

# Successful Summer Reading Programmes

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A RESOURCE TO HELP SCHOOL LIBRARY STAFF CREATE SUMMER  
READING PROGRAMMES FOR NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS



School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa  
Te Puna Whare Mātauranga a Kura



# Overview

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- Why run a summer reading programme?
- The initial planning stages
- The next steps
- The main elements of your programme
- Special treats
- Marketing your programme
- Evaluating your programme's success
- Case studies of successful summer reading programmes
- Acknowledgements

# Why run a summer reading programme?

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- To encourage students to continue reading over the summer holidays, to build reading mileage and to improve literacy levels
- To prevent the 'Summer Slide/Slump' (see the National Library's Services to Schools website [here](#) for a summary of research on this topic)
- To **build confidence** by providing targeted summer reading material
- To **provide books** for students who might not otherwise have access to suitable reading material
- To **extend** 'good' readers with new and more challenging texts
- To ensure library collections are used year round and increase borrowing statistics
- To **engage students** in a way that is fun
- To raise the profile and **promote the role of the school library**
- To provide the opportunity to **build relationships** within the school and wider communities



# The initial planning stages

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- Set some clear, realistic goals  
*what do you want the programme to achieve?*
- Know your students  
*what will work best for them?*  
*what do your students want?*
- Set some limits  
*how much time do you have to run the programme?*  
*how many students can you cater for?*  
*how many books can you provide for each student?*
- Find some supporters  
*Can other staff, students, the principal, Board of Trustees, parents, PSTA help?*  
*Are local businesses and suppliers able to provide sponsorship?*



# The next steps

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- Decide how your programme will run
  - will you let students choose their own books or will library staff select them?*
  - how will students 'sign up' for the programme?*
  - how involved will parents and caregivers be?*
- Create some guidelines
  - will you require permission from parents and caregivers for holiday borrowing?*
  - how will you deal with books that aren't returned on time?*
  - will you work with other agencies (e.g. local public library)?*
- Create a timeline for your programme
  - when will you start advertising the programme?*
  - when will students 'sign-up'?*
  - when will books be collected and returned?*



# The main elements of your programme

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Some of the things you could consider including as part of your summer reading programme are:

- A good selection of suitable reading material
  - this could include fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels or magazines*
  - encourage the use of new, high-interest titles*
  - consider including books for other family members*
- Recommended reading lists to encourage further reading
  - develop your own lists of recommended titles or use suitable lists from other sources*
- Information about the programme for parents and caregivers
  - include the programmes goals and how achieving these will lift student outcomes*
  - enlist their support as role models and encourage them to take an interest in their child's involvement*
- A survey to gather feedback from students and/or parents and caregivers
- Material to promote the use of the local public library
  - if you choose to do this, ask the public library to donate bookmarks, flyers and other material*



# Special treats

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As well as great books, you might like to include some special treats and rewards

- Bookmarks (these could be donated, purchased or made yourself)
- Stickers
- Pens, pencils, pads and other stationery
- Sweets
- Christmas themed goodies (e.g. Christmas crackers or small decorations)
- Discount vouchers (e.g. from local bookstores or other retailers)
- Badges

Approach local businesses and your suppliers for donations of treats to support your programme

# Marketing your programme

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- consider using a catchy name for the programme
- use an eye catching logo and/or colour scheme for all printed and online materials
- decide who your market is – you may need to use different types of promotion to reach students, parents/caregivers, and teaching staff
- explain the programme's goals and its benefits for students
- use a variety of vehicles to advertise the programme (e.g. websites, Facebook and other social media, school newsletters, posters, email, etc)
- decide on a time line for sending out your messages and reminders





*What evidence can you collect to evaluate and help improve your programme?*

# Evaluating your programme's success

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**Collect some data** so that you can evaluate how successful your programme has been. You can then use this to adapt and improve the programme in subsequent years, and to show stakeholders the value of your summer reading programme.

