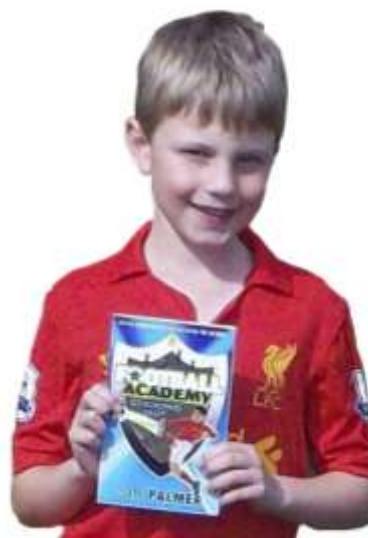


Football Readers

Reading for Pleasure
with Tom Palmer's
Football Academy



Introduction from Tom Palmer

The **Football Readers** pack is aimed at teachers and librarians. It is intended as a tool that you can use to encourage children who love football to love reading for pleasure too.



When I was young I did not find reading easy. Although I came from a family of big readers, I was uncomfortable around books. It left me feeling that some people read lots of books and were clever, whilst other people – like me – did not read books and so were not clever. I found libraries intimidating because I did not feel that I belonged in them.

Some children have many misconceptions about reading. I certainly did. I hope that this pack might help, especially if you have a lot of football-loving children in your class or using your library.

The idea is that the following posters will create a positive images of children with books. You could create a display around them, or put them on a frequently used door. Experiment with putting a new one up each week to build interest.

Develop their interest further by letting them create their own poster about what their football and reading life is like, using the enclosed template.

In addition to the posters, there are a set of six activities that I hope will be useful to inspire both individuals and groups of children to read for pleasure.

Finally, please do email me if any of your pupils have read all six books in the Football Academy series as I can send you a signed certificate to present to them.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Palmer".



First name: *Lucas*

Town/City where you live: *Wakefield*

Favourite football team: *Chelsea*



What is *Boys United* about?

*The main character is Jake Oldfield. Jake really wants to play for the under 12s team. He is worried that he's too small for football. This was the first Football Academy book I read and I got it signed by Tom, when he came to my school, I highly recommend this book ******

Who is your favourite *Football Academy* character and why?

Jake Oldfield because he is determined to get in the under 12s team.

What other three books would you recommend to readers who like *Football Academy*?

*Beast Quest books,
Captain Underpants books
and Billionaire Boy by David Walliams.*

Which other character in the *Football Academy* series would you like to read a story about?

All the adults.

What is your favourite magazine?

Moshi Monsters

What is your favourite website?

Moshi Monsters

What is your favourite newspaper?

The Wakefield Express.

Where is your favourite place to read?

Bed



First name: Edward

Town/City where you live: Sydney, Australia. I moved here from Blackpool

Favourite football team: Liverpool Football Club



What is *Striking Out* about?

It's about an 11 year old boy called Yunis, who is a brilliant football player. He practises hard after school, but this means he doesn't have enough time to do all his homework. His mum and dad want him to stop playing football and work harder in school. They never watch him play. This is an exciting story about how hard it can be to enjoy playing football and do your best at school too.

Who is your favourite *Football Academy* character and why?

My favourite character is Jake because he is a bit like me. I am one of the shortest in my football team too. My favourite position is left wing just like Jake. I love reading about Jake's tactics during the game. He is a really good team player.

What other three books would you recommend to readers who like *Football Academy*?

I loved Steven Gerrard's autobiography. I learnt a lot about football, the relationships between the players and how hard you have to work to become a top player.

I am reading the Foul Play series. I am enjoying the detective idea.

Outside football I have really enjoyed Diary of a Wimpy Kid series.

Which other character in the *Football Academy* series would you like to read a story about? Will.

What is your favourite magazine?

My favourite magazine is Four Four Two which is published in Australia. This month I could read all about the Barclays Premier League teams.

What is your favourite website?

