

So it's true. Bedtime stories really do aid reading, scientific experiments show.



A report from the *Daily Mail* seems to have confirmed what many of us already knew – reading bedtime stories to children really does improve their brain development (Here's a thought – does it also improve the brain power of we older children and adults who read in bed?)

So, do you have a little bruv or sis? Do you ever read to them? If not, why not?

A study in America has shown that reading to children from birth helps early learning and builds connections in the brain that help with language development. The study author, Dr John Hutton of Cincinnati Children's Hospital said the pre-school years are 'critical' in brain development. He continued, "We are excited to show, for the first time, that reading exposure during the critical stage of development prior to kindergarten, (nursery), seems to have a meaningful, measurable impact on how a child's brain processes stories, and may help predict reading success."

"Of particular importance are brain areas supporting mental imagery, helping the child 'see the story' beyond the pictures, affirming the invaluable role of imagination."



Task:

1. How often do you read a book? (Be honest!)
2. Why do/don't you read books?
3. Would the scientific information above make you read more/less to yourself or your children?

Task: Why don't you write a bedtime story for a small child? Remember:

- The story must be appropriate to a small child. They need to go to sleep thinking that everyone has lived happily ever after.
- Think about the language you'll need to use. They won't understand many of the words you use in stories.
- Use clip art to illustrate the story. (Unless you are a great artist and can do your own.)
- When you read it, take it slowly. Chat to the child about the story as you go along.
- Why not write a story about animals – little ones love them. You might use realistic animals – but no predation please!
- You might use anthropomorphic animals – think about *Wind in the Willows*.