Some ideas for collecting data:

- Survey students and/or parents and caregivers
- Conduct pre and post testing of students' reading abilities (consider using data already gathered by your school e.g. asTTLe data, running records)
- Seek feedback from teaching staff regarding student reading achievement after the holidays
- Record verbal feedback from students, parents and staff
- Take photos of students taking part in the programme
- Record statistics of books issued, number and year levels of students taking part, return rates of books



# Case Study 1: John McGlashan College

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## Summer Holiday Reading Mystery Packs (SHRIMP)

### The goals

- To get those books off the shelves and into the school community
- To keep the conversation going about books & readers, especially in families
- To keep reading mileage up
- To promote the following Key Competencies: managing self, thinking, participating, engaging with others, becoming lifelong learners



# Case Study 1: John McGlashan College

## Summer Holiday Reading Mystery Packs (SHRIMP)

### Initial planning stages

- Chose a funky name for the programme – this was a way to get buy in from students
- Library staff would select a BIG bag of books tailored to each student (based on what they had already borrowed and what they needed to be extended e.g. to give students who only read one genre something new and appealing to try)
- Targeted boys with reading difficulties – this meant talking to lots of other staff (Learning Support, English and Form class teachers)
- Advertised in school assemblies, newsletters and promoted in individual classes
- Boys filled in a questionnaire to identify books that they wanted to read



# Case Study 1: John McGlashan College

## Summer Holiday Reading Mystery Packs (SHRIMP)

### The next steps

- New books are bought especially or are kept aside to go in the SHRIMP packs
- Bags include name tags, bookmarks, lollies and freebies from the public library as well as a big selection of books (and always with a few surprises which generates lot of excitement)
- Up to 30 books go into each bag (there may be fewer books in the future though so that the bags are a bit lighter - some boys have complained that it's too hard to get their bag home on the bus)
- Bags are all assembled in one room ready for collection after final prize giving – they bring their parents and it is festive chaos!



# Case Study 1: John McGlashan College

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## Summer Holiday Reading Mystery Packs (SHRIMP)

### Student involvement

“In the last few weeks of school, during class time, we tee it up with the teacher to get the boys to choose a book for each member of their family including some nonfiction, quick readers and I make them take a couple of picture books **to read aloud** to the littlies in their family or even the dog. THEY LOVE THIS! There is also a big class discussion about what Mum/Dad/Nana/Grandad like to read. Usually this lasts for the rest of the period while they all have their say. It’s quite enlightening if you listen.”

*Pam Garry, Library Manager*



# Case Study 1: John McGlashan College

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## Summer Holiday Reading Mystery Packs (SHRIMP)

### Feedback and evaluation

- 2014/15 will be the 6<sup>th</sup> year of this programme
- It began with 16 bags in the first year and now the entire junior school expect a SHRIMP pack, along with around 40% of senior students and staff (and staff families)
- In 2013/14 124 bags were made up and over 2000 books issued over the summer
- The programme is successful because the library staff know the students and their passions – they match the book to the boy



# Case Study 1: John McGlashan College

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## Summer Holiday Reading Mystery Packs (SHRIMP)

### Lessons learned

- The programme encourages BOOK TALK
- It gets parents and the wider family involved
- Promotion of the library within the school community is an important side effect
- The programme's success is a clear statement that we know the students and what they are reading
- Having a SHRIMP pack gives the boy a pat on the back for what they ARE reading
- The programme gives Reading status and recognition!
- The programme promotes reading for sheer pleasure – there is no pressure



# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

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## Special Summer Book Bags

### The goals

- To prevent the summer reading slump
- To improve literacy levels and student achievement
- To have library books used over the holidays
- To make reading something special and fun!





# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

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## Special Summer Book Bags

### Initial planning stages

- Decided to trial the programme in 2012/13 holidays
- Limited to year 9 and 10 students (+ a few seniors if they begged!)
- Books to be selected by librarian and tailored to each student, based on interests and borrowing history
- Students had to apply to take part
- Permission from home was required
- Advertised in daily notices, school newsletter and on school website and promoted by teaching staff



# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

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## Special Summer Book Bags

### The next steps

- Branding (chose name for the programme and a logo from Microsoft Clip Art)
- Approached suppliers and local businesses for donations of goodies to go in book bags
- Enlisted the support of PSTA
- Decided on the content of the book bags
- Designed an application form which included questions about reading interests and a permission slip



# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

## Special Summer Book Bags

### The book bags contain

- Information letter to parents
- 6 to 8 books selected specially for each student (using their borrowing history and information provided on the application form)
- Recommended reading list of books available at public library
- Information from public library
- Treats (free book, sweets, pens, pads, bookmarks, etc)
- Feedback survey to be completed and returned along with the bag and library books



# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

## Special Summer Book Bags

### Feedback

- 37 students took part in the 2012/13 trial
- Responses were overwhelmingly positive
- Students liked the 'surprise' of discovering which books they were given
- Badges were given to students when returning their books, bag, and completed survey

Otago Daily Times, 12 Dec 2012, p.30

Beating holiday boredom is in the bag



Judah Kelly (13), of Queen's High School in Dunedin, breaks out her summer book bag with schoolmates (from left) Riley Homan (14), Isabel Laing (14), Isley Benham (14), Haixin Li (14), Sommer Pearson (15), Anastasia Ashley (13), Kama Warburton (13), Danielle Cairns (14), Jessica White (14), Siân Stables (15), Janelle Platten (14), Abby Johnson (15), Yesseni Benayaka (14), Toni Fowler (13), Sophie Scholten (14), Caitlin Bouman (14), librarian Carole Gardiner, Grace McIntyre (15), Janelle Kosh (15), Brittany Luskie (15), Madalyn Fox (14), Xana Pua (13), Juliette Bernard (14) and Sarina Hicks (15).

The years 9 and 10 pupils were presented with the books in an initiative to combat a traditional drop in literacy levels over the summer break. The idea had been popular, with 36 of the school's 180 years 9 and 10 pupils applying to participate in the inaugural programme, principal Julie Anderson said. "It's been very popular with the girls. We might have a rush on next year." Mrs Gardiner said the book bags were personally assembled for each pupil, taking into account their tastes and interests. "We're trying to broaden them and we want

to prevent the girls going away over summer and not reading. "There are also activities for them to do during the school holidays." The packs included information on cycling and walking route maps, a bus timetable, public library hours, a Christmas cracker and chocolates. Many of the pupils were already voracious readers, such as Toni Fowler. "This is a great idea and I'll definitely be doing it again next year," she said. "I love reading. Books are such a great escape." REPORT: NEAL EDDON/PHOTO: JANE BAKER



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# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

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## Special Summer Book Bags

### **The second year of the programme - 2013/14**

- The programme was extended to include Y11 and Y12 students
- A target of 50 students was set, but 57 girls signed up
- Bags were put together for staff as well
- Every bag had at least one new or almost new library book
- Provided specific titles as requested



# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

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## Special Summer Book Bags

### Feedback and evaluation

- 87% said they read more books over the holidays than normal (2012/13 programme)
- 92% said they read more books over the holidays than normal (2013/14 programme)
- Used asTTLe data as a measure of change in reading abilities before and after the summer reading programme (data was only available for a very small number of students, so results were indicative only)



# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

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## Special Summer Book Bags

### Some feedback from students

*"The books were all the ones I like to read and made me feel special because Mrs Gardiner knows my reading preferences."*

*"I don't usually read in the holidays but since I had the book bag I made sure that I did."*

*"Without this I probably wouldn't have read at ALL in the holidays. [The books] were amazing! I really liked all the books I read!!"*





# Case Study 2: Queen's High School

## Special Summer Book Bags

### Lessons learned

- Programme works best with students who are self motivated (those signed up by parents or teaching staff did not participate fully)
- Programme works for ALL students, regardless of their reading ability
- Time management is crucial for library staff
- Need a good supply of 'in demand' books
- It can be hard to choose books for students who aren't big library users
- Have a set time for all book bags to be collected at end of school year
- Be prepared to follow up overdue books
- Treats are nice, but books are still the main attraction!





