Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework
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The purpose of this book

This book forms part of the State Literacy Strategy. The strategy is designed to support the work of teachers by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to address students’ literacy needs within mainstream classrooms. The teaching of reading is to receive major attention in the State Literacy Strategy.

The key elements of the Department of School Education’s approach to literacy are:

• the teaching of literacy skills in an explicit and systematic way
• continuity in the development of each student’s literacy skills through a planned, whole-school approach
• coordinated and targeted school programs in response to the identification of literacy needs and at critical transition stages in each student’s literacy development
• early identification for students who are experiencing difficulties with literacy and provision of appropriate support
• intensive local training and development for teachers in recognising and addressing the literacy needs of students
• development of effective learning partnerships with parents and caregivers
• monitoring of students’ literacy achievements
• the establishment of literacy support teams in schools and districts.

This book aims to provide a guide to the systematic teaching of reading from Kindergarten to Year 6 within the context of the K-6 English Syllabus. It draws together recent and relevant information about the teaching and learning of reading into a clear and coherent framework for K-6 teachers.

The information in this book underpins all other components of this reading project, namely:

• Teaching Reading: A Whole-school Focus
• Teaching Reading Books 1 to 5
• School Magazine Teaching Units
• Teaching Reading: School-based Training and Development Program
• Selecting Texts for the Reading Program: Training and Development Program
• Teaching Reading: Parents Program

The materials in the Focus on Reading Project should be used in conjunction with:

• Focus on Literacy
• the K-6 English Syllabus
• the Revised Early Learning Profiles
• Department of School Education English K-6 Support Materials

The teaching of reading is a whole-school responsibility. By clearly targeting reading as a priority, and by developing a sequenced plan for the teaching of reading from Kindergarten to Year 6, schools can provide for the continued development of reading for all students.
What is reading?

Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written text.

I define reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practised. My definition states that within the directional constraints of the printer’s code, language and visual perception responses are purposefully directed by the reader in some integrated way to the problem of extracting meaning from cues in a text, in sequence, so that the reader brings a maximum of understanding to the author’s message.


Reading is an essential part of literacy. Any discussion of reading must take place in the context of what it means to be literate in today’s society. The following definition of literacy underpins these materials.

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual’s lifetime.

All Australians need to have effective literacy in English, not only for their personal benefit and welfare but also for Australia to reach its social and economic goals.

A functional approach to reading

Whenever we use language we create and interpret texts. When we read we interpret texts created by others. These texts are created to achieve particular purposes. Different kinds of texts are created to achieve different purposes.

A functional, or social, approach to language focuses on how language works in different contexts to achieve particular purposes.

The task of the reader is to construct meaning from a text by interpreting it within a particular context. A functional approach to language helps us to understand how a particular text works to achieve its purpose and so helps us to interpret, or read, the text.

This approach to reading has clear implications for the classroom program.

Students should encounter a range of texts:

- literary texts such as narratives, poetry and plays
- factual texts from all key learning areas
- texts used in everyday life, such as newspapers, posters and advertisements
Students should use texts for a range of purposes, including:

- reading for pleasure
- to find information
- to learn how to do something

Students should have many opportunities to learn about the structure and features of texts:

- during modelled reading
- during guided reading
- during independent reading
A model of reading

Reading is a complex process which involves interaction between the reader and the language and ideas of the text. It involves readers in drawing upon their existing knowledge of the world, of language and of the written code in order to attend to the visual information of the text. The diagram below indicates visually the elements of reading and their relationships to each other. This diagram is further explained on the following pages.

The goal of reading is to construct meaning from written text.
Context

We learn to read and write as individuals in social contexts

Literacy is learnt in social contexts as people use literacy practices to interact with each other to achieve social purposes. Literacy practices are some of the ways we relate to other people in social contexts.

Literacy practices are culturally-based ways of achieving social purposes. Different cultural groups use and value literacy practices in different ways.

Students’ views of what literacy involves, and its purposes, are shaped by the kinds of reading experiences they encounter at home, at school and in the broader community. When children enter school they have already become aware of some of the ways in which reading and writing are used and viewed in their own families and communities.

