

Story Power

A guide to
reading-for-enjoyment



Malibali



Welcome!

Nal'ibali means "Here's the story" in isiXhosa. It is also the name of our national reading-for-enjoyment campaign that aims to spark children's potential through storytelling and reading. Maybe you're wondering why this matters. There's a simple answer: not only is sharing stories lots of fun, it also helps children learn how to read and grows a love of reading in them. Youngsters who are passionate readers today, are tomorrow's leading problem solvers!

In this Story Power guide, you can find out what reading for enjoyment is and then how to use it with your own children and/or the children at your school, library or reading club. There are great ideas for choosing books for children and doing story-related activities too.

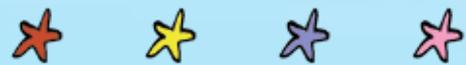
Join us in reading to children regularly!

The Nal'ibali team

PS: This guide is available in eleven South African languages. Look out for other guides in the Story Power series! Go to www.nalibali.org to find them.

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What is reading for enjoyment?



Nal'ibali is called a "reading-for-enjoyment" campaign. So, what exactly is "reading for enjoyment" and why does it matter?

Different people call reading for enjoyment different things. Some call it "free voluntary reading" or just "free reading". Others call it "reading for pleasure" or "leisure reading". But, they all mean the same thing: reading for enjoyment is reading because you want to.

It's *not* reading because you need to find information for a project or assignment. It's *not* reading a book because your teacher said everyone in your class has to read a certain book, or because your parents said that reading is good for you. It is *not* reading because someone said they would pay you R20 if you read a book during the school holidays, or because you want to have more stars on your reading chart than anyone else in your class.

When you read for enjoyment, you choose what you read, and mostly, when to read. You do not have to finish a book if you don't like it. Nor do you have to talk about it or write about it afterwards – you may choose to, but you don't have to. There is no test on the book and there are no prizes for having finished it. But there certainly are rewards!

When you have read because you want to, your biggest reward is the satisfying feeling that comes from having experienced a good book. It comes from entering another world, or learning about something you're interested in,

or from having your understanding of something or someone changed or deepened. It doesn't matter what your age is – whether someone is reading to you, or if you are reading for yourself – the rewards are the same.

And that's why it is so important to read to children simply because it is a satisfying thing to do together. When children hear lots of inviting stories, it allows them to experience the power of books. This motivates them to want to learn to read, and the more they read, the more likely they are to become good at it.

It goes round and round: the more you read, the easier it becomes, and so the more you are likely to want to read for enjoyment, and so you read more often. That's what makes children into lifelong readers.



Getting started

Reading aloud to children helps them to experience the pleasure of stories. It also stimulates their imagination, and develops their language, curiosity and knowledge.

Whether you are reading aloud to your own children or a group of children in your class or reading club, here are some tips to help you all get the most out of your reading time together.

- ★ **Have fun.** The most important thing is for you to enjoy yourselves because then your children will learn that reading is a pleasurable activity.
- ★ **Choosing books.** Choose books to read that you enjoy, but also ones that match your children's changing interests. (You can find out more about choosing books on page 6.)
- ★ **Timing is everything.** Share stories at times when your children find it easy to settle down, like after bath time or just before they go to sleep at night. Younger children may find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time, so don't read for too long. Remember you want to encourage them to develop an interest in stories and books, so don't make it a chore!
- ★ **Before you read.** Children may need time to settle before you begin reading. Young children respond well to a song or rhyme or guessing what the story might be about from the cover picture and title. Ask older children to recall what happened in a novel at the end of your last read-aloud session.
- ★ **Don't skip the cover.** Read the title of the book and the name of the author and illustrator each time you read a book. This helps children realise that real people just like them write and illustrate stories.
- ★ **Perform!** Reading aloud is always a performance! Put lots of expression in your voice to create the mood.
- ★ **Practice makes perfect.** If you're new to reading aloud, practise reading the story aloud a few times before you read it to a group of children.
- ★ **Think about your audience.** Try to be aware of your listeners and don't read too fast! Allow time for them to look closely at the illustrations or to create a mental picture as you read.





- ★ **Getting into the story.** We all have to learn how to listen to and engage with a story. Draw your children into the story, for example, ask them what they think about something that a character did or said, discuss one of the pictures, or ask them to turn the pages for you.
- ★ **Show the pictures.** When you read a picture book, make sure that you all get a chance to see the pictures. You might like to pause to show the pictures and allow comments or questions as you read or after you've read the whole book through once.
- ★ **Ask questions.** As you read the story, ask open-ended questions about it. "What do you think will happen next?" is a great question to help children develop their prediction skills, which are essential to being a successful and independent reader.
- ★ **Join in.** As your children become more familiar with a story, or as older children are learning to read, ask them to help

you read the story. Younger children often like to recite parts of a familiar story – especially if the words rhyme or a phrase is repeated. Read along with older children as they attempt to read the words on the page with you, pointing to the words as you go.

- ★ **Read it again!** If your children ask you to read a story again ... and again and again, do it! This allows them to discover new things about the story each time.
- ★ **Reading together is for older children too.** Once children can read, you do not have to stop reading to them! Choose books that are more difficult and complex than the ones they can read on their own. If you are reading a novel aloud, read a chapter or part of a chapter each day. Find a place in the story to stop that will make your listeners eager for you to continue tomorrow.

For more information on reading to children, as well as how to read to children of different ages, go to www.nalibali.org.

Again and again:
It's good to follow children's lead and to recreate the magic for them! When children ask you to read a book repeatedly, it is a sure sign that they are becoming hooked on books, whether they are 10 months or 10 years old!

