Reading non-fiction in Year 1: spotting labels, captions and diagrams

Key points

- Non-fiction books use special features—labels, captions, diagrams and contents pages—to help readers find information, and they look very different from story books.
- A label is a word or short phrase that names a part of a picture, like 'petals' on a flower or 'wheels' on a bike.
- A caption is a sentence or short text next to a picture that tells you more about what you see.
- A diagram is a picture with labels or simple drawings that shows how something works or what something looks like.
- Noticing and using these features helps your child find information and understand what they read in non-fiction.

Things to try at home

- When you read together, point out a label or caption and say, 'This tells us...' or 'Look, the caption explains...'
- Look at how-to books, recipe books or books about animals together—find the labels, captions and diagrams that explain the steps or show how things work.
- Draw something your child enjoys (a pet, a plant, their bike) and let them label the different parts with your help.
- Play 'spot the label' or 'find the caption' when you're reading—it's a gentle, fun way to get them looking for these features.

Find out more

- Department for Education: Key Stage 1 English curriculum (GOV.UK) for what your child learns in Year 1 reading
- Your child's teacher: ask about non-fiction books or text features they're working with in class
- Your local library: librarians can recommend non-fiction books that use clear labels, captions and diagrams for young readers