Teachers need to acknowledge, value and build on students’ prior-to-school experiences. The literacy experiences students encounter at school with teachers and peers will shape the way they view themselves as readers and writers.

Sources of information

In learning to read students must learn to use and integrate four complementary sources of information

- information about meanings (semantic information)
- information about language structures (grammatical information)
- information about the sounds of language (phonological information)
- information about language in print (graphological information).
Semantic information

Readers use semantic information when they ask themselves questions such as:

- Does this make sense?
- Does this fit with what’s gone before?

Semantic information includes meanings related to such things as word meanings, common expressions, subject-specific vocabulary, figurative language and real-world knowledge.

Grammatical information

Readers use grammatical information when they ask themselves questions such as:

- Does this sound right?
- Would we say it like that?

Grammatical information includes such things as text organisation, sentence structure, word order and agreement of verb and subject.

Graphological-phonological information

Readers use graphological and phonological information when they ask themselves questions such as:

- Does this look right?
- Do the sounds I want to say match the letters on the page?

Graphological-phonological information includes the relationship between sounds and letters, common English letter clusters and whole words.

Integrating sources of information

Readers must access and integrate information from all four sources fluently and continuously as they read. In a systematic approach to reading the four sources of information are learnt and practised together.
Four roles of the reader

To develop as effective readers, students must learn to take on a set of roles, or ways of interacting with a text. These roles (described by Freebody and Luke, 1990) indicate the ways a reader can move beyond decoding print to understanding and using text on several levels for a variety of purposes. Briefly, these roles can be described as:

**Code-breaker role**

As a code-breaker a reader is concerned with decoding the visual information of the text. Readers use the code-breaker role when they ask themselves questions such as:
- How do I crack this text?
- What are its patterns and conventions?

In adopting the code-breaker role readers attend to:
- the sounds in words
- whole words
- sound/letter correspondences
- sentences and paragraphs
- punctuation conventions
- left to right directionality
- book conventions
- grammatical information
- word meanings.

**Text-participant role**

As a text-participant a reader is concerned with understanding the meaning of the text. Readers use the text-participant role when they ask themselves questions such as:
- What is this text trying to say?
- What are the possible meanings of this text?
- What do I already know about this topic?

In adopting a text-participant role readers attend to:
- the way the text is constructed to make meaning
- the literal and figurative meanings of words and expressions
- how this text relates to the reader’s prior knowledge.
Text-user role
As a text-user a reader is concerned with the way in which the text prompts them to take some action. Readers use the text-user role when they ask themselves questions such as:
- What do I do with this text, here and now?
- What are my options and alternatives?
Readers adopt the text-user role when they:
- use the text in social situations to achieve social purposes
- interact with others in the classroom around the text
- participate in events in which the text plays a part.

Text-analyst role
As a text-analyst a reader is concerned with the underlying and unstated assumptions in the text and the way the text attempts to position them as readers. Readers use the text-analyst role when they ask themselves questions such as:
- What is this text trying to do to me?
- Whose interests are being served by this text?
- Which voices or points of view are silent?
Readers adopt the text-analyst role when they:
- talk about opinion, bias and point of view in a text
- present an alternative position to the one taken by the text or decide to endorse the position taken by the text
- think about what the writer of the text believes.

Effective readers are those who:
- have knowledge about the sources of information (semantic, grammatical, phonological, graphological).
- have strategies for accessing and integrating information from the four sources.
- have knowledge of texts and how they are structured within different contexts.
- have strategies for taking on the four roles of a reader.
Readers must learn to use semantic, grammatical, phonological and graphological information in order to construct meaning from text. Readers do this within the context of culture and context of situation in which they operate by taking on the roles of code-breaker, text-participant, text-user and text-analyst.

