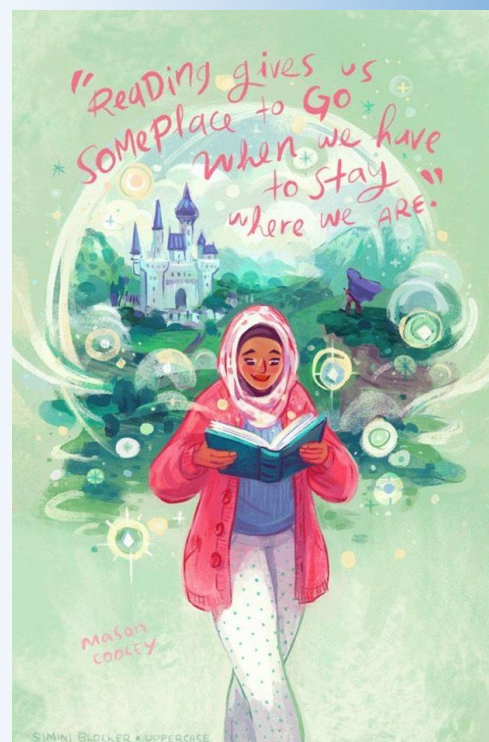


December 2020



Dear all,

I am writing this during the second COVID-19 lockdown which has been a very difficult time for so many people in different ways. As you can imagine, our work has also been impacted by the current crisis. In March, ABC to read volunteers were supporting over 500 children every week in 80 partner schools across the country. With school closures, a lot of our volunteers paused what they were doing, and we have had many messages from schools to let us know that they miss their volunteers and are looking forward to welcoming them back. We hope many of you will be able to return soon after the Christmas break.

Thank you all very much for your ongoing support. We continue to make a difference to children's literacy even during these difficult circumstances. Unfortunately, as with many charities, our fundraising has been impacted although we are still in a good financial position. We are self-funded and rely on support from trusts, fundraising events, individual donors, gifts in wills, school donations and regular giving. I would like to say an extra big thank you to everyone who has continued to support us financially. Many, many children will have fallen behind with their reading during school closures and ABC to read is well-positioned to step in and help these children to catch up with vital reading support. Our volunteers will be needed more than ever.

The effect of this missed schooling on the reading attainment of some children will be enormous.

With your help we can mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on our children's education. The Department for Education has already acknowledged that one-to-one or small-group tutoring will be crucial in getting children's reading back up to speed, and we are hopeful that we will be able to return all of our volunteers back to schools soon.

Please do feel free to make contact with your school directly if you would like to organise your return date when you are ready to do so or contact your fieldworker.

As much as we would like to, we will not be making any hall bookings and we will not be holding our usual book exchanges in January, but if you do need resources then please contact your fieldworker who will make arrangements with you directly.

Website update

We are using this time to catch up on activities that we have been meaning to do and one of those on our "to do" list has been to review our website. We are now working with Pixel Cottages and they are going to be ensuring that our website is clear and concise so that we engage readers immediately as well as ensuring that it is optimised to work on mobile devices and secure.

One thing that we need to do and where we need the help of our volunteers is to have some pictures and some testimonials to add credence and authority to what we do. Are you able to send in a case study? Please send them through to info@abctoread.org.uk

Activities

Would you like to stay active with the charity and you have some time to spare?

- ◆ You could write a piece for a newsletter e.g. submit a quiz, poem, drawing or a message
- ◆ Virtual storytelling - pick a favourite story, film yourself (phone is fine) and we can share them on to our website, social media and into schools
- ◆ Write or create a virtual card to send into school
- ◆ Host a team quiz
- ◆ Join in our 'Book Rocks' pebble painting
- ◆ Create a story sack to be used in school





Left: Mcllory Park in Tilehurst, not far from our office and where we get to have the pleasure of walking whilst working from home!

Do you have a local beauty spot where you blow away the cobwebs to share with us?

Lockdown Lexicon

Have you been marvelling at the speed with which COVID-related words have entered everyday usage? But of course, few of them are truly new: 'Quarantine' has its origins in the 14th century when the Venetian state, in an effort to keep plague out of its territories, would make foreign ships wait at anchor for 40 (quaranta) days before allowing them to dock.

'Isolate' also has its roots in Italian – by staying alone, one is making oneself into an island or isola.

'Epidemic' and 'pandemic' both appear in the 17th century, when England experienced the final waves of the 'Great Plague', at its most virulent in 1665 to 1666.

'Vaccine' - from Vaccinae, Latin for cowpox - after Edward Jenner's 1798 discovery that humans injected with cowpox virus were protected from deadly smallpox.

Ecclesiastical Insurance has started its annual '12 days of giving' campaign. 120 charities will receive an early Christmas gift of a £1000 donation, with 10 winners announced each weekday from 7 to 22 December.

We need your help more than ever this year to allow us to support local children with their reading. You can do this by nominating us to receive £1000. Please encourage friends and family to do the same. Just click the link below.

Our charity number is 1184968

[HTTPS://WWW.ECCLESIASTICAL.COM/](https://www.ecclesiastical.com/movement-for-good/)
[MOVEMENT-FOR-GOOD/](https://www.ecclesiastical.com/movement-for-good/)

Movement for good - 12 days of giving –
Nominate a charity to receive £1000 from Ecclesiastical.



**WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU ALL A SAFE AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS AND
LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL AGAIN IN THE NEW YEAR FOR A YEAR OF
HAPPY READING!**



Office closure - Christmas holiday

The office will close for the Christmas break on Wednesday 16th December and re-open on Tuesday 5th January