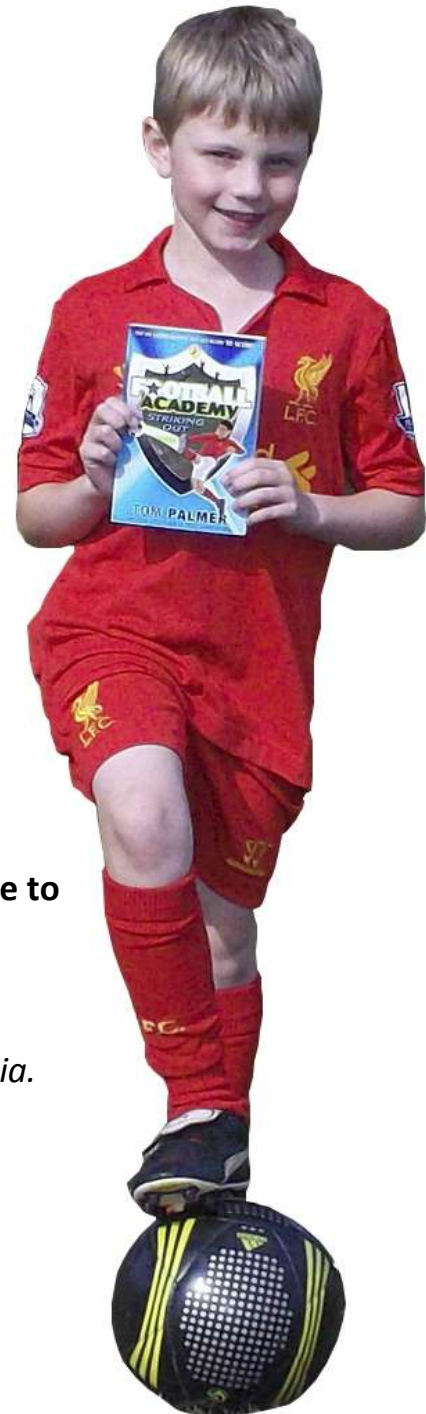
I am a big fan of Liverpool Football Club so my favourite website is www.thisisanfield.com

What is your favourite newspaper?

I only read news articles online, mainly the BBC sports pages.

Where is your favourite place to read?

My favourite place to read is on the sofa in our lounge. I like it to be quiet when I read.



First name: *Oscar*

Town/City where you live: *Leeds*

Favourite football team: *Leeds United*



What is The Real Thing about?

The book is about a Polish boy named Tomasz Bobik who faces bullying from the team captain called Ryan. In the end Ryan and Tomasz make friends because Ryan realizes that it's not bad to speak a different language and you shouldn't be unkind to people just because of where they come from.

Who is your favourite Football Academy character and why?

My favourite Football Academy play is Jake, because he was friendly and kind when people were hurt and not like Ryan. Jake is good at passing the ball and is a good player and not selfish.

What other three books would you recommend to readers who like Football Academy?

James and Giant Peach by Roald Dahl.

Flat Stanley and the Big Mountain Adventure by Jeff Brown

Jake Cake and the Football Beast by Michael Broad.

Which other character in the Football Academy series would you like to read a story about? *Chi because I want to find out more about him as a player and his personality.*

What is your favourite magazine?

Match of the Day

What is your favourite website?

Moshi Monsters.

Where is your favourite place to read?

My bedroom.



First name: *Nye*

Town/City where you live: *Cardiff*

Favourite football team: *Cardiff City*



What is *Reading the Game* about?

It's about Ben who isn't very good at reading in school, but is very good at reading in football - that means he can tell who the ball is going to be passed to. The manager, Steve, helps Ben improve his reading in school and confides in Ben that he found reading difficult too and that his wife taught him how to.

Who is your favourite *Football Academy*

character and why? *Tomasz. He's not the same as the other characters. Mainly because he's Polish and a goalkeeper. He's also kind which makes him very different from Ryan.*

What other three books would you recommend to readers who like *Football Academy*?

The Mr Gum series. Mr Stink by David Walliams. Stormbreaker by Anthony Horowitz

Which other character in the *Football Academy* series would you like to read a story about?

Chi

What is your favourite magazine?

Top Gear

What is your favourite website?

www.aqame.com

What is your favourite newspaper?