Teachers should plan and implement programs which develop these capacities in explicit and systematic ways.
Reading… a pathway of development

As students develop as readers they demonstrate growing skills, knowledge and understandings in all elements of reading. Not all students develop in the same way or demonstrate markers of development at the same time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual understanding</th>
<th>Semantic information</th>
<th>Grammatical information</th>
<th>Phonological information</th>
<th>Graphological information</th>
<th>Roles of the reader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows that text conveys meaning</td>
<td>Shows early understandings of the purposes of a variety of simple texts.</td>
<td>Knows that there are different kinds of written texts.</td>
<td>Begins to differentiate between literary and factual texts.</td>
<td>Understands that texts are constructed by people and represent real and imaginary experiences.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows development of real-world knowledge and growth in understanding of topics being studied such as home, family, own and other communities, own and other environments, topics of interest such as games, food, clothes and animals, and topics in all key learning areas.</td>
<td>Shows development of vocabulary including word meanings, figurative language and subject-specific language of topics being studied in all key learning areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows early understanding about “who” is doing “what” in texts.</td>
<td>Has beginning understandings about nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives and prepositions in simple sentences.</td>
<td>Show understanding of noun groups, verb groups, phrases and connectives in texts.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hears and says everyday words.</td>
<td>Knows words that rhyme.</td>
<td>Separates spoken words into onset and rime.</td>
<td>Separates spoken sounds in words.</td>
<td>Orally blends spoken sounds to make a word.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows own first name in print.</td>
<td>Recognises own first name in print.</td>
<td>Shows some awareness of letter/sound relationships.</td>
<td>Coordinates a match between spoken and written words with the support of finger pointing.</td>
<td>Uses knowledge of letter patterns in known words to read unknown words.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognises and names some letters of the alphabet.</td>
<td>Knows an increasing number of print concepts such as directionality.</td>
<td>Recognises and names some letters of the alphabet.</td>
<td>Reads different fonts and print.</td>
<td>Knows a simple bank of sight words in different contexts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At each stage shows growing understanding of and ability to adopt four roles of the reader on a range of texts of increasing complexity in all key learning areas, eg uses code-breaking strategies to work out what the text says (code-breaker role), eg when meeting an unknown word asks: What would make sense? What would sound right? What would look right? uses own prior knowledge and information from the four sources to gain literal and inferential meaning from the text (text-participant role) eg uses illustrations to assist in gaining meanings from the text; connects own prior knowledge with information in a factual text participates in social activities around text (text-user role), eg follows a text when making something; uses texts to find information explores the underlying and unstated assumptions in the text and how the text attempts to position them as readers (text-analyst role), eg considers who a text could be written for; understands that texts are written by authors who have a particular point of view.</td>
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Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework
The pathway of reading development presented here provides an indication of the broad sequence of reading development that teachers can expect to see as students develop competence as readers.

Towards Stage 4

- Recognises and discusses differences between patterns commonly used in some literary and factual texts.
- Explains the purpose of some organisational features of written informational texts.
- Recognises the effects created by different patterns in written texts.
- Evaluates the effects of context, audience and purpose on written texts.

Shows development of real-world knowledge and growth in understanding of topics being studied such as home, family, own and other communities, own and other environments, topics of interest such as games, food, clothes and animals and topics in all key learning areas.

Shows development of vocabulary including word meanings, figurative language and subject-specific language of topics being studied in all key learning areas.

- Understands causal connectives, eg because, therefore, unless, however.
- Understands noun/pronoun and subject/verb links within and across simple and compound sentences.
- Understands different types of nouns, verbs, adjectives, phrases and clauses in texts.

- Recognises and discusses differences between patterns commonly used in some literary and factual texts.
- Generalises and applies generalisations about letter/sound groups.
- Uses effective word identification strategies on texts at own instructional level.
- Hears separate syllables in multisyllabic words.

- Works out unknown words using a range of strategies on complex texts in all key learning areas.
- Confidently uses all book conventions such as indexes, tables of contents and glossaries when reading.
- Confidently and consistently uses effective word identification strategies in automatic ways when working out unknown words.