# Case Study 3: Fairfield School

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## Summer Reading

### The goals:

- To provide books for students to read over the holidays – this was in response to an initial request from teaching staff who wanted to target some specific year 6 students and provide them with holiday reading
- To prevent the ‘Summer Slide’
- To develop a programme that is easy to set up and manage – the librarian has only 12 hours per week in the school library
- To make reading a fun summer activity
- To showcase other children, adults and young adults as reading role models



# Case Study 3: Fairfield School

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## Summer Reading

### Initial planning stages

- Enlisted the help of the older student librarians
- Student librarians designed a sign-up sheet that was put up in the library
- The programme was advertised in the school newsletter
- Information was provided to parents about the Summer Slide, along with suggestions of ways that they could help to prevent it
- Teaching staff were invited to sign up specific students that they felt would benefit from the reading programme



# Case Study 3: Fairfield School

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## Summer Reading

### The next steps

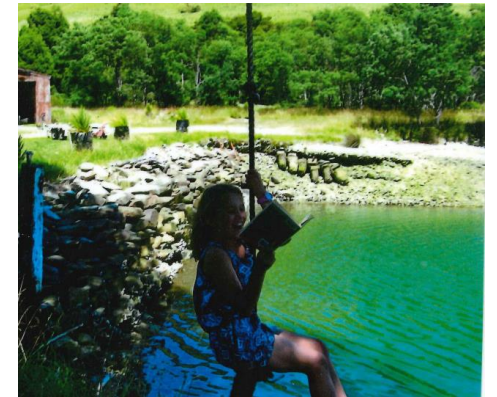
- Children who had signed up were invited to the library (along with their parents) at specified times in the last week of term to choose their own books
- Children were encouraged to bring their own book bags to fill (some were also provided)
- Some new books were held aside to tempt the reluctant readers signed up by teachers
- Children could reserve books to put in their bags and were allowed to choose 10 books to take home in their bags
- They were also given a popsicle bookmark, some stickers, a lollipop and some sweets, a colouring and puzzle page for the younger readers, a reading log and an information sheet



# Case Study 3: Fairfield School

## Summer Reading Photo Competition

- Students were invited to enter this competition by taking a photo of someone reading in an interesting place and emailing or handing it in to the librarian by the first week in term 1
- A display of all the photos entered was created in the school office foyer
- The librarian included some photos of her own showing adults and young adults reading as a way to model young adults reading for leisure
- Prizes of book vouchers and stationery items were awarded to the best three photos



# Case Study 3: Fairfield School

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## Summer Reading Bags and Photo Competition 2013/14

### Feedback and evaluation

- Lots of children signed up for summer reading bags for the holidays
- More children than expected returned reading logs showing lots of reading during the holidays (they were given small prizes as rewards)
- There were a good number of entries in the photo competition, with children already asking if it will be run again next year
- Running record data from the beginning of the year was collated and checked for students who had taken summer reading bags – most students' reading levels remained the same, with only one boy's level decreasing significantly (and so the programme will be continued next year)
- There was lots of positive feedback from parents



# Case Study 3: Fairfield School

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## Summer Reading

### Lessons learned

- There was still a lot of preparation involved in this programme, but it will be easier in the future since templates have now been set up and there will be a whole year to gather goodies for the bags and prizes for the photo competition
- There were still a large number of books overdue in March so need to look at systems for getting books returned more quickly
- There was negative feedback from one parent – that the books were too large and there were too many to take on holiday!