First News

Where is your favourite place to read?

In bed.

Or the 'reading chair' in the lounge (if the TV isn't on).



First name: *Kael*

Town/City where you live: *Pershore*

Favourite football team: *Norwich City*



What is *Free Kick* about?

This book is about a boy named James and he is a great footballer and plays for the legendary U 12's United squad; his dad was an ex England player, but James wants to do something else. How will he tell his dad about this?

Who is your favourite *Football Academy* character and why?

James because he's really brave and is quite like me!

What other three books would you recommend to readers who like *Football Academy*?

White Fear by Tom Palmer, World Class by Dan Freedman and Reading The Game by Tom Palmer.

Which other character in the *Football Academy* series would you like to read a story about?

Ryan from Free Kick.

What is your favourite magazine?

Match

What is your favourite website?

www.matchmag.co.uk

What is your favourite newspaper?

The Sun

Where is your favourite place to read?

In Bed



First name: *Mark*

Town/City where you live: *Cork, Republic of Ireland.*

Favourite football team: *Manchester United*



What is *Captain Fantastic* about?

It's about Ryan who's a captain. He deals with problems on and off the pitch. When his mother starts arguing with the referee, it was an embarrassing problem. His teammate Craig had a secret. When his team found out, Ryan helped him by finding someone who could encourage and support him back to his old self.

Who is your favourite *Football Academy* character and why?

I love Ryan Flynn. I think he is wide awake to what's going on around him

What other three books would you recommend to readers who like *Football Academy*?

Boys United, The Real Thing and Reading the Game are all very good books.

Which other character in the *Football Academy* series would you like to read a story about?

Craig. I would love to find out how his life gets on with his Dad.

What is your favourite magazine?

Match Of The Day

What is your favourite website?

Fantasy Premier League

What is your favourite newspaper?

Evening Echo (Kidzone on Thursdays)

Where is your favourite place to read?

A pillow under my head on my bed!!!



First name:

Town/City where you live:

Favourite football team:

What is the book you are holding about about?

Who is your favourite character and why?

What other books would you recommend ?

What is your favourite magazine?

What is your favourite website?

What is your favourite newspaper?

Where is your favourite place to read?



Session 1 – Kicking off: “How do you read?”

Football
Readers



This session is about introducing book-phobic children to the joy of books.

Sometimes young readers struggle to read because they are in the wrong place or need some encouragement from others. Just hearing a classmate admit to reading for enjoyment can make it seem more interesting and inspire reluctant readers to give it a go.

Try not to be judgemental about children’s reading choices. Remember when a teacher or librarian criticises a child’s choice of reading based on their

own adult (and subjective) value judgements of what is or isn’t good literature it can alienate a child from reading books for pleasure for life.

So try to avoid pushing a child to extend their reading too quickly into something deemed more “worthy” when a child is really enjoying working their way through a series.

And remember, some children who read nothing but comic books can go on to be successful scientists. ITS ALL READING.

Make time to have an open class discussion about ...

- What makes a good place to read?
- What does everyone enjoy reading? Books, the internet (what sites?) or magazines (which ones?)
- Who prefers fact and who prefers fiction?
- Where do they get their books from ? Bookshops, library, friends, supermarkets, by post etc.
- What is easiest to read – paper book or tablets or kindles?
- Do they always remember to return books they have borrowed?
- Does anyone like listening to audio books? What do they think of the narrator’s voice?
- Has anyone stopped reading a book – why?
- Is reading fun?

Finally, ask if anyone has any tips to carry on reading something that is a bit hard work.

Tom Palmer’s top tip from when he was younger was that he set himself a goal, for example to read to the end of a page, or the end of the chapter and when he had done so he clenched his hand like he’d scored a goal!

Extension activities :

- Get the group to turn their answers in graphs they could put on display or even show in assembly to get the whole school reading.
- Create a Reader’s Rights poster for your library to help children make the right reading choices for them.
- Have a heated debate on a topic like “This house believes books should be banned”

Session 2 – Reading the Game: using newspapers to encourage reading for pleasure

Football
Readers

This session is about using children’s love of football to get them interested in reading newspapers. Newspapers are a great way of getting into reading, from the attention-grabbing headlines to the short, often easy-to-read, passages all about the game.

