

CASE STUDY: THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN LONDON



Sora
Where students read

How this school uses Sora to support reading success

Sora feels tailor-made for the literacy-driven American School in London.

Nestled in the heart of London, the American School in London (ASL) provides an international education to a vibrant community of 1,400 students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, spanning from pre-kindergarten to year 12. In this dynamic environment, ensuring every learner has access to the right tools and global content is crucial. That's where Sora, the student-centered reading app from OverDrive, plays a vital role.



Navigating Challenges of Location

At ASL, literacy is more than just a goal; it's woven into the fabric of the school's culture. Grade-level appropriate reading activities, book clubs, and recreational reading programs thrive in every classroom. However, being located outside the U.S. posed challenges in sourcing U.S.-published books. Because of the importance of literacy, the addition of digital books affords the school an opportunity to develop and provide a more robust library collection.

Sora's Transformative Features for ASL's International Students

- Multilingual Resources** Access books in multiple languages, supporting diverse student backgrounds.
- Accessibility Options** Adjustable text sizes, screen colours, and fonts for readers with disabilities, visual or learning difficulties.
- Flexible Formats** Ebooks and audiobooks to accommodate different reading preferences and needs.
- Barrier-Free Access** Supports students with limited physical adaptability or handling barriers.
- On-the-Go Availability** Access materials while travelling, after school hours, and during breaks.

Recognising the need for a flexible digital solution, ASL implemented Sora, transforming its reading landscape to incorporate an abundance of high-interest, user-friendly digital resources. Sora quickly became integral to the school's literacy strategy.

Venisha Bahr, High School Librarian, explains: "Students rely on the annotation and notes features within Sora to help in writing essays and to quickly search in the books for quotes to use as evidence in class writings. They can take notes and highlight within the books they're reading for assignments and export them to access any time, even after they've returned the digital book."

Tailored Reading Tools

- ASL uses the Fountas and Pinnell levelling system to create collections for each reading level.
- Students and teachers can easily browse, borrow, and read books suited to individual needs.

Beyond the classroom, the school's book clubs now use Sora for instant access to selected titles, removing the hassle of distributing physical copies and boosting greater participation. While print books remain available, digital copies allow multiple students to borrow the same book simultaneously, breaking down access barriers and inspiring recreational reading.





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Sora Within the School Community

Promoting Sora within the ASL community has been a notable success, driven by digital posters, in-library promotions, engaging parent events, and regular updates that keep students, faculty, and parents informed about available resources. This proactive approach has fueled widespread adoption, with students increasingly turning to Sora for both leisure and academic reading.

One way ASL successfully makes Sora an engrained part of their entire school community is by bringing parents into the Sora reading platform. Parents have their own log in to utilise the platform for their own reading. This approach gets parents involved in the reading experience, modeling positive reading behaviours with the Sora platform at home - in addition to at school.

“I love the Sora app!” said Emily Mazzulla, parent of two students at ASL. “I listen to audiobooks while running and doing chores around the house and this app has been great! It is easy to use, allows me to explore new titles, and it’s free!” Parents are more likely to be advocates for the digital reading tool when they themselves are using it daily. It can create a top-down impact on daily student reading habits.

Since incorporating Sora into its literacy initiatives, ASL has experienced a remarkable boost in engagement, as the platform breaks down geographical barriers and offers a diverse array of books and resources that resonate with its international student body. With its accessibility, flexibility, and global reach, Sora empowers ASL to meet the unique needs of its community, ensuring all students have the tools they need to succeed. In addition, Bahr praises the local support team from Sora that is always available to assist and provide resources.

“The biggest benefit to having Sora is working with an amazing support team!” said Bahr. “Whenever I have a question or concern or need help with something, the response time is rapid, professional, efficient, and extremely kind.”

For schools facing similar challenges, Sora stands out as a transformative solution, enhancing both academic and recreational reading in an inclusive and scalable manner.

WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING:

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Emily Mazzulla

Parent of two ASL students