# Case Study 4: Bayfield High School

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## Summer Reading Programme

### The goals

- To prevent the 'summer slide'
- To provide access to books over the holidays
- To provide books for avid readers who are not members of the public library
- To have more of the library collection circulating
- To provide books in English for international students who return home over summer
- To target students who need encouragement to continue with their reading over the summer holidays





# Case Study 4: Bayfield High School

## Summer Reading Programme

### Initial planning stages

- Designed a reading permit (to be signed by parent/caregiver)
- Available to all students returning to school the following year, provided no outstanding overdue books
- No limit on the number of books students could borrow over summer





# Case Study 4: Bayfield High School

## Summer Reading Programme

### The next steps

- Most recent new books are set aside to go into the summer reading bags
- Students can choose their own books or have a 'mystery' bag tailored to their reading interests chosen for them by library staff
- Specific groups of readers are offered summer reading bags (e.g. year 9 students in the 'Buddy Programme', Chinese ESOL students) to encourage them to keep reading over the holidays
- Staff were invited to read some Young Adult fiction and give feedback on the books via a reading log designed by library staff – this feedback was then used as the basis for a library display



# Case Study 4: Bayfield High School

## Summer Reading Programme

### Feedback and evaluation

- When the programme was first offered it attracted 16 students – now it averages around 50 students each year
- Most students prefer to select their own books (those opting for a ‘mystery bag’ are usually girls)
- Some students choose to borrow an entire series, while others borrow the one book that they haven’t quite finished before the end of the year
- Some students borrow for siblings and other family members as well
- More than half the students taking part read all or most of the books they borrow
- Only half of the students taking part had access to books over the holidays from another source



# Case Study 4: Bayfield High School

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## Summer Reading Programme

### Lessons learned

- When surveyed, most students taking part felt the summer reading programme was a good scheme and wanted to sign up again in future years
- Very few books are lost each year (and sometimes none are lost)
- The programme will continue to be offered for as long as there is a demand for it



# Case Study 5: Kaikorai Valley College

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## Summer Reading

### The goals

- To encourage students to read over the holidays
- To help raise students' levels of academic achievement
- To promote use of the school library



# Case Study 5: Kaikorai Valley College

## Summer Reading

### Initial planning stages

- Decided to offer a summer reading programme for the first time in 2013/14 holidays
- Students in years 7 to 10 were targeted and the programme planned to start after seniors had finished school for end of year exams
- A questionnaire was developed to find out students reading preferences and borrower histories were checked
- Students had to return a letter of permission, signed by parents or caregivers
- Programme was advertised in school newsletter, daily notices and on the blog



# Case Study 5: Kaikorai Valley College

## Summer Reading

### The next steps

- Students could select their own books to borrow over summer or choose to have the librarian pick the books for them
- All students received at least one new library book
- Students could look at the books selected for them and add others to their pile if they wished
- Students all borrowed 7 or 8 books each



# Case Study 5: Kaikorai Valley College

## Summer Reading

### Feedback and evaluation

- 18 students chose their own summer reading books in 2013, and 17 students had books selected by the librarian
- Younger and less able readers were more likely to borrow books selected for them by the librarian
- Table shows participation in 2013/14
- All summer reading books were returned
- Students really liked having books over the holidays

Year Level	Girls	Boys
7	7	
8	11	2
9	6	4
10	2	3
Total	26	9

# Case Study 5: Kaikorai Valley College

## Summer Reading

### Lessons learned

- The programme made students realise that reading is something that they can do to benefit their studies, as well as being something to keep them entertained over the holidays
- The programme provided a great opportunity for students to get hold of popular books that were always out on issue during the year
- It has helped build a closer relationship between students and the Library - the students that took part have continued to borrow books
- Teachers and parents appreciated the efforts of the library to provide students with books
- The programme helped to reinforce the importance for students to read during the holidays





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