Preparation

The week before this session, ask the children to look out for and read football stories in newspapers, either in the public library, at home, online, or, ideally if you can afford to buy some, in the school.

Tell them that this will prepare them for a quiz and that they could win prizes. Encourage them to read the newspapers together with an adult at home. This will help them work their way around the newspaper layout and if they could get a family member to read with them it will be more enjoyable and could create a long lasting great habit. Ask them to bring in the football article they were most interested in to the session.

Activity One

Ask the children to show or read their chosen newspaper headline to the rest of the group, while covering up the main article or photo. Can the group guess what it is about? Do they know all the facts? Ask each child to do this in turn to warm up the group.

Activity Two

Buy all the day’s newspapers on the day of the session. Then, devise a ten-question quiz based on what the latest football news is about. Get a football fan to help you if you are struggling with what is best to ask. Give the children fifteen minutes to read the newspapers and remember as many facts as they can – then do the quiz. Give the winner a prize.

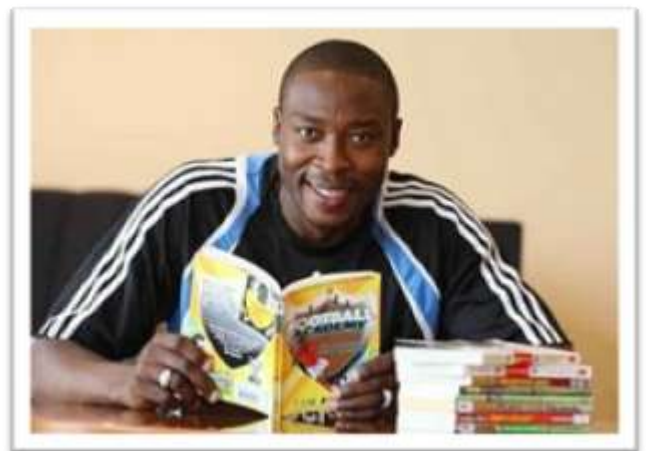
Activity Three

Ask one of the more confident children to sit with his / her back to the wall. Pin up a picture of a well-known footballer from the newspapers behind them, or project it onto an Interactive White Board.

Now they have to guess who it is by asking up to ten questions (in the style of twenty questions) to their classmates about who they are.

Some Question Suggestions :

- Is he a defender? Striker? Manager?
- Has he played for England?
- Is he European?
- Does – or did – he have a famous wife?
- Has he written his own football books?
- Has he had a famous injury or operation?
- Has he got a famous celebration move?
- Has he got an unusual hairstyle?
- Does he play for a London / Northern club?



The other children can only answer yes or no.

If you feel no-one in your class could cope with this – give them questions to pull out of a hat. Or try getting them to work in pairs with the name of a footballer on their back and they have to try to guess them by taking it in turn to ask questions.

Session 3 – An Away Fixture: visiting the local library

Football
Readers



Many children have never visited their local public library and may not be members. They may also be amazed by the fact that there is so much ‘stuff’ there, such as internet access, Play Stations, DVDs, music, magazines – and be unaware of the fact that it is free!

Your library will be very keen to sign them up and let them borrow some of their many football books.

Going out on a school trip is always exciting. Whatever you do with the children is likely to stay in their memory for the rest of their lives.

This is a great opportunity to both enhance the work you are doing and to give the children a chance to visit and feel comfortable in a library.

All school trips need careful planning and preparation. Your educational visits coordinator will advise you on the necessary arrangements that need to be made for your setting.

Also, make sure you are in regular contact with representatives from the library you are visiting beforehand. Often if the library know you are bringing less confident readers they will arrange for a children’s librarian to meet you.

This is an ideal opportunity to involve more reticent parents, who may want to support you on the trip.

Activity One

The Library Quiz – for individuals

The aim of this activity is for children to become familiar about the different types of books. Ideally it needs to be held in your school or local library.