At each stage shows growing understanding of and ability to adopt four roles of the reader on a range of texts of increasing complexity in all key learning areas, eg

- uses code-breaking strategies to work out what the text says (code-breaker role), eg monitors own reading, confirms or searches for more information and self-corrects
- uses own prior knowledge and information from the four sources to gain literal and inferential meaning from the text (text-participant role) eg uses knowledge of how texts are constructed to make meaning; explores the various meanings in a text
- participates in social activities around text (text-user role), eg shares and justifies personal response to a text; uses text to compare, select and purchase products
- explores the underlying and unstated assumptions in the text and how the text attempts to position them as readers (text-analyst role), eg identifies an author’s point of view and presents an alternative point of view to the one taken by the text; explains why people might interpret a text differently.
TEACHING AND LEARNING

A systematic approach to teaching reading

Principles

• The reading program is underpinned by a functional approach to language.
• Reading competence is developed within a supportive and stimulating language environment which integrates reading, writing, talking and listening.
• Reading development is strongly linked to writing development, particularly in the early years.
• The reading program is based on ongoing observation and assessment of each student’s needs and abilities, and support is provided for students experiencing difficulties.
• Students receive explicit instruction and opportunities for developing a wide range of skills, knowledge and strategies which will enable them to read for a range of purposes.
• Reading experiences are embedded in a context which accommodates and builds upon prior learning.
• The reading program reflects a balance between learning to read and reading to learn at all stages.
• The reading program includes opportunities for each student to experience:
  – modelled reading
  – individual and small group guided reading
  – independent reading.
• The reading program encourages critical reflection and provides opportunities to construct meaning from a range of viewpoints.
• There is continuity of development of each student’s literacy skills through a planned, whole-school approach.

A systematic approach in the classroom program

The classroom reading program forms part of the classroom program for English K-6.

The classroom reading program provides for the specific development of:

• aspects of semantic knowledge such as real-world knowledge, knowledge about topics being studied, word meanings, subject-specific vocabulary and figurative language
• aspects of grammatical knowledge such as nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and sentence and clause structure
• aspects of graphological and phonological knowledge such as phonemic awareness, knowledge of the alphabet, letter-sound correspondence, high frequency word knowledge, letter clusters and spelling patterns
• skill in integrating this knowledge through the development of reading strategies such as predicting, monitoring own reading and self-correcting.
The classroom reading program incorporates:

- activities which explore the structure and features of a range of texts
- activities which require students to use, critically analyse and respond to a range of texts.

The classroom reading program provides daily instructional reading through:

- modelled reading lessons with the teacher
- guided reading lessons with the teacher
- independent reading.

Texts for the classroom reading program include:

- texts carefully matched to each student’s instructional level
- a wide selection of literary and factual texts at students’ independent reading levels
- texts selected for modelled reading which contain the required teaching points.

The classroom is organised for whole-class, group, pair and individual learning.

The classroom reading program may utilise:

- support personnel
- parents and volunteers
- peers.

**A systematic approach across the school**

- There is a consistent approach to reading instruction and assessment across the school.
- Reading is taught every day in every class.
- The key teaching strategies of modelled, guided and independent reading are used by all teachers K-6.
- There is ongoing assessment and monitoring of every student.
- The library is a key component of the reading program for all classes.
- Support for students with reading difficulties is ongoing and is provided within a whole-school support network.
- Training and development in the teaching of reading is provided for all teachers.
- The school works with parents to build effective partnerships which support students.
- The school fosters a home reading program.
What teachers need to know and do

Understand how students learn to read and read to learn. (See “A model of reading” page 9 and “Reading… a pathway of development” page 14.)

Plan for daily, systematic reading instruction. (See “Organising for instruction” page 50.)

Assess each student’s specific needs and abilities. (See “Assessing reading development” page 22.)

Work as part of a whole-school team to provide for each student’s ongoing development of reading and build effective learning partnerships with parents. (See Teaching Reading: A Whole School Focus.)

Value and build on each student’s social and cultural background. (See K-6 English Syllabus.)

Consider themselves as part of a collegial group of teachers as learners. (See Teaching Reading: School-based Training and Development Program.)

Identify and cater for students experiencing difficulty in learning to read. (See “Assisting students with reading difficulties” page 45.)

Select texts for the reading program. (See “Selecting texts for the reading program” page 60.)

Systematically develop each student’s reading abilities through modelled, guided and independent reading. (See “Teaching strategies for reading” page 28 and “Teaching Reading in Stages” books 1 to 5.)

