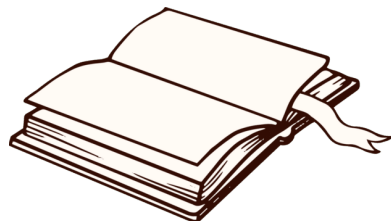


Reading Booklet

A Guide to Reading at The John of Gaunt School



Reading in Y7



At the John of Gaunt School, we want students to enjoy reading, use reading as a tool to help them learn, and to be able to read confidently.

In lessons	You will encounter reading material in your lessons with lots of different text types and purposes – this could be recipes, poems, Maths problems, maps, text books, experiment notes, musical scores, and lots more.
Tutor reading	You will read two books a year with your tutor, discussing the key themes and plot points with your tutor group as you read.
Sixth form reading	You may be paired with a sixth form reader who will share a reading book with you and help you gain confidence in your reading.
Library	You will have access to our very own dedicated library space and are welcome to borrow books and resources to take home. You will also have a fortnightly library lesson in the library with Mrs Bruton and your English teacher.



Reading interventions	In Y7 and Y8, everyone is tested twice a year with a test called the NGRT. This assesses your reading ability. From this testing, we may conduct further follow up testing. If you have difficulties with reading, we will be able to provide you with appropriate intervention (extra support) to help you feel more confident and develop your reading skills.
Competitions and Events	Mrs Bruton and the English team aim to offer reading events throughout the year. This may include author visits and webinars, includes celebrating World Book Day every March. We also enter several writing and speaking competitions and a creative competition organised by the University of Bristol.
Reading recommendations	There is space in your planner for mentioning and sharing your favourite books, as well as talking about this with your class mates and friends in library lessons.



Support with Reading

1

Ask for help and recommendations – speak to your tutor, teachers or Mrs Gilvin (literacy lead) if you need support with reading. Ask Mrs Bruton for a book recommendation, or chat to others about the last book they enjoyed.

2

Library - in addition to the school library, join your local library. It's free to join and they will have a wide range of books for your interests.

3

Subtitles - when you're watching TV, put the subtitles on. This is a simple but effective way of supporting your reading and spelling skills.

4

Read often – a little reading after school or before bed each day can boost you academically in lots of your subjects, and helps to practice your reading skills. Read out loud to people that you live with or a pet for extra practice.

5

Use reading strategies – you can approach any reading text with a few clear strategies to help you understand it better.



Reading Strategies



- **Clarify** – What is happening in each section?
Where is meaning unclear? Do I need to look up new vocabulary?
- **Ask questions** – What is happening here?
Why is the writer focusing on this?
- **Predict** – What is likely to happen next? What further detail could be included? What do I already know that could help me here?
- **Summarise** – How can I simplify this? What is the most important section?



Library at John of Gaunt

Welcome to your school library!

My name is Mrs Bruton, I am the school librarian and am lucky enough to spend my days surrounded by books and students!

When you start Year 7, you will find a library lesson on your timetable once every fortnight. We will start with a big library induction where I tell you all you need to know about how you can use the library. Some of you may have visited libraries before while others have never set foot in one. Please don't worry, it's a friendly space full of stories and I will try my hardest to find the right books for you!

In your library lesson we will have a book of the week. This will help introduce you to lots of different authors and genres (I'll tell you what that word means too!), some that you may never even have heard of before. After this, you will have time to read. It's a lovely relaxing time in your busy school day.

The library has books for everyone! There are plenty of Junior Fiction and Young Adult fiction books available, alongside graphic novels and of course non-fiction too. I try to make sure I keep up with what our students like to read and keep the library well stocked.

The library is also open outside of lesson time. You can come in and read, borrow books, do your homework, print work, colour in or do puzzles before and after school as well as during break and lunch.

I'll see you soon!

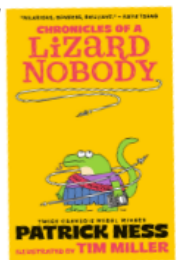


Mrs Bruton

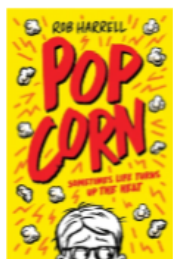
Suggested Summer Reads

Are you looking for a new recommendation? Mrs Bruton has some suggestions for your summer.

