own bookshelf.**

If you have appropriate books of your own, you can read them. Let children know if it is a family treasure, or a child’s favorite, or a gift, for example. This is a part of modeling how reading for pleasure fits into our lives.

**4. The school library.**

If you are short of options, you may be able to arrange with the school to borrow books from the school or classroom library. You must still have them ahead of time to practice. Some schools have eliminated their libraries, and many more are neglected, so this may not be an appealing option. The disadvantage to this approach is that children may miss out on a wider variety of books that readers can bring from larger collections. The advantage is that children become interested in the books that our readers share. If that book is already in their school, it is easier for a child to pick it up after you leave.



**5. Book lists.**

Recommendations for every age are found everywhere. You can browse years of book favorites from Read Aloud readers online: [readaloudwestvirginia.org/book-lists-and-reviews/](http://readaloudwestvirginia.org/book-lists-and-reviews/).

# Help!

## How do I judge if it is a good book?

A good book is one that you and your students enjoy, and that is appropriate in every way – reading difficulty level, subject matter, and emotional level. Here are a few things your favorites may have in common:

### 1. A clearly defined theme.

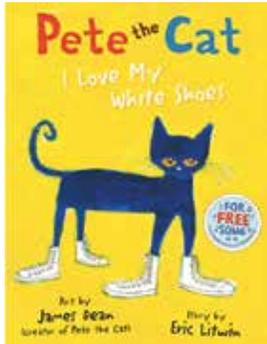
Memorable stories tend to explore ideas that humans can relate to, such as underdog characters, sibling rivalry, or dreams thwarted and later achieved. Good stories move us to experience a range of emotions.

### 2. A good plot.

Especially for young listeners, the action in a good book will move fast enough to hold attention. Tension in the story will build to a climax, which is resolved. Readers and listeners should feel satisfied at the end of the story.

### 3. Engaging language.

You could call it style. A variety of interesting words, pleasing sounds and rhythm, and vivid word pictures will make a good plot worth listening to. We want children to see the scene in their heads. Good authors can do this with words.



### 4. Characters.

Characters are believable, even if they are fanciful. As readers, we empathize with characters. To some degree, we share their struggles and successes.

### 5. Illustrations.

Illustrations are an important part of the story. They help children to learn new ideas. They reinforce or augment what children imagine. They also introduce readers to different styles of art.

### 6. Right listening level.

Remember that children can understand and benefit from listening to a book that is a grade level or two beyond what they can read proficiently themselves. Too far, and they cannot follow it. Too easy, and they may lose interest.

### 7. Relevant and popular topics.

Read what you love and, through interaction with the class, discover what members of the class love, such as basketball or fantasy. Children respond well to books about subjects that interest them. Some readers like to find books that explore topics children have studied. Children also benefit from reading or listening to multiple books on the same subject. Readers are not

required to match books to school lessons, but when it happens in a natural, enjoyable Read Aloud way, it can be a thrill for students to recognize something they have learned about and to build on that knowledge.



Linda See, retired teacher and volunteer reader, reads to students at Widmyer Elementary School in Morgan County.

## How do I get matched with a classroom?

### 1. Attend an orientation.

Good readers understand the role they are undertaking.

### 2. Complete the Reader Preference Form.

Whether paper or electronic, this form puts you on a school's roster of available readers. Already have an arrangement with a teacher? No problem! Just record that information on the form (please use QR code) and contact your teacher to begin. When in doubt, just email [stateoffice@readaloudwv.org](mailto:stateoffice@readaloudwv.org) with any questions or updates. After you complete the orientation and turn in your form, we will send you a Read Aloud WV card identifying you as an official volunteer reader.

### 3. Receive a call or email from your school.

Within a month of the orientation, you should hear from at least one of the schools you listed. The Read Aloud coordinator will offer you a classroom based on your preferences and put you in touch with the teacher. The coordinator may also advise you of county-specific requirements, such as a background check or an additional form required by the county school system. Follow through on any steps that the school assigns.



Scan to access reader preference form

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#### 4. Contact your teacher. Introduce yourself.

Get in touch with your teacher promptly. Swap contact information. Make sure your teacher has your name. Confirm any necessary details, including your starting day and time. Look at the schedule together and discuss any dates you should not show up, such as field trips or testing days. Identify the best contact method when plans change, for snow days or illness, for example.

#### 5. If a school doesn't contact you, please follow up.

School staff are busy and frequently fall behind on placing readers. If you haven't been matched, work through these steps:



■ Examine the list of classrooms in your area who want a reader: <https://readaloudwv.org/vacancies>. Choose a possible classroom, and contact the school to reach the teacher and get started.

■ Contact your local chapter leaders and let them know. (Find county contacts



here: <https://readaloudwv.org/participating-counties/>)

Some county chapters are very involved in placing readers and may be able to connect you with a classroom.