Organise and manage the classroom environment. (See “Organising for instruction” page 50.)
What to include in the reading program

Students need a balanced reading program to develop:

• contextual knowledge
• knowledge about the sources of information
• skills in reading as a code-breaker, text-participant, text-user and text-analyst.

Teachers should ensure that each component of the reading program is covered explicitly and systematically. Guidance to help teachers plan a systematic program of instruction can be found in the *K-6 English Syllabus, Dictionary of Classroom Practices.*

*A balanced reading program enables students to develop as effective readers.*
Contextual understanding
Students need experiences with reading and using texts for a range of purposes. They need to:
• engage with a variety of texts including literary, factual and media texts, across a range of cultures
• engage with texts created for different purposes including texts created to entertain, to provide information and to persuade
• identify the structure and features of different types of texts and consider how these support the purpose of the text
• link texts to their own experiences and knowledge
• make comparisons between different texts.

Knowledge about the sources of information:

Semantic
Students need experiences which will enable them to develop:
• real-world knowledge about topics of interest and relevance to students including knowledge about everyday situations in the home and community.
• knowledge about topics being studied in all key learning areas.
• conceptual knowledge about the world, eg concepts of size, shape, position, height, direction, orientation and time.
• vocabulary knowledge:
  – word meanings
  – common expressions
  – subject-specific vocabulary
  – figurative language.

Grammatical
Students need experiences which will enable them to investigate:
• grammar at the text level:
  – connecting words and phrases between sentences and paragraphs
  – content word chains throughout a text
  – how events are linked in a text by connectives such as because, so, and.
• grammar at the sentence level:
  – types of words in sentences, eg nouns, verbs, adjectives
  – sentence structure
  – clause structure in sentences
  – subject-verb agreement
  – correct tense
  – plurals
  – word order in phrases and noun groups
  – word order in sentences
  – pronoun reference within sentences
  – connectives within sentences.

Phonological
Students need experiences which will enable them to develop:
• phonological/phonemic awareness:
  – hearing the sounds in words (rhyming, alliteration)
  – separating the sounds in words (isolation, onset/segmentation)
  – manipulating the sounds in words (exchanging blending).

Graphological
Students need experiences which will enable them to develop:
• knowledge of book conventions:
  – page and book layout
  – front and back cover.
• concepts about print:
  – spaces between words
  – directionality (left to right and top to bottom).
• sight vocabulary:
  – high frequency words
  – irregular words.
• letter knowledge:
  – individual letters
  – upper and lower case letters
  – letter clusters (syllables, prefixes/suffixes).
• punctuation:
  – capital letters
  – full stops
  – question marks
  – exclamation marks
  – commas
  – inverted commas
  – apostrophes
  – colons; semi-colons.

  • Letter/sound correspondence:
    – awareness that sounds can be written down
    – difference between sounds and letter names
    – alphabetic principle (systematic relationship between letters and sounds)
    – making generalisations (use of analogy)
    – recognising that letters can represent different sounds.
  • Blending:
    – Combining sounds (letters and letter clusters).
### Skill in reading as a:

#### Code-breaker

Students need to learn how to:
- draw on and integrate information from the four sources to work out what the text says
- monitor their reading by:
  - using knowledge of text and grammar in order to predict likely text and sentence structure
  - using meaning, grammar and word and letter knowledge in order to notice a miscue
  - using topic knowledge in order to predict likely words and phrases.
- search for more information from the four sources of information by:
  - using strategies of re-reading or reading on to access information from the four sources to work out an unknown word or to resolve a mismatch
  - using cross-checking (ie checking one source of information against another) to verify or alter a response.
- self-correct by:
  - trying different options to try to resolve a mismatch between the print and what the reader says
  - trying different strategies to work out an unknown word, eg asking what would make sense asking what would sound right asking what would look right.

