



St John's College
Oxford



Job title	Post-doctoral Research Assistant
Location	St John's College/Department of Experimental Psychology
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £36,024 -£44, 263 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed-term (12 months)
Reporting to	Professor Kate Nation
Vacancy reference	00123

Research topic	Children's language and literacy development
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Professor Kate Nation
Project team	ReadOxford (www.readoxford.org)
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by St John's College
Recent publications	Nation, Dawson, & Hsiao (2022). Book language and its implications for children's language, literacy and development . <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> .

Overview of Role

A position is available for a highly motivated Post-Doctoral Research Assistant to work on a research project at the University of Oxford. The project is led by Professor Kate Nation and Dr Nicola Dawson and is in close collaboration with The Story Museum.

The project sits within a programme of work investigating children's reading and language development. It will also inform The Story Museum action research on the impact of engaging with spoken, written and digital stories on children's learning and life satisfaction. The goal of this project is to investigate children's learning through books, audiobooks and oral story telling.

Our previous work has shown that reading experience is important as books contain language that is more complex and sophisticated than the language children would otherwise encounter in their day-to-day lives. In this project, we ask whether other properties of books also contribute to learning. We will do this by comparing children's learning from reading story books vs listening to audiobooks. Key to education is learning information and acquiring knowledge. As our previous work has shown that the language content of nonfiction books is different in important ways to the language of fictional narratives, we will consider learning from nonfiction texts as well as stories.

Children are constantly learning, often in complex, social, multifaceted, and multisensory environments. This is not captured by standard laboratory style experiments. To remedy this, we will develop a research partnership with the Story Museum to investigate and celebrate the magic of oral storytelling and what children learn from it.

The project is funded by St John's College and the appointee will be a member of the college as well as being affiliated with the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford. The post is for 12 months with a proposed start date of 1st September 2024 or as soon as possible afterwards.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. Work collaboratively with the Principal Investigator and other members of the research team, including those based at the Story Museum.
2. Bring expertise and knowledge about early language and literacy development or social and emotional development to develop and test research questions.
3. Set-up and run studies with children in schools, and develop protocols for studies with the Story Museum.
4. Analyse complex data and prepare reports, reviews, publications and presentations detailing findings.
5. A willingness to contribute actively to developing impact and public engagement, including the co-development of ideas with children and young people.
6. A commitment to open science.
7. Contribute to the day-to-day supervision of students and project interns.
8. Assist with general administration within the research group.

Additional security pre-employment checks

- A satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check due to regulated activity involving children.
- The selected candidate will be required to present documentation demonstrating the Right to Work in the UK.

Selection criteria

1. An undergraduate qualification and/or Masters degree in a related subject such as psychology, education or speech and language sciences.
2. A PhD (or soon-to-be completed PhD) in psychology or a relevant subject with direct experience of psycholinguistic research.
3. A strong publication and dissemination record commensurate with career stage and opportunity.
4. Advanced theoretical knowledge relating to the psychology of language and/or reading (or to socio-emotional development).
5. Experience of interviewing, focus groups and other qualitative research methods.
6. Excellent statistical, coding and data-handling skills and a commitment to open science best practice.
7. Experience designing and running experiments with children in a school or similar setting.
8. Experience in liaising in a professional manner with external collaborators (e.g., education practitioners) and commitment to professional dissemination and building impact.
9. Excellence in communication, decision-making, problem-solving, planning and organising.

Desirable selection criteria

1. Experience in a museum or arts environment.
2. Experience collaborating or creating with children and young people.

Terms and Conditions

Salary: Appointment will be made on Grade 7 of the University's pay scale, currently starting at £36,024 per annum.

Hours of work: Normal office hours are 37 hours per week. The post-holder will be expected to work such hours as are reasonably required to carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the Principal Investigator. Some flexibility will be required according to particular responsibilities and will include some out-of-office duties in local schools as well as at the Story Museum.

Holidays: Annual entitlement is 38 days inclusive of 8 Bank Holidays (pro rata for part time staff) and is to be taken by agreement with the Principal Investigator. The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Pension: The post holder will be entitled to join the Universities Superannuation Pension Scheme.

Probationary and Notice Periods: The appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of a three-month probationary period, during which time the notice period will be one week on either side. Once the appointment has been confirmed, the notice period on either side is one month.

Meals: The post holder is entitled to free meals in Hall on days when working at the College site.