Choosing books for children



Which books get children begging for more? Younger readers often choose a book because they like the illustration on the front cover! More experienced readers may choose a book on their favourite subject or by a familiar author. So, how do you choose books for children? Here are some ideas.

1. Take turns

Sometimes let your children choose which books they want you to read. Other times, talk together about the books to choose and suggest ones that you think will suit their interests.

2. Ask for help

Ask your children's friends what they have enjoyed reading or ask other parents what their children are reading at the moment. Get to know your local librarians and ask them which authors children of a particular age usually enjoy.

3. Home language is important

Books for babies and pre-schoolers should be in their home language where possible. Have a go at translating books that have very few words, which are not published in the language you need. Also try to find home language books for older children – nothing beats reading a story in your home language!

4. Books for babies

Babies like brightly coloured pictures or photographs of objects or people with simple text. They love feeling the rhythms of language, and listening to repetition and rhyme.

5. Books with no words

Wordless books are a great investment because you get the chance to tell a story in your own way to your children in any language you like. They can then create their own stories too.

6. Good read-aloud books

Books with rhyme, rhythm and repetition make good read-aloud books for young

children, and are also good for introducing a new language. As your children get to know the story, encourage them to join in as you read.

7. The known and the unknown

Choose some books that reflect things that will be familiar to your children, for example, books in which the homes look like your children's. Choose other books that provide new experiences, such as folktales or stories set in different places and cultures.

8. Books for children who can read

For children who can already read, it's best to choose some books that they can read on their own, some books you can read together, and some books (with more complex language and plots) that you can read to them.

9. Face feelings and fears

Picture books and novels about difficult things in children's lives – like the arrival of a new sibling, illness, parents' divorce or friendship challenges – can help them process their feelings and face their fears.

10. Include information books

Information books are not just for older children. Factual books stimulate curiosity and help children to learn about our world.

Just 15 minutes of reading with your child each day can expose them to one million written words in a year.

Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1998

Getting the most from stories



Do you enjoy reading with your children and want to make sure that they benefit as much as possible from spending time in this way? Here are some ideas for activities to use before you read, while you're reading and after you've finished reading a book. These activities deepen and extend the experience of the books you read together. Some of them are suitable for all ages, while some are better suited to older children – choose the ones that you think are best for your children.

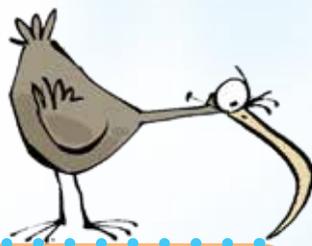
Before

- ★ Spend some time looking at the information and illustration or photograph on the front cover of the book. With older children, you might also want to read the blurb on the back cover. This helps children learn that they can use the information provided on a book's cover to decide whether they want to read the book or not.
- ★ Ask your children to use the cover to predict or guess what the book is about. (You can follow this up after reading the book by asking your children to think about how accurate their predictions were!)
- ★ Ask your children if they know any other stories about similar things to this story. Also invite them to share their memories, for example, ask, "Have you ever been lost?"



During

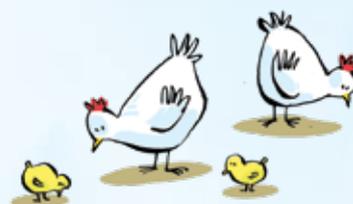
- ★ As you read, stop briefly once or twice, to ask, "What do you think will happen next?" Thinking about cause and effect deepens children's understanding about how things work.
- ★ Ask your children to comment on the pictures or to find particular people or objects in the pictures.
- ★ If your children can already read, take turns to read different parts of the story. Encourage younger children to join in by pretend reading (or reciting) parts of stories that they know well, and to help you make sound effects, like knocking on a door or the wind howling.



Find stories in eleven languages to read to your children at www.nalibali.org and www.nalibali.mobi.

After

- ★ Many stories focus on how characters deal with challenges that life sends their way. It is powerful for children to relate these things to challenges that they face in their own lives. Encourage them to make strong connections by saying something like, "When I read this story to you, it reminds me of how important good friends are. What does it remind you of?"
- ★ Children develop empathy by putting themselves in a character's situation. Help them to do this by asking them to think about why a character behaved in a particular way in the story.
- ★ Invite children to retell the story you have read, or to draw or paint a picture of their favourite part of the story. Or, act out the story with them. These activities help them to deepen their understanding of the story.



Connect with Nal'ibali

Become part of the Nal'ibali network and use the power of stories to inspire children to want to read and write.

Visit our different platforms for reading-for-enjoyment resources and tips, and children's stories in 11 languages.

Nal'ibali supplements

Get your bilingual reading-for-enjoyment newspaper supplement in the *Sowetan*, *Sunday Times Express*, the *Daily Dispatch* and *The Herald*. For more information, visit www.nalibali.org.



Nal'ibali on radio

Tune in to Nal'ibali's radio programmes on SABC's public stations and enjoy children's stories in all 11 official languages. Visit www.nalibali.org for the Nal'ibali **radio schedule**.

www.nalibali.org

Visit the Nal'ibali **website** for free tip sheets, literacy blogs, reading tips and children's stories.



www.nalibali.mobi

Get storytelling and reading tips, reading club support and stories in 11 South African languages – on your **cellphone**!



Social media

Join the conversation on **Facebook** and follow us on **Twitter** and **Instagram** for inspirational reading-for-enjoyment tips and updates. You can also visit our **YouTube** channel, www.youtube.com/user/TheNalibaliChannel for useful reading club tips.



Contact us by calling our call centre on **02 11 80 40 80**, or in any of these ways:  www.nalibali.org  www.nalibali.mobi

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