

# TIPS FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

We know it can be a little daunting getting started on your volunteering journey with Chapter One so we've tapped into our best resource - our existing volunteers - and asked them for their tips and tricks for getting the most from their online reading sessions.

Sarah Lao, Mishcon de Reya

In the first few sessions, as you try and establish a rapport with your student, think about the types of questions you might ask them in order to get to know them better - and how you might ask them. During initial sessions, for example, I asked my student some general questions (such as whether he had siblings, any pets and his favourite football team) and took some notes to refer back to in later sessions.

Hayley Blake, Suse

Sometimes, when I sense the little boy I'm reading with is a little bit tired because we read on Fridays, or if there's a lot of noise around us, I take a story from a much higher reading level and read it to him. I know he's really interested in space - he loves anything about rockets - so when I'm looking through the higher levels, I can pick the stories with a space theme that he might find really interesting. He just sits and listens.

Rebecca Forrester, UPS

Every time that I finish a session with a child, I always do a little comprehension quiz at the end because it's so easy for them just to follow the words and not necessarily understand them. We will go over what new words they have learned today and what they liked about the story. It's good to ask them to tell you in their own words what happened in the story.

### Krishen Vaya, Ocado Group

I would again say just how fantastic the Chapter One platform is. There's a practice session that's absolutely golden and there's a really useful resource about how to pronounce letters and use phonics. It's also good to make sure that you've been through all the different games to know how they work. And then once you've started reading with your student, try and remember what it is they enjoy reading and ask them for their thoughts. Do they like the look of this story, or of that story? I try and find a happy medium between directing my student and being led by her.

### Laura Haigh, Rothschild & Co

I know it's mandatory, but do the training provided by Chapter One! And revisit time and again. There are things that I had forgotten and areas that I continually try to improve upon as a volunteer, for example, what positive reinforcement sounds like and when is the right time to step in? How long do you leave your pupil to try to pronounce a word or respond when checking their comprehension? As a volunteer, you do have a sense of responsibility and of course, you want the child to do well. But it's ultimately about being patient - both with yourself as well as your child. I was a little nervous initially but I soon got the hang of it, and anyone can make an impact, particularly when you keep the purpose of the programme in the front of your mind.

### Samantha Moylan-Heydt, Cisco

I would encourage tutors to use the 'high fives' and rewards that the Chapter One platform gives volunteers to use. Sienna really loves it when one of those pops up on her screen!

### Kirsty, Royal London

Try and find somewhere to do your session where you're not going to be interrupted or feel self-conscious about reading back or saying things out loud. Don't take it personally if your child seems distracted or isn't engaging well during some sessions. There maybe something more exciting going on in the classroom. A couple of times, after about 20 minutes of our session, my little girl said, 'My ears are sore!' [from the headset] so I said, 'No problem, let's leave it there today'. I must admit there was a couple of times where I couldn't actually hear what my little girl was reading because of classroom noise, so rather than play a game where I would have no idea if she was right or wrong, I switched back to reading stories and got round the sound difficulties by reading the story back to her. In professional life a lot of us spend our time asking ourselves am I doing the right thing? Am I the expert? With Chapter One, you're always going to be the expert. Your child's going to love whatever you do with them. Whether you just play games one week, or whether you can't remember how to play a game, they don't mind, they're not going to notice. Connecting with other colleagues at Royal London who are Chapter One volunteers and sharing our experiences has been really valuable.



# Chapter One

It all starts with literacy