Give every child a sheet of paper with six clues to lead them to the following library sections: Newspapers, Biography, Children's sport, Internet, Adult sport & Children's fiction

The six clues are:

1. Where will you be able to leaf through news about last night's football games?
2. Where are the books about football players?
3. Where are books on how to improve your football skills?
4. Where can you find out news today that hasn't even been printed in a newspaper yet?
5. Where are the histories of the world's great football clubs?
6. Where can you find fictional stories about football?

Pin up one of six large letters of the alphabet next to each of the above sections. The six letters should form an anagram of a famous footballer's name. Familiar six letter names you could use could be Torres or Rooney. But you may wish to use your own local hero's name. Tell the children to solve the anagram. Find a prize for the winner.

To avoid the cruciate ligament and metatarsal injuries that might occur if you make this a race, it can work well if you say everyone who gets it right within 15 minutes will be entered into a draw to win the prize.

Activity Two

The Library Treasure Hunt Game – for teams



The aim of this activity is for children to learn about how (not) to judge a book by its cover. Ideally it needs to be held in your school or local library.



Get the children to line up into 2 teams.

Explain that in turn, they need to try to be the first to get a book and that their team mates can shout to direct them where to look.

Get them to find one of a mixture of books (before hand, get an example book each of these types to show them and check you have them in stock).

Try some of the following examples and make up your own.

- a celebrity on the cover – a chance for a quick talk to about autobiographies, biographies
- about something scary – a chance for a chat about what different people find scary eg. fictional ghosts or factual about insects
- a red spine – talk about the parts of a book - the cover, the spine and blurb
- a sparkly cover - talk about gimmicks from publishers to entice you
- a hard back – to look at hard backs / soft backs
- a book with the author surname beginning with “P” – talk about what an author does
- a book about sport –another opportunity to discuss fact and fiction
- a book a film has been made from

At the end, ask the children if there are any books from their random selection that they do want to read. And which ones they don't and why?

Session 4 – Team talk: running a football reading group



Hosting a reading group can be a great way of encouraging children to talk about books. It is much like a class read session with discussion points about the book or story that you have been reading.

There are lots of good short books that the children could read in class sets independently at home or together in class:



Michael Coleman – Squabbling Squads

Football Academy – Tom Palmer

Girls FC – Helena Pielicahty

Cool – Michael Morpurgo

If you don't have the budget to buy sets of books, I have lots of free stories from 500 words to 30,000 words on my website at http://tompalmer.co.uk/index.php?page_id=36. *The Character Strikes Back*, at the bottom of the web page, has been a popular choice in schools.

Before starting the session have a think about what questions or topics in the book you would like the children to talk about. This will help kick the session off.

Some Reading Group Questions:



- What do you think of the cover?
- Did you enjoy the book?
- Did you finish the book – if not, why?
- What was the book was about?
- How did you expect it to develop?
- Did the ending disappoint you?
- How did it make you feel?
- How was the story told? Whose point of view was it from? Was that disruptive? Or did it seem appropriate/fitting?
- Did you enjoy the book? Why? Why not?
- How did the book compare to other books by the author (or other books in the same genre)?
- What did you think about the plot? Did it draw you in; or did you have to force yourself to finish the book?
- How realistic were the characters?
- Would you want to meet any of the characters?
- Did you like them? Hate them?
- Did the actions of all the characters seem realistic and plausible? Why? Why not?
- If any of the characters had to make right or wrong moral choices, would you have made the same decision? If not, why not?
- How does the place where the book is set feature into the book?
- Did it feel that the time and place in which the book was set were realistic?
- What are some of the book's themes? How important were they?
- Would you recommend this story to other readers? To your close friend?



Session 5 – A new signing: bringing a visitor into school



Inviting someone from outside to come in to talk about football and reading can have a powerful impact on children.

Especially someone with an exciting job or who represents sport in some way, either as a job, a volunteer or fan.

By talking about their job and how they enjoy reading, including newspapers, magazines, websites the visitor could be a real inspiration to the children.