My first recommendation has to be **Wolf Siren** by **Beth O'Brien**, a retelling of the Little Red Riding Hood with lots of twists! This book just won two of the biggest book awards in the country, one voted for only by children. If you want to read something that will make you laugh out loud, try **Chronicles of a Lizard Nobody** by **Patrick Ness** or **Worst Holiday Ever** by **Charlie Higson**. Another book filled with funny illustrations and a good message is **Popcorn** by **Rob Harrell**. A great read, especially when you are facing a big transition! Do you like your books scary or creepy? Read **Gloom** by **Jack Mackay**! Deliciously dark and creepy but still junior fiction. Fancy some riddles and WWII history? **The Bletchley Riddle** by library favourite **Ruta Sepetys** and **Steve Sheinkin** is the book for you! If you like adventure and fantasy, try **Impossible Creatures** by **Katherine Rundell**. You may even have time to read book number 2! If you are a Formula 1 fan and you want to impress your family with lots of random facts and history, check out the **Racing Legends** series by **Maurice Hamilton**!



Happy summer reading!



Myths, Legends and Folktales

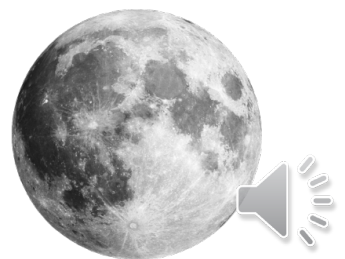
Your first unit for English lessons in Y7 is on myths and legends. In this booklet, there are three myths to read and enjoy over the summer.

Myth 1 - The Moonrakers

This story is a Wiltshire folk tale about smuggling, trickery, and being underestimated. It also explains why some places and people from Wiltshire might be referred to as "moonrakers". The pond in the story is believed to have been near Devizes and has been passed on since the 18th century.

On a summer's night in May, under the light of a full moon, two men crept out from their homes and tiptoed from shadow to shadow gingerly. One man pointed wordlessly to the clouds that passed over the moon, signalling that both men should advance further as the clouds covered the light of the moon. Both were carrying garden rakes, but this was no time for clearing leaves.

Inching forwards, stealthy and silent, the men approached a large duck pond, skirting the boundary of trees that ringed around it. They ducked down behind a bush, furtively glancing to see if they had been spotted. These two men were poor and desperate, and their desperation made them reckless...



By day, they were farm labourers, working in the fields to bring in crops and tend the animals. But this job paid very little and both men wanted more money, and more excitement.

During the night, they might hear a muffled knock at the door and know that stolen goods, smuggled from ships and pirates needed hiding before being transported further into the country towards London. It was dangerous work, but the men were richly rewarded with money and portions of the smuggled goods. This fateful night, the two men were seeking a hiding place for a barrel of brandy, an expensive drink which they could sell on for much profit.

Earlier that evening, they had attached ropes and stones to the barrel and thrown it into the pond where it sank below the lily pads and reeds, totally obscured from view. Now was the time to claim their reward and retrieve the barrel from its safe, secret hiding place.

As the men raised their garden rakes and gently dropped them into the water, swirling and swooshing, searching for the hidden ropes, they shuddered. They had heard hooves on the highway nearby and the slowing neigh of a horse pulled suddenly to a stop.



“Turn your light out”, hissed the first man, as the second hastily snuffed the candle in the lantern. Both men waited, still, unmoving, as the footsteps came nearer.

Smuggling carried a heavy fine as punishment (at best), and a prison sentence at worst. If discovered, both men would leave their families and homes instantly.

As the night watchman approached, accompanied by customs officers whose job it was to tackle any smuggling or wrongdoing in the area, the first man shivered. They had been caught in the act, with rakes, no good reason for being out at night and stolen goods sunk just below the surface, almost visible in the light of the full moon.

“Good evening officer”, stuttered the first man. “Lovely evening for fishing.”

The officer looked down at the first man, who was clearly nervous. He looked over pointedly at the rakes. This was evidently not a fishing trip.

“What are you doing out so late? We have reason to believe there are smugglers operating in this area and you are arousing much suspicion.”

The second man started forward quickly, aware that what he said next could save or condemn the two neighbours. “Why sir?”, he started respectfully. “My cousin and I were hungry. We saw the large cheese that fell into the pond from our windows and our appetites got the very best of us.”



The officer sighed with disdain and looked at the gentlemen with a bored air.

“What cheese?” he huffed dismissively, gesturing to an empty pond.

“That cheese there”, grinned the second smuggler, pointing to the reflection of the full moon on the surface of the pond. “We have been raking and raking but we can’t reach the cheese to fetch it”. The second man winked at the first man and his fellow smuggler realised the trick he was playing and nodded along vigorously.

The officer and his men laughed cruelly. These two country simpletons think the reflection of the moon is a wheel of cheese, they thought.

“Go back to your homes, gentlemen,” the officer urged. “No good comes from being out this late at night, no matter how hungry you are”, he giggled meanly. The officer and his men turned away from the men, still laughing, and mounted their horses, turning quickly back to the highway.