#### Text-participant

Students need to learn how to:
- relate a text to their own growing knowledge and experiences
- understand the literal meanings presented in texts
- understand inferential meanings implied in texts
- understand how text structure contributes to the meaning of a text
- understand how illustrations including diagrams, tables, maps and graphs contribute to the meaning of a text
- use knowledge of text structure in constructing meaning
- understand various layers of meaning in a text

#### Text-user

Students need to learn how to:
- use texts for a range of purposes, eg for enjoyment, finding information
- use texts to take action, eg:
  - use instructions to make or do something
  - use product information when buying something
- interact with others around a text, eg:
  - share and justify a personal response to a text
  - talk about how a text’s structure and features contribute to its meaning
- use text to add their own knowledge and to refine their understandings in all key learning areas
- use texts as part of oral interaction, eg:
  - buy something at the school canteen
  - plan an excursion using information about transport and venues.

#### Text-analyst

Students need to learn how to:
- talk about an author’s purpose in writing a text
- identify opinion, bias and point of view in a text
- compare texts on the same topic from different viewpoints
- talk about their agreement or disagreement with the ideas or information presented in a text
- construct an alternative position to the one taken by the text
- explain why people might interpret a text differently
- understand how the choice of words and text structures contributes to how a text portrays particular social groups.
Assessing reading development

Assessment is defined as “the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students’ learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on student achievement and progress and set direction for ongoing teaching and learning.”

Principles for Assessment and Reporting in NSW Government Schools, 1996.

Implications for classrooms and schools

- Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of reading.
- Effective assessment provides teachers with information about student achievement in reading. It shows teachers what students know and can do.
- Effective assessment provides information to help teachers to plan learning experiences necessary for student reading progress.

To ensure continuity of reading development for each student, it is important for schools to develop a consistent approach to assessment from Kindergarten to Year 6.

This will mean making a distinction between:

- assessment information which each teacher will gather to inform their planning and teaching
- assessment information which needs to be communicated to others, for example parents, specialist teachers, a student’s next teacher
- assessment information which the school needs in order to make decisions about, for example, the effectiveness of programs, intervention programs for individuals or groups of students, or the allocation of resources
- assessment information which the system needs in order to make decisions about, for example, targeting of resources to particular groups of students or the effectiveness of state-wide programs.

In reviewing their current assessment practices schools should decide:

- what information about student reading development is needed
- what assessment practices will best provide the needed information
- when assessments will occur
- how assessment information will be recorded
- who will receive assessment information and in what form.

Effective assessment practices

Effective and informative assessment practices:

- need to identify achievement of the reading outcomes in the K-6 English syllabus
- need to address all the areas of reading development outlined in
  - A model of reading (page 9)
  - Reading… a pathway of development (page 14)
  - What to include in the reading program (page 19)
- should be part of, and flow naturally from, well structured reading activities
• need to be balanced and comprehensive, using a variety of strategies, multiple opportunities and varying contexts
• need to be fair and ensure equal opportunities for students to succeed at reading
• need to be student centred and engage the learner. That is, reading outcomes are made explicit to the learner, and students are involved in monitoring their own reading progress
• need to value teacher judgement based on evidence which has been demonstrated a number of times and in varying reading contexts
• need to be time efficient and manageable
• need to be sensitive to student self-esteem
• need to involve the full and informed participation of parents
• need to involve a whole-school approach that tracks students from Kindergarten to Year 6
• need to provide meaningful and useful information that can be reported on for a number of purposes and for a variety of audiences.

Assessment in the first year of school

All children come to school with skills in using language and with knowledge about the literacy practices used in the home. It is essential for the school to acknowledge this literacy learning and to value and build on what students already know and can do when they come to school. By referring to the Revised Early Learning Profiles as students engage with literacy learning in the first weeks of Kindergarten, teachers can begin to gather information about what students know and can do. Teachers should provide students with a range of opportunities to demonstrate their literacy achievement.

Guided reading sessions provide excellent opportunities for assessing students’ reading development.
A process for assessing reading development

- Teachers collect information about students' reading using a variety of strategies, multiple opportunities and varying contexts, for example:
  - observing reading behaviours in modelled, guided and independent reading situations,
  - observing young students' early 'reading' behaviours
  - using oral and written retellings of text read,
  - taking running records,
  - keeping records of student progress in guided reading,
  - using comprehension responses during and after reading,
  - analysing the reading strategies the student uses in guided reading,
  - using student self-assessment, such as independent reading records,
  - using work samples, such as student’s writing to check sound/letter correspondence
  - analysing student’s incorrect responses to a cloze procedure to determine the type of error the student is making
  - analysing student’s Basic Skills Test results.

