

# Reading at COVID-19 times

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Dear parents,

Many institutions are trying their best to translate information about COVID-19. The website to access all topical information in nine languages is <https://www.covid.is/>. Just a few days ago, the new app Rakning C-19 was made available in App Store and Google Play store to trace the spread of the infection.

For parents of school children, it is particularly important to receive and understand messages about the schooling of their children and available materials. Tips for parents from the World Health Organisation are available in 36 languages here. SAMFOK – the Alliance of Parents' Associations and Parents' Councils of Elementary Schools in Reykjavík, has recorded and translated presentations in ten languages about Icelandic school system, leisure activities, the importance of communication of teachers and parents, and the importance of mother tongues in the project *Allir með* – all recordings and slides are available here.

In most countries, schools are closed entirely and children are home schooled. They get a lot of homework from their teachers that they work on independently or with the assistance of their parents. In Iceland, schools are finding solutions how to respect the hygiene and social distancing rules and offer some regular teaching hours at the same time. The authorities encourage parents to send their children to school because of the regularity that it creates in children's lives. Yet the children still spend a lot of time at home.

***Reading in Icelandic***

Most compulsory schools require regular reading at home in Icelandic, and sometimes they add other homework. Access to reading materials in Icelandic can be difficult when all libraries are closed. Here are some websites where online reading material in Icelandic is available:

Rafbækur í rólegheitum (Eng. electronic books in peace and quiet; open access)

Skólavefurinn (password needed)

Leveled books for beginning readers

Books for readers of different ages with audio recordings, exercises and answers.

Rafbókasafnið (access to a public library needed)

The Directorate of Education (open access)

Classic stories for readers of different ages are available at the website of the Directorate of Education, as well as links to other sources of educational, relaxation, interesting material for children and youth.

### ***Reading in other languages***

This may be a good time for reading in other languages, too. Many plurilingual children in Icelandic compulsory school have solid knowledge of their mother tongues. The library of **Móðurmál** – the Association on Bilingualism has now catalogued 5800 items in **58 languages**. The material can be browsed on [www.leitir.is](http://www.leitir.is) with the search term MODPG. There you can select the language. Most books are available in Italian, Czech, Spanish, Filipino languages, Portuguese, Polish, Lithuanian, French, English, Finish and Arabic. School libraries accross Iceland can receive these books for their students and individuals can borrow books by contacting the project manager via Facebook.

Our children learn English, Danish and other languages in their schools. Why not watch movies on Netflix and add subtitles – then a lot of reading takes place, together with listening, music and exciting stories. There are a lot of online resources out there, too. Here is one – StoryJumper – where you can both read free stories online, and you can create your own!