

NRCQ 2024: Media engagement for participating schools

Media engagement



Change your story

National Reading Champions Quiz



Funded by

ALCS

You might want to reach out to your local media to cover the regional heats, particularly to celebrate the winning school making it through to the final. While many local media outlets run on small staff, they are always looking for positive local interest stories.

Before deciding who to approach, it's a good idea to do some research into local media in your area and the types of stories they cover.

Pitch

You should put together a short and succinct pitch for your news story. You will want to write what your idea is, the hook and why you are the person who is best or most experienced for writing it.

By keeping it short, plain and direct, you give your story the best chances of being picked up as journalists receive hundreds of messages a day. You don't want to overwhelm or lose their attention in the first paragraph!

Find the most relevant reporter or Editor, who specialises in the topic, to send your story. By personally addressing the pitch email to the journalist, it helps build rapport and allows you to become more personable.

Package

Try putting together a package of pictures, quotes and videos to make it easier for the journalist to publish your story because everything is in one place. This is particularly key if the outlet has a strong online presence. The more content you can offer them the more likely they are to use it on multiple platforms.

Follow up

When you haven't heard back, follow up is crucial for securing coverage. You shouldn't be disheartened if you hear nothing back as they sometimes miss emails. Try calling or emailing the journalist again to check they have everything they need and plan on running the story.

How to write a press release

Headline

Lead with the most newsworthy element of the story. It could be that your school or class is the best in one particular quiz category, had the record number of pupils sign up to the National Reading Champions Quiz or reached the final.

- Make it bold and bigger font to capture the journalist's attention

First paragraph

One or two sentences where you summarise the project, story or new development which the press release is about.

- Use the 5 Ws – who, what, where, when, why, to unpick the key elements of the story and title

This sentence is crucial to grab the reader's attention when the email lands in their inbox

Body copy

This is the main part of the press release where you explain the story:

- Explain the Quiz and the detail of your participation
- Use numerical data where possible to evidence your point. This could be the number of pupils, correct answers, or pupils taking part in the quiz
- Use research findings or studies which provide context for why you are bringing this story to the journalist's awareness. You might want to look at research by the National Literacy Trust for the literacy need in your area, or about the role of reading for pleasure in improving children's literacy attainment or wellbeing
- We would suggest writing two sentences per paragraph so the press release isn't text heavy

Quotes

Using quotes brings a story to life, adds credibility and a personal angle to your story:

- Quotes should contain some form of emotion or explain why the cause or story is important
- We would suggest gathering a few quotes, one from a librarian or teacher from a school and a National Literacy Trust spokesperson
- Keep quotes short and succinct. They should be no longer than two sentences, otherwise they will lose the journalist's interest

Relevant links

- To find out more, please visit the [National Literacy Trust website](#)
- Share and use links to your social media pages for ease. This could be your school Facebook page, photos shared on Twitter of children taking part in the regional heats
- By using hyperlinks, you will give your story the best chance of being published as they can see the results or story for themselves

Media contacts

Always add further contact information and details of the person to speak to for more information and to arrange an interview

Notes to editors

Provide background information to your school and the National Reading Champions Quiz.

About the National Reading Champions Quiz

The National Reading Champions Quiz is an annual competition for enthusiastic young readers to go head-to-head with their peers to showcase their knowledge of reading.

Led by the National Literacy Trust and funded by the ALCS, it aims to build a love of reading and celebrate reading for pleasure in schools across the country.

Template press release

Press release

For immediate release XX 2024

XX School in XX wins regional heats of the National Reading Champions Quiz 2024

Students from [name] School are named [region]'s top readers after winning the regional heats of the National Reading Champions Quiz.

The team of [XX] students went head to head with peers from [XX] schools in the area during the heats on [date]. They will now be heading to the grand final on **Wednesday 5 June** to compete with schools from across the UK to be crowned the **National Reading Champions 2024**.

The competition, which is in its fourth year, is led by the National Literacy Trust and funded by the Author's Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS). It celebrates keen, young readers and champions the important role of teachers and school librarians in promoting reading for pleasure. It comes after National Literacy Trust research revealed that children who enjoy reading have significantly better mental wellbeing than those who don't¹.

[Name] School were named champions after getting X out of X questions correct and showcasing their skilful ability to identify the characters, authors and titles across a breadth of children's literature. They really shone in [example of most successful round, e.g. when they had to put their heads together to solve brainteasers].

¹ Christina Clark and Anne Teravainen-Goff, Mental wellbeing, reading and writing, National Literacy Trust, 2018, <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/mental-wellbeing-reading-and-writing/>

Now they have the chance of competing for the grand trophy and a generous set of book tokens if they win the country's top spot on June 5. Second and third place finalists will also be presented with book vouchers.

Pupil name, pupil from X winning School said: [sample quote] *"I am over the moon, this is such a big achievement for me. I've always loved stories, their characters and how we can escape into their worlds, but I never thought that was something to be celebrated.*

"The Quiz has made that possible and given me a push towards embracing my love of books. I feel really encouraged and proud."

Librarian / teacher name, [job title], from X School, said: [sample quote] *"We'd like to thank the National Literacy Trust for this opportunity, it's been a massive boost to the confidence of our students to take part in a national competition. We never thought we would get this far, let alone win!*

"It's been so great to see their progress, how they've prepared and worked together on this Quiz. They've exceeded all expectations!"

Henrietta Roberts, Senior Project Manager of the National Reading Champions Quiz, said:

"We are so excited to host the National Reading Champions Quiz to celebrate young readers across the UK. There is an amazing wealth of literature out there for students to explore and through the Quiz we hope to motivate them to read as widely as possible - and to feel proud of their reading knowledge.

"We wish the best of luck to all of the schools competing in the final and look forward to crowning the National Reading Quiz champions of 2024!"

For more information on the National Reading Champions Quiz visit: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/events/national-reading-champions-quiz/>

-ENDS-

Media contacts

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Notes to editors

About the National Literacy Trust

Our charity is dedicated to improving the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of those who need it most, giving them the best possible chance of success in school, work and life. We run Literacy Hubs and campaigns in communities where low levels of literacy and social mobility are seriously impacting people's lives. We support schools and early years settings to deliver outstanding literacy provision, and we campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians, businesses and parents. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy and drive our interventions. Literacy is a vital element of action against poverty and our work changes children's life stories.

Visit literacytrust.org.uk to find out more, donate or sign up for our free email newsletter. You can also find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About ALCS

The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) is a not-for-profit organisation started by writers for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers' work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity, ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents over 110,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £500 million to writers (alcs.co.uk).