There are a number of different speakers you could invite. This is just a selection of ideas:

- **Local newspaper sports journalists** can be wonderful guests. Often from the same streets as the children in your area, they can talk about how they watch lots of live sport for free, how they can meet and get to know footballers and how they became a journalist. Read your local sports pages and identify the right journalist. Contact them by phone or use the email address listed in the paper, or on their website, or via the newspaper's editor.
- **Local football club coaches and players can be great speakers.** If Wrexham are supplying a coach for your sessions, ask if they are available to visit for longer and allow time to talk to the pupils, too.
- Ask your **school games teacher** to come and talk about how he or she likes reading, or, if you are a library, someone from a local sports centre.
- A **parent of one of the school's pupils** may have an interesting or sports-related job.

The Visit



It's always a shame when a visitor faces a crowd of blank faces because the audience is unprepared.

Time should be spent with the children – before the visitor arrives – thinking of suitable questions to ask their visitor.

The children could write their questions down on a piece of paper, and be introduced and prompted when they could ask their question, question-time style.

Make sure a teacher is present the whole time and ensure they are briefed to be fully engaged with the activity. Ideally, it always helps if someone can chair the question and answer session to make the most of their time.

But the children should also be encouraged to ask any questions they like on the day, once everyone has relaxed.

And don't forget to allow time at the end for one-to-one chats for those who are too nervous to speak in front of others.

Session 6 – Passing it on: getting the rest of the school to join in



This is a good opportunity to give the children a greater sense of responsibility and to spread the impact of your work, getting the children to pass it on.

First, ask the children how they think they could spread their love of reading through football.

Let them spend ten minutes in groups working out ideas and schemes.

- How do they think they can encourage younger children to read for pleasure? Their peers?
- How can they identify the children who would benefit most from it?
- Can they think of a name for themselves so other children know who they are and what they are doing?

Some ideas to add to the children's could be:

- take **photos** of the children reading their favourite book, then enlarge them, print them out and pin them on doors and notice boards around the school
- ask the children to design and carry out a **survey** of reading habits in the school, use ICT or numeracy time to develop their findings and have an assembly to show and tell what they have discovered
- employ some of the children as football **librarians** in the school library
- ask the children to create – and update – a sports reading **display** in the dinner hall
- pair them with weak readers in lower years, in a **buddying** scheme
- create **posters** that show reading in a positive way



These ideas should give the children a great sense of responsibility in passing the reading message on – and will, in turn, reinforce the message for themselves.

A Football Shaped Book Review

Print and cut out these footballs for children to review books they have read.

Then display them creatively against a backdrop like a football net or a crowd of faces



Order Form for Class/Library set of books
******* Special Offer 10% discount & carriage free*******

Name	
School name	
Address	
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The Squad

*Black Op
White Fear*

Set Special £11.69

Tick to order

The Squad is about a youth football team that represents the country around the world in international tournaments. But, secretly, five of them are spies, sent to stop foreign agents harming British interests.



Football Academy

Boys United, Striking Out, The Real Thing, Reading the Game, Free Kick & Captain Fantastic

Set Special £32.65

Tick to order

The stories of six boys who are part of a fictional Premier League football academy. (7+)

'I wanted to write a series of books based at a real football academy, a series that would be just like the academies at Manchester City or Arsenal or Swansea. I went to a couple of real academies and met the coaches and players to see what academies are really like. Then I wrote the books, making sure I made it as realistic as possible.'



Foul Play

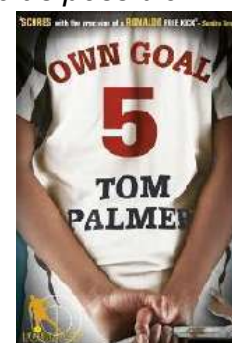
Foul Play, Dead Ball, Off Side, Killer Pass & Own Goal

Set Special £31.46

Tick to order

A series about a boy called Danny who tries to solve crimes in the football world, using his experience reading detective stories to help him.

'There is loads of crime in football around the world. Kidnaps, bribery, exploitation of young players. I wanted to create a boy hero who would clean up the game and show a new generation that football is about more than money and puffed-up egos.'



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