

Reading Coach Role Description

Read Easy UK is a registered charity that works through affiliated local groups to provide one-to-one reading coaching to adults, using trained volunteers. By enabling people to tackle their reading difficulties, Read Easy also allows each individual to grow in confidence and self-esteem, become more independent, move on to other forms of education if they wish, and improve their employment opportunities. Each affiliated Read Easy group is run entirely by volunteers and aims to provide interesting and rewarding opportunities to all involved to help change lives for the better. To read more about the difference that Read Easy makes, please see the [Testimonials](#) page on our website.

‘Initial Training’ and starting coaching

As a volunteer Reading Coach, you will receive two one-day training sessions. The Initial Coach Training day will introduce you to some of the issues faced by adults with reading problems, how to use the reading manuals, how to establish an appropriate relationship with your new Reader and guidance on working one-to-one. After this first training day, the group’s Coordinator will keep your details listed until an appropriate volunteering opportunity arises. Please be aware that this can sometimes take some time.

Once you have been allocated a new Reader, you will be given a list of approved venues and the two of you will be able to choose together a convenient place to meet, which you will then be responsible for booking. You will be asked to keep the Coordinator informed of these arrangements, keep a record of your Reader’s progress and submit this regularly to the Coordinator. After the first few weeks of meeting together, the Coordinator will visit to observe a reading session and offer advice and support, and will then keep in touch with you and visit to provide support as necessary.

‘Consolidation Training’

Once you have been working with your Reader for a while, we will ask you to attend a ‘Consolidation Training’ day. This will provide you with ideas for how to use other resources, techniques and activities to help your Reader to consolidate his/her learning. Please note that attendance at both training days is an essential requirement if you decide to volunteer as a Coach. The training is very interactive and volunteers generally find the sessions very interesting and rewarding, but please be aware that they are quite long and intensive days.

A note on Turning Pages

Turning Pages is a phonics-based reading programme for adults (published by the charity Shannon Trust), which has been designed to be used by volunteers and is central to the way we work. It is made up of five separate manuals, with 30 accompanying graded reading books, which have all been written specifically for adults. The initial training session will give you a good introduction to the manuals and how to use the phonics approach, but every page also provides the Reading Coach with clear instructions. It is important to be clear from the outset that this is our main tool, although we do encourage using other resources to support the programme. If you feel that this approach is not for you, please do be honest and say so.



Time Commitment

The secret to success in learning to read is working one-to-one, little and often. We therefore ask our Reading Coaches to commit to providing two *separate*, half hour coaching sessions a week, whenever possible. To make this viable we will attempt to provide venues that are local enough for both Coach and Reader to spend as little time travelling as possible. Some Readers may complete the course in as little as nine months, others take as long as two years, and sometimes longer. It varies a great deal according to the individual Reader, so please be aware of this. The great advantage of one-to-one coaching is that people can work at their own pace without feeling rushed.

Reading Coaches are also asked to commit to attending termly **Coach Meetings** whenever possible, to meet up with others, discuss how they are getting on and receive extra training.

Holidays

We realise that while you are coaching you may want to take a holiday, and we should be very grateful if you could give the Coordinator (and your Reader) as much notice as possible.

Expenses

Read Easy's overall principle is that volunteers should not be out of pocket as a result of their volunteering, but should also seek to get good value for the organisation. We therefore try to arrange reading sessions to keep travel to a minimum. The Coordinator will discuss with you how much travel you are likely to incur and whether paying expenses would be helpful.

When you have finished...

The completion of the Turning Pages manuals will mark the end of your coaching sessions with your new Reader and will be celebrated by a presentation of certificates. Some Read Easy groups offer a second stage of literacy support called *Moving Ahead* and, if this applies to your group, your Reader may like to consider this opportunity. However, please bear in mind that this scheme requires a change of Coach. If you are interested in finding out more about Moving Ahead, or about coaching another Reader, please speak to your Coordinator.

Personal qualities required to be a Reading Coach:

- an ability to talk and listen to the person you coach in a patient, positive, encouraging and purposeful way;
- a non-judgemental attitude and a positive respect for others, regardless of abilities, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or age;
- an ability to focus on your Reader and his or her needs;
- an ability to work alone, seeking support when necessary;
- a willingness to work within the guidelines and policies of the project
- reliability and consistency;
- an ability to handle disappointment;
- a commitment to maintaining confidentiality;
- willingness to undergo an Enhanced DBS check, if required;
- the ability and confidence to work on a computer and access documents online, or the willingness to learn to do so.



The volunteer recruitment process

If you think that this role is for you, please let us know. We may not have opportunities immediately to take on new reading coaches – it will depend on the number of reading pairs that we are currently able to support – but we will get back to you to let you know. If we think that there are likely to be opportunities in the fairly near future, we will ask you to complete an application form and return it to us, and we will then arrange a time to interview you. We will also take up references. After this, successful candidates will be asked to attend an Initial Coach Training day. This is considered to be part of the recruitment process as it gives both you and Read Easy an opportunity to see how you get on with some of the practical aspects of the role.

If both parties are happy to proceed after the training day, your name will be kept on a list until a suitable Reader is found for you. Please be aware that 'suitability' is based on a whole range of factors including time availability of both Readers and Coaches and geographical location, so it can often take some time to allocate a Reader to a Coach. You will then be introduced, sign a Volunteer Commitment and provided with the resources you need to start coaching. After you have been coaching for a few weeks, the Coordinator will visit for your first Coach Monitoring Session, after which the recruitment process will be considered to be complete.

Thank you so much for your interest in this vital role. We look forward to hearing from you.