# Reading over the holidays when school sends nothing home

Peabody guide · updated 2026-10-30

No reading log from school this break? A simple plan for two weeks of holiday reading: a book a day for little ones, one challenge, and free paper logs.

When school sends nothing home for the holidays, you get to decide what reading looks like, and the simplest plan is the one that lasts: a book a day for the youngest, a few longer books for older children, one chart on the fridge, and a trip to the library in the first week. You don't need a log from school, a target from anyone or an app. This guide is the plan I would use for the two weeks of winter break, with Peabody's free Winter Break challenge for families who want one and paper logs for families who would rather not use a screen. Like the rest of Peabody, it is free through the end of 2026.

## Nothing from school is a good start

A holiday with no reading assignment means the reading is the child's own. That is worth protecting. In a 2012 study of second and third graders, published in the Journal of Research in Education, children whose reading log was optional came to like reading more over two months, while classmates given a compulsory 20-minute nightly log came to like it less. It was one small study, but it is a good reason not to rebuild the school's log at home. Let the child choose the books, and let the chart be theirs.

## The two weeks

Peabody's Winter Break challenge runs from Saturday 19 December 2026 to Sunday 3 January 2027, sixteen days. They are not sixteen equal days:

- The first weekend is the easiest reading of the break. Start strong: a library trip, a stack by the bed, two books before Monday.
- The middle week is visitors, travel and late nights. Plan for less, and let read-alouds carry it.
- The last weekend is getting ready for school. A short book to finish on is better than a long one to abandon.

If your break falls on other dates, the same shape works for any fortnight off, with the paper logs below.

## A book a day for the youngest

For children of 5 to 7, a book a day is a rhythm rather than a rule. Winter Break's target at that age is 10 books in sixteen days, about one every day and a half, so a missed day costs nothing. Two things make it easy:

- A book read aloud counts. At this age, being read to is reading. A bedtime book on most nights reaches ten on its own.
- A favourite read again on another day counts again. Young children choose re-reading, and it should count.

Peabody's first books are short enough for one sitting even on a tired evening: Pit, Pat is 18 words, Frog on a Log 45 and A Cat and a Dog 61. Every story can be read aloud with the , and Peabody's library has 425 free stories on 19 levels with no account needed.

For children of 2 to 6, Read-Aloud 20 is twenty books read aloud to a little one, a patch of a reading quilt each. Grandparents reading over the holidays count.

## Older children: fewer, longer books

From 8 to 10, the Winter Break target is 6 books, about one every two or three days. From 11 up it is 4, about one every four days, because a real novel takes several sittings. If your child is a big reader, let them pick a higher number after the first book. A number they chose is a number they own.

## One challenge, or none

Pick one. Two challenges at once over a short break is one too many.

- Winter Break: a snowy mountain climbs a step a book, and the certificate prints at the top.
- Book Bingo: 25 kinds of books on a card, five in a row is a Bingo. Several squares suit the season: "Snow, rain or wind", "A story at night", "A book about a family", "A book read aloud to someone".
- 100 Books: start over the break and keep going; there is no end date.
- January, for after the break: a day's square colours in with a finished book or 20 minutes of reading, and twenty days out of 31 is the finish line.

Or none at all. A family that reads at bedtime and goes to the library twice has had a good reading holiday without a chart.

## Paper logs, no screen needed

Everything prints, and paper works in a car, on a plane and at a grandparent's house with no signal.

- The weekly reading log: Monday to Sunday rows, the title, a column for pages or minutes

(leave it blank if nobody asked), "how was it?" faces, a column for a grown-up to sign and a total line.
- The monthly reading log: 31 squares to colour or write a title in, with days read and books finished.
- The bingo card and the 100 books chart.
- The challenge's own chart prints with the picture to colour, a table of the books so far, a line for records like "Read 6 books, 19 Dec – 27 Dec", and a QR code back to the challenge that carries no child data.

If you use the tracker on a family device instead, each reader picks an animal face, up to six on one device, and nothing they log leaves it.

## Where the books come from

- The library, in the first week. Borrow more than you think you need: the challenge stalls between books more than during them.
- Peabody's kids' lists, for the next book: winter books for kids, bedtime books and chapter-book read-alouds for the whole family. Buy links are plain searches with no affiliate tag.
- Books by level, with Peabody's free stories at each level and the lists and series that fit.
- What should I read next: three tap-to-answer questions (what kind, how long, alone or together), and one pick.

## Travel and visitors

Pack the books, or the paper chart and a pencil. Read aloud in the car or the waiting room. Hand a visiting grown-up a book and a child: it is the easiest present to give. A chapter book read aloud to the whole family over the break counts for everyone listening, if your family says so.

## Questions parents ask

## Should my child read every day over the holidays?

Most days is plenty. A missed day costs nothing on Peabody's challenges, and on the January calendar it simply stays empty.

## How many books should my child read over winter break?

Peabody's targets are 10 for ages 5 to 7 (read-alouds count), 6 for 8 to 10 and 4 from 11 up. The right number is one they can finish with a day or two to spare.

## The school sent nothing. Should I ask for work?

You don't need to. A chart your child fills in, and a printed record of the books they read, is something to show the teacher in January if they would like to see it.

## Can we do this without a screen?

Yes. Every log and chart prints, and the library has the books.

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Free at peabody.kids/guides/reading-over-the-holidays