The second man turned triumphantly to the first man.

“They may think we’re stupid, but it’s us that has the last laugh”, he smiled, as he raked the ropes of the expensive barrel and heaved the treasure back to land.



Myth 2 – King Midas

This is a Greek myth about being careful what you wish for. This story is taken from a website called 'Classic Tales'. We use some of the stories from this website in our English lessons for the first term.

Dionysus, the god of drinking and drunkenness, wild music and wild dancing, loved to make great processions across the world with his satyrs, men with hairy legs and horses' hooves, singing and drinking and dancing. And among the satyrs would be Dionysus' old teacher, Silenus, white-haired, pot bellied, with red wine constantly dribbling from the corners of his mouth, but wise beyond wisdom.

And during one of those great processions across the world, old Silenus was left behind. And he was found by some people, by some mortals, staggering from one side of a road to another, singing to himself. And they caught the satyr; and they bound him with ropes; and they lifted him onto their shoulders; and they carried him to their king.

Now their king was called Midas, King Midas, and he was a worshipper of Dionysus, the god of drinking and drunkenness, and wild music and wild dancing. And when he saw the old satyr bound with ropes, he was furious with his people. He took a knife; he cut the ropes; he sat the old satyr on his own golden throne; and he ordered that a feast be held in honour of Silenus.



When the feast was finished, King Midas himself led the satyr to Dionysus, the great god. And when Dionysus saw his old teacher, his heart was filled with happiness. He ran across. He threw his arms round Silenus' neck. He kissed him on both cheeks and he turned to King Midas and he said, 'I will grant you one wish, one wish and one wish only. What do you want?'

And at that time King Midas needed gold. He needed more gold. And he was thinking to himself, 'If I ask for my chests and my coffers to be filled with gold, soon enough the gold will be spent. How could I get more gold than I've ever dreamed of?'



And then, suddenly, an idea came into his mind, beautiful in its simplicity. He said, 'What I want is this: that everything I touch be turned into shining gold.' The great god Dionysus looked at the king, and he smiled, and he bowed his head, and he vanished into the light.

And King Midas turned to walk home, and, as he turned, he felt a strange sensation. He looked down, and his clothes and his robes had hardened into gold. He crouched down. He touched the tip of a blade of grass.



And there it was like a little golden dagger, jutting out of the ground. He ran and plucked an apple from a tree, and it was heavy, yellow gold, cold against the palm of his hand. He touched the trunk of another tree, and there it was, a golden tree stretching high above his head, the leaves no longer whispering and rustling, but clinking and clanking like golden chimes.



And King Midas ran this way and that way, touching this and touching that. And when he came to his palace, he stretched out his hands on the doorway of the palace, and there was a golden portal reflecting the light of the sun. He strode inside. He told his servants to prepare a great feast, so that he could celebrate his golden gift. And meat and bread and wine and honeycakes were served; and King Midas sat down, picked up a piece of bread, put it into his mouth and bit. And his teeth scraped across rough gold. He grabbed a cup; he lifted it to his mouth. At the touch of his lips the wine hardened into gold and he was spitting out little golden shards. Suddenly, he understood his mistake, he understood his terrible mistake.

At that moment his little daughter, whom he loved, came running across the floor of the palace. She threw her arms around her father's neck, and she clattered onto the ground, the perfect, golden statue of a little girl but cold, cold, dead gold. Midas knelt beside her and his golden tears clattered onto her golden face. And he said, 'Dionysus, Dionysus, I have made a terrible mistake. I beg you, take back your gift of gold.'



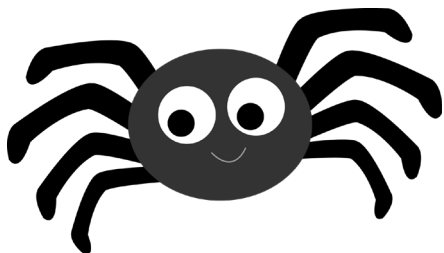
And on the high slopes of Mount Olympus Dionysus, the god of drinking and drunkenness, wild music, wild dancing, looked down at King Midas, and he felt pity stirring in his heart. And he appeared before the king. He said, 'Go and wash yourself in the River Pactolus where it bursts out of the side of the mountain, and the gold will be washed from your skin, your heart, your soul, and everything you've turned into gold will be returned to its proper form.'

And Midas leapt to his feet, and he ran out of the palace, and he ran, and he ran, and he ran until he came to the place where the River Pactolus burst from the side of the mountain. And he plunged into the water. He washed himself from head to foot. And as he washed himself, the gold was washed from his heart, his skin, his mind, his soul.