■ If you do not easily connect with a local volunteer or teacher, email [stateoffice@readaloudwv.org](mailto:stateoffice@readaloudwv.org) with an update on your status. Some counties need more help placing readers.

■ When you begin reading, email us at [stateoffice@readaloudwv.org](mailto:stateoffice@readaloudwv.org) to give us the details of where you are reading, including school, grade, and teacher's names. Thank you.



A satisfied customer at Fairplain Elementary School in Jackson County enjoys his new books.

## Six literacy experiences children should have every day

In a 2012 article, Richard Allington and Rachael Gabriel offer six experiences all children should have every day to become successful, engaged readers.

### 1. Every child reads something they choose.

"Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read," the authors say.

### 2. Every child reads accurately.

This means reading material at the "just right" level of difficulty. Spending more time reading doesn't help unless students are reading with at least 98 percent accuracy. Students solidify their decoding skills. "Perhaps more important, they are likely to understand what they read – and, as a result, to enjoy reading," say Allington and Gabriel.

### 3. Every child reads something they understand.

Comprehension is the goal of reading instruction. Too often, interventions for struggling readers focus on basic skills in isolation. All students benefit from high-quality reading instruction with engaging and comprehensible content.



Fifth-graders at Mary C. Snow Elementary School in Kanawha County show off their new books.

### 4. Every child writes about something personally meaningful.

Writing provides a different way to practice the skills of reading for an authentic purpose.



A St. Albans dad and son attend a Read Aloud WV Snuggle and Read in Kanawha County.

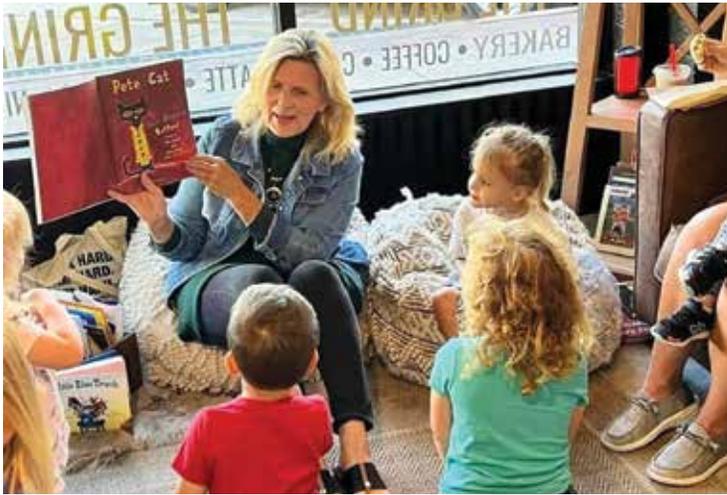
### 5. Every child talks with peers about reading and writing.

Conversations with classmates improve comprehension and engagement with texts. "Time for students to talk about their reading and writing is perhaps one of the most underused, yet easy-to-implement, elements of instruction," say the authors.

### 6. Every child listens to a fluent adult read aloud.

Listening to a competent adult modeling good reading helps students with vocabulary, background knowledge, sense of the story, awareness of genre and text structure, and comprehension."

*From "Every Child Every Day" by Richard Allington and Rachael Gabriel, Educational Leadership, March 2012 (Vol. 69, #6, p. 10-15), [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org).*



Cheryl Miller, a Jackson County volunteer and retired teacher, reads to toddlers and preschoolers during a regular read aloud time at The Grind coffee shop in Ripley.

## More ideas for encouraging reading

*Parents and family members can create opportunities to read and make time spent with books part of the social and recreational routine. In other words, include books in the fun stuff that kids get to do.*

- Set up a good reading light beside the bed. Enjoyable reading is comfortable.
- Allow enough time before bed to read aloud, and some more time for children to read on their own. This also creates a good quiet habit around bedtime.
- Keep books or magazines visible at home and in the car. Whatever your child is interested in, put books on those topics where they will be seen and spark interest.
- Include books in birthday and holiday gifts, both for your child and for others.
- Honor your child's birthday or your child's teacher by giving a book to the school or classroom library.
- Help your class or school get into a monthly book give-away habit. Mark long weekends or school breaks by creating a simple event where children choose a book to keep. Pretty soon, they will anticipate this tradition and ask about it. See if you can work up to one event per month.
- Notice subjects that interest a child, and help them to find multiple

books or other readings on that subject. This boosts reading comprehension faster than other methods.