- Teachers analyse the evidence collected to identify what students can do, and match this against the K-6 English syllabus outcomes and “Reading… a pathway of development” in this book.

- Teachers plan ways to meet students’ needs through grouping for whole-class, small group and individualised instruction.

- Teachers use teaching and learning experiences that develop the skills and knowledge needed to achieve the reading outcomes towards which students are moving.

- Teachers continually look for evidence of development in students’ reading over time, and can design specific opportunities for students to demonstrate reading achievement.

- Teachers monitor reading development and record students’ progress. Effective methods that operate as part of teaching and learning and that are manageable, not overly detailed or time consuming are best.

- Teachers constantly review, adjust and re-plan teaching and learning activities to support the reading needs of the whole class and of individual students or groups of students in order to facilitate progress along the reading pathway.
What evidence teachers need

Teachers need to gain balanced information about the reading progress and achievement of individual students and about the effectiveness of classroom programs in meeting student needs. Teachers need to gather evidence about all the elements of reading as identified in the model of reading on page 9, that is, evidence of:

- the ways in which students understand and use contextual information
- the ways in which students understand and use the four sources of information
- the ways in which the student is able to take on the four roles of the reader.

For example:

To gain the evidence needed about how students understand and use contextual information, teachers could ask:

- What social and cultural literacy practices does the student bring to school?
- What strategies does the student have for relating text to social and cultural context?

To gain the evidence needed about how students use and integrate the four complementary information sources, teachers could ask:

- Is a student making sense when he/she reads? (Semantic)
- Does a student have sufficient knowledge of the topic he/she is reading about? (Semantic)
- Is a student demonstrating understandings about features such as word meanings, common expressions, figurative language in the texts he/she is reading? (Semantic)
- Is a student demonstrating understandings of features such as how texts are organised, the structure of sentences and word order while reading? (Grammatical)
- Is a student using the knowledge he/she has of sounds, letter clusters and words to work out what the text says? (Graphological/phonological)
- Does a student know sufficient sounds, letter clusters and whole words in a text to work out unknown words and maintain meaning? (Graphological/phonological)
- Is a student using and integrating all four information sources, fluently and continuously as he/she reads? (Integrating information sources)

To gain the evidence needed about whether students can assume different roles when reading with text, teachers need to ask:

- Is a student actively using his/her knowledge of the alphabet, sound/letter correspondences, and conventions of punctuation, direction and book layout? (Code-breaker role)
- Is a student relating prior knowledge and using his/her knowledge of literal and figurative meanings of words and expressions? (Text-participant role)
- Is a student able to use a text to take action? (Text-user role)
- Can a student reflect on a writer’s beliefs and discuss issues in a text such as opinion and bias? (Text-analyst role)

Observation of student behaviours usually forms the springboard for all other types of focused assessment gathering techniques. Although observations can be incidental, at times they should be structured and systematic. Observation can take place during any type of reading episode but it is particularly useful during and after guided and independent reading. In particular teachers should consider the guided reading session with small groups of students or individuals as one of their main opportunities for assessing students’ reading development.
Observations of students’ reading development can be more sharply focused by using the following techniques for assessment purposes:

- Miscue analysis
- Running records
- Retelling
- Cloze
- Examining work samples
- Student self-assessment
- Parent/peer assessment
- Independent and guided reading logs.

Detailed information about these techniques can be found in the *K-6 English Syllabus and Support Document* and *Choosing Literacy Strategies That Work, 1 and 2*.

### Recording assessment information

- It is important to record students’ reading development over time. A guided reading record is a useful way to do this. The record should provide space for the teacher to record what the student does in each guided reading lesson and to make notes to guide the teaching in future lessons.