And when he climbed out of the water, he hated gold with all the strength of the love that he'd had for it before; and as he climbed out of the water, everything he'd turned into gold was returned to its proper form; and his little daughter leapt to her feet all unknowing, and ran into the arms of her nursemaid. And from that day onwards, the water of that river, the River Pactolus, has glimmered golden in the light of the sun. And men and women have panned the mud and the silt of the river bed for hard, little, shining nuggets of gold.



Myth 3 – Anansi and the pot of knowledge



This story is a moral tale, originating from West Africa, about a trickster spider. This spider god – Anansi - learns about the true meaning of wisdom, when he tries to keep all the wisdom for himself.

Long ago, all the knowledge of the world was kept by the sky god, Nyame, locked safe in a small clay pot. One day, Nyame entrusted the pot to Anansi, asking the spider to share the contents of the pot - the knowledge - with the world.

Anansi wanted to conceal the wisdom of the world, hoarding and nurturing it for himself. He opened the pot to peek inside and always learned something new, or some new insight or perspective on the world. Imagine the power and respect granted to the wisest creature to exist!

With the knowledge of the world crammed full in his pot, Anansi tried to climb a large tree where he could carefully nest the pot with the knowledge out of sight, and hidden from view. He tied the pot to his stomach, and lurched forwards towards the tree. He clambered up a few branches, but his eight legs tangled with the rope and he stumbled down to the ground.



Frustrated, he tried again, but Anansi found that he was constantly clashing the pot against the tree and couldn't find an easy way to climb.

He toiled and sweated in the sun, inching up the trunk of the tree, grumbling effortfully. His son watched him closely, and shouted to Anansi: "Have you tried carrying the pot on your back instead?"

If it were possible for a spider to blush, Anansi would have reddened to a deep shade of scarlet. He detached the pot and tied it to his back, then moved easily through the branches to the top of the tree.

This should have been his moment of glory, but Anansi felt a crushing shame and a melancholy feeling in his stomach. What was the point of collecting the entire knowledge of the world, only to find his own son had more common sense and problem solving to offer?





With fury, he threw the pot from the top of the tree to the ground. Smashing into sharp shards, the clay pot released the knowledge to the winds: wisdom drifted on the currents of the breeze and resettled over the land. The logic and knowledge was released back to the world.

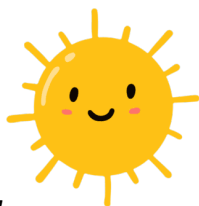
Shuffling his eight feet dejectedly, Anansi headed home through the forest. On his way, he encountered an owl, lecturing some other creatures.

“Wisdom is grown through sharing with others. We can’t protect knowledge by locking it away from the world”, the owl twittered reflectively. The other animals nodded and Anansi grasped a little wisdom from the air to realise his error.

Anansi moved through the forest and into his future; he vowed to share the knowledge of the world. He became a valued teacher, sharing stories and wisdom with the world.



Summer Reading Challenge



How many of the boxes on the Bingo grid can you complete? Cross through the box when you complete a challenge. Bring any completed Bingo grids to the English office in September for the chance to win a prize.

Read a book of your choice. My book was: by	Visit Trowbridge library (or another local library). I visited on...	Recommend a book to a friend. I recommended...
Design a new book cover for your favourite book. Get your colouring pencils out, or design on the computer. We'll make a display in the English corridor.	Read a book in an 'extreme' way. Take a picture of yourself reading a book in an unusual location. Your book can cover your face, if you prefer.	Read something (book/ comic/ poem/ guide) about one of these areas: A hobby Animals Starting a new school
Learn from a podcast Listen to an episode of an educational podcast e.g. "Greeking Out" by National Geographic Kids.	Research an author. Learn five different facts about their life. Author: Favourite fact:	Read another book of your choice. My book was: by



Information and links for parents and carers

Supporting reading is a team effort at The John of Gaunt and we recognise that parents, carers and the community have a pivotal role to play.

Key Details

- Please support your child with reading this booklet. An audio version of the booklet, including the stories, is available on the school website. If you, or your child, have any accessibility needs that could make this easier, please let me know by emailing ggilvin@jog.equamead.org
- We will test all students in year 7 with a literacy screening test twice a year. Please support your child in knowing when this will take place and its importance. It will determine which students may need extra support with their reading as they move through the school. More information will be emailed in September.
- Read with your child when you can and be enthusiastic about encouraging their reading. Reading well can improve academic results across all subjects
- Reach out with any questions, or anything that I can help with to support your child with their reading.

Key Links

This booklet is also on the school website to make links easier to access.

- The National Literacy Trust - [Families \(11+\) | National Year of Reading 2026 | Go All In](#)
- Government advice - [10 top tips for parents to support children to read - GOV.UK](#)