- Help to establish a 10-minute fun reading time for the entire school (students and teachers) possibly at the close of the school day. It fosters a love of reading and sends students off in a good frame of mind.
- Sponsor a book fair, a book swap, or other distribution event.
- Get control of screen time in your own home. The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages TV and other media use by children younger than 2 and encourages interactive play. For older children, total entertainment screen time should be limited to less than two hours of educational, nonviolent programs a day. They should be supervised by parents or other responsible adults.
- Limit screen time for adults. Inform yourself about the unintended effects of these tools (such as disrupted sleep) and the intended effects (designed to stimulate addictive processes in the brain). Guard against letting family time become independent screen time for all ages.

Learn about the dangers of social media, particularly for developing children and teens. For example, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Anxious Generation*, recommends that school communities and parent friend groups agree on certain limits together to prevent the worst damage that social media can do. No single family or teacher can address the problem alone.

- Discuss and share appropriate books, magazines, and news articles you are reading. Sports fans share their enthusiasm, and children pick it up. The same is true for reading. Habits are caught more than taught.
- Visit your local libraries or bookstores. Children who connect reading with pleasure read more.

## Beyond classroom volunteers

*Read Aloud West Virginia's work falls into four overlapping categories:*

### 1. Volunteer readers.

The original program -- volunteers are matched with eager classrooms where they read for fun each week, serving as a live commercial for reading.

### 2. Public engagement.

Volunteers speak wherever they are invited, including school family nights, business groups, Rotary clubs, book clubs, and churches. Volunteers exhibit at fairs and other events to connect with families, schools, and volunteers.

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Sarabeth Harris, a Wood County Read Aloud Chapter leader and a retired teacher, speaks to parents at Emerson Elementary School.

### 3. Reader-friendly classrooms.

Read Aloud helps teachers to create classrooms that nurture readers for life. This may include help with book distributions and access to best practices.

### 4. Book distributions.

Volunteers distribute thousands of books each year through schools that participate in Read Aloud WV.

## How do book distributions work?

Readers and teachers who sign up with Read Aloud WV are eligible to request a book distribution for students. Distributions are scheduled as capacity allows.

Teachers and classroom readers may coordinate with county chapter leaders, and the Read Aloud WV office to schedule the event and transport books. Chapters also collaborate with organizations to distribute books at public events.

Read Aloud offers new and used books, depending on the event. All Read Aloud distributions emphasize choice, an important factor in motivation.

More details about different types of book distributions are available at [readaloudwv.org](http://readaloudwv.org).

## Rules for book distributions

*Some children do not yet enjoy reading. Read Aloud WV wants to provide the experience that turns those children into readers. For others who already read for fun, Read Aloud is about access to books.*

By accepting books from Read West Virginia, teachers, volunteers, principals, and collaborators agree to uphold the quality of book distributions by following Read Aloud WV's best practices:

**1. Read Aloud WV book distributions emphasize choice.** Children choose books free from mocking, nagging, or other judgements about what they “should” be reading.



**2. Books contain bookplates, a sticker, usually in the front, that invites children to claim ownership by writing their name in their book.**

Book ownership is a factor in reading success. Volunteers and teachers help to maintain the quality of distributions by making sure books are plated correctly, and by adding plates neatly, in a way that does not cover art or information whenever possible. Volunteers show the bookplates to children and encourage them to write their names.

**3. Children will be given time and quiet to browse, sample, and think about their choices.**

**4. Adults can and should help children who want it.** They can show children how to evaluate a book. Are there pictures? What does the text look like? Do you see words you know? Would you like to hear how it starts? These are skills that readers have. Conversation with kids about their choices and their interests is great.

**5. Some children will say, “I don’t like books.”** These are the very children we most need to reach. Resist the impulse to contradict. Instead, listen, agree where you can, and turn the conversation to something the child does like. Whether they take a book or not, give the child a good, respectful encounter with Read Aloud.

**6. Schools will not blemish Read Aloud books by assigning point values for Accelerated Reader or other point and prize schemes, which are not based in research and may serve as a disincentive to read in the long run.**

**7. Read Aloud sends extra books so that the last child in line has a choice just like the first in line.** Volunteers and school partners promise to be good stewards of resources, to distribute books as intended, and to work with Read Aloud WV to arrange for the return or distribution of leftover books.





A student at Ripley Elementary in Jackson County receives her chosen bundle of books on American history.



Thank you for volunteering to read. Sharing your love of books and reading can truly make a difference in a child's life. You are creating memories and motivating children to actually WANT to read.

**Happy reading!**

Read Aloud West Virginia is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded by a group of West Virginia parents in 1986. Read Aloud is fueled by donations, grants, sponsorships, and the efforts of more than a thousand volunteers around the state.

For more ways to support the work of Read Aloud West Virginia or to learn about sponsorship opportunities, please contact us:

**[stateoffice@readaloudwv.org](mailto:stateoffice@readaloudwv.org)**

**304-345-5212**