

Activity**FOR SALE: THE PERFECT READING DEN**

Design or, if you're already lucky enough to have it, share a sketch of your perfect place to relax with a good book. Build it! Then... relax with a good book! Create an advertisement to 'sell' your spot to your classmates and children your age from other schools.

*What should I do?*Build a reading den!

Do you have somewhere special where you enjoy reading a good book? Take a look at some authors' favourite reading spots: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/news/authors-favourite-reading-spots-children-read-summer/>.

Den-making is great fun and can really challenge your creative side...

You can download some good instructions for making a den from <http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/getlost-summer> using chairs, blankets or bedspreads, cushions and clothes pegs. An internet search for 'reading den' will bring up many more ideas, or you might prefer just to go your own way and let your imagination run wild!

When making a den, you're going to need to think of the following:

- Where to position your den - will you build an outdoors or indoors structure? (What does the weather forecast say?!) What materials do you have lying around to build with? Are they safe to use?
- Quiet – can you find somewhere peaceful for your den, or think of a way to block out distractions effectively so you will be able to concentrate on your book?
- Size – how big does your reading spot need to be? Is it just for you or for more people? Will you want to be able to stretch out to read or are you happy to curl up?
- Comfort – will you be able to sit or lie or stand (...or hang!) comfortably for a good amount of time? Do you need to include cushions or some kind of seating?
- Light – can you make good use of natural light to read by or will you need to set up some artificial lights? (Be VERY careful not to place heat sources near anything that could catch fire – do NOT use candles especially! Check your choices with an adult first.)
- Strength – how can you make a strong structure that won't easily fall over, trip anybody up, or bury you by collapsing?!
- Permanence – how long do you want your den to remain up for? Will you want to leave your family without sofa cushions for very long, or can you create something wonderful behind the garden shed that you can enjoy for weeks and weeks?!

Build yourself a reading den that will be the envy of all your friends!

Try out your den – enjoy a book!

Choose a good book and hide out in your den to read it. You might like to take a photograph of you reading there or, if you want to share your den online, take a picture of a teddy or other toy enjoying a great read instead.

Think about your den design – does it do everything you need it to? What might you tweak to improve it further?

Sell your spot

Now you have somewhere fabulous to spend your time reading, it's time to persuade others that it is the very best den in the world.

You've probably never looked closely at advertisements for houses before – they use very specific language to make the properties sound attractive. Visit some estate agents' websites; you may like to ask an adult for some suggestions or remember businesses you've heard about on TV adverts. See how the writers make negative points sound positive, e.g. instead of 'small and cramped' they might have written 'compact and cosy'!

Collect words and phrases you think could be useful to describe your 'unique property' (your den!). Can you spot some of these words and phrases being used: 'handsome', 'immaculate', 'well-presented', 'elevated position', 'spacious', 'magnificently proportioned', 'the site benefits from...', 'the property comprises...', 'well maintained', 'bright', 'popular development...'?

Make a note of words and phrases you need to ask the meaning of and then ask someone about them or use a dictionary to find out.

Write an advertisement for your den in the style of the house adverts you've been reading. Have fun finding and using words and phrases to substitute in order to make negative points sound like positives! You could take some photographs of your 'bijoux residence' from different angles to include along with the text.

- <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/coronavirus-information-advice/keeping-kids-entertained-during-lockdown> Den Building with Save the Children UK;
- <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-for-parents/top-5-tips-for-den-building-with-your-children/> Top 5 Tips for Den Building With Your Children;
- <https://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/how-to-build-your-own-den> How to build your own den;
- <https://www.noaandnani.co.uk/den-building-ideas-for-the-best-dens-ever-i43> Den Building Ideas for the Best Dens EVER.

Written advertising is very different from the sorts of adverts children will see on television. Help your child to notice particular words and phrases used in selling houses, and point out if they slip into the sorts of language used more in spoken adverts.