Application Procedure

If you consider that you meet the selection criteria, please send your application (as a single pdf) containing a covering letter explaining your suitability for the post and a full CV with your complete education and employment history by email to vacancies@sjc.ox.ac.uk. Please include the name and contact details of three academic referees who are willing to be contacted, should you be shortlisted for the post. Please indicate whether you have Right to Work in the UK, and whether this is subject to any visa stipulations.

Your application should arrive no later than 12 noon on 4th July 2024. We anticipate that interviews will be held on Monday 22nd July 2024.

If your application is successful, your appointment will be subject (i) to the provision of an original document, which indicates your right to work in the UK, (ii) Enhanced DBS check and (iii) the completion of the initial 3-month probation period.

Equal Opportunities Statement

St John's College is committed to providing equality of opportunity and avoiding unlawful discrimination. The policy and practice of the College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment and that entry into employment with the College and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases the ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of his or her sex, marital status, sexual orientation, racial group, age or disability.

Data Protection

All data supplied by candidates will be used only for the purpose of determining their suitability for the post and will be held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the College's Data Protection Policy and recruitment monitoring process.

About St John's College

St John's College is one of the larger colleges within the University of Oxford. Founded in 1555 by Sir Thomas White, the College is a long-established member of the thirty-eight colleges of Oxford University. Like all colleges, it is an independent, self-governing establishment, which functions both as an academic institution and as a social and residential centre for its members. The College has around 650 students and 100 Fellows. For further information about the College, please visit our website at www.sjc.ox.ac.uk.

About The Story Museum

The Story Museum highlights the human need for stories and celebrates the many ways that people can benefit from them. Its vision is to enrich lives, especially young lives, through stories. Its mission is to do this by collecting great stories and sharing them in great ways at their most unusual Museum.

Through imaginative exhibitions and exciting programmes of performances, events, workshops, clubs and skills-building courses, the Museum engages people of all ages in great stories. Its activities are

interactive, multi-sensory and designed to encourage parents, carers and children to spend time together enjoying stories in many different ways.

For further information, visit: <https://www.storymuseum.org.uk>

About the Department of Experimental Psychology

The Department of Experimental Psychology at Oxford was founded in 1898 and has a long and prestigious history and is fortunate to be home to a number of current world-leading research groups, and continues to be among the top-ranked Psychology departments worldwide. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) Exercise the Psychology, Neuroscience and Psychiatry REF submission from Oxford was judged to have many outstanding strengths in the research it produced, its research environment, and in terms of the impact of its research on wider society. Departmental turnover for 20/21 was in excess of £15.5 million. Research in the Department is organised into 5 research groupings roughly equal in size: Behavioural Neuroscience / Cognition and Perception / Developmental Psychology / Social Psychology / Psychological and Brain Health.

In 2018 the core of the Department relocated to the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter where we now occupy two floors of New Radcliffe House and the Anna Watts Building. The Anna Watts building houses the developmental research centre and facilities for EEG, TMS, and tDCS, along with multiple laboratories with eye-movement recording equipment. The Oxford Centre for Anxiety Disorders and Trauma (OXCADAT) is located at The Old Rectory and we also have some research groups located in the Tinsley Building in the Science Area of the city. Experimental Psychology has good access to a wide variety of special populations including: mothers and babies, schools, older participants, acquired and developmental neuropsychological patients, and individuals with psychological problems.

In 2024 the department will move to its new home in The Life and Mind building. This exciting development will provide exceptional research and teaching facilities along with space for public engagement and outreach. It also offers renewed commitment to work across disciplinary boundaries to further knowledge across the psychological and biological sciences and to solve major global challenges. See: <https://lifeandmind.web.ox.ac.uk/>

Research in the Department is supported by an extensive range of laboratory and IT facilities. The Department has a wide portfolio of research grants from UK and international charities, Research Councils and government organizations, the EU Scientific Programme, NIHR, and industrial sources. Much of the work is collaborative with other Departments and often includes work in hospitals, schools and industrial settings both locally and further afield. Many researchers in the Department also have collaborative research programmes with leading institutions elsewhere in the UK, in Europe, North America, and Japan.

At the undergraduate level, the Department is the focus for lectures, classes, practicals, and research projects. It is a centre used by the undergraduates from all colleges for the Experimental Psychology (EP), Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics (PPL), and Biomedical Science (BMS) courses. The Department provides lecture rooms, IT facilities and laboratories for experimental and project work. The Department also hosts two Masters level courses. MSc in Psychological Research and MSc in Neuroscience.

The Department of Experimental Psychology is strongly committed to equality and valuing diversity and we operate a flexible working policy for all staff. The Department holds a departmental **Silver** Athena award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

For more information please visit: <http://www.psy.ox.ac.uk>.

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.