A possible format might be:

#### Guided reading record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Book Box No.</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Work needed on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For independent reading most students, other than those in the early years, can usually keep their own records.
- Teachers can prepare a sheet for students to keep a record of what they read. The amount of information asked for will depend on the stage of development of the student. For example:
• Students should complete the record for each book they read.
• Teachers can use the record to discuss students’ reading habits and needs with them, and to gain information about the type and quantity of material the student is reading.
• Detailed information about recording assessment information in the early years can be found in *Kindergarten Workbook, NSW Department of School Education*.

**Using Basic Skills Test results**

The Basic Skills Tests assess aspects of literacy at a fixed point in Years 3 and 5. The aspects tested are reading and language.

**Reading** – tests literal and inferential comprehension on a range of text types specified in the *English K-6 syllabus*.

**Language** – tests skills in grammar, spelling and punctuation which are embedded in written texts.

Information from the Basic Skills Tests is *complementary* to that collected in the classroom. Because it assesses many of the same skills and knowledge, but in a different way, it can be used to validate other reading assessments.

It is also *different* from classroom assessments in that it provides teachers and parents with a reliable standard of statewide performance against which to gauge student performance.

**Features of the Basic Skills Tests in Literacy:**

- The particular skills tested reflect the literacy demands which students encounter across *all key learning areas*, not just English.
- Stimulus material for the test is presented in a way which mirrors the content, themes and text types that students encounter in the classroom. The assessment occurs, therefore, in a *context*, from which reasonable inferences can be drawn.
- The design features of the test and the large body of test data permit items within the texts to be reliably grouped in skill bands, according to level of difficulty. This provides a *continuum* along which individual student progress can be shown.
- The tests provide reliable statewide performance information against which an individual student’s achievement can be shown – a reference point or *standard of comparison*.
- The use of a common scale for the Year 3 and Year 5 tests allows a reliable *comparison of individual student growth* between those years. Parents and teachers can identify and monitor students whose growth between Years is more or less than expected and implement appropriate support or enrichment strategies for them.

**Diagnostic uses of the Basic Skills Tests:**

At individual student level, class level and school or group level, Basic Skills Test data can be analysed to show patterns of strength and weakness in particular skills or with particular text types.

At the classroom level in particular, this information can be used directly in teaching programs to improve specific skills. The booklet *Putting the Basic Skills Tests to Work in the Classroom* provides a guide for teachers.
Teaching strategies for reading

Effective reading programs use a balance of modelled, guided and independent strategies to support and extend student learning.

Modelled reading

In modelled reading situations teachers demonstrate reading strategies by sharing the reading process with students.

In modelled reading situations:

- teachers – read to, show, demonstrate, explain, instruct, interpret student responses
- students – watch, engage, listen, follow, share, question, participate.

Guided reading

In guided reading situations teachers work with one student or a small group of students to read and learn about text.

In guided reading situations:

- teachers – support, prompt, guide, question, scaffold, observe, instruct, make inferences about further reading, assess and record
- students – try, explore, problem-solve, experiment, take risks, approximate, predict, self-correct, practise.

Independent reading

In independent reading situations teachers construct conditions for students to read, explore and respond to text independently.

In independent reading situations:

- teachers – construct, encourage, respond, question, observe, record
- students – initiate, select, use, control, practise, consider, discuss, evaluate, justify, record.
**Modelled reading**

Modelled reading involves students in structured demonstrations of what effective readers know and do. During modelled reading teachers make explicit the knowledge and skills a reader needs in order to gain meaning from the text, and structure situations in which students can use their knowledge and skill to share in reading the text. Teachers use modelled reading to present a range of texts and to explain how they work. Teachers use a modelled reading text to teach specific aspects of the reading process, and to teach students about the features of a text, concentrating where appropriate on:

- meaning
- grammatical features
- sound, letter and word knowledge
- contextual knowledge
- the roles of the reader.

A modelled reading text can be read several times, on each occasion focusing on different aspects for teaching. Less competent readers benefit from repeated readings of a text since they are able to focus their attention on learning aspects of print when the meaning and grammatical structure are familiar to them. More competent readers also benefit from repeated readings as they read for different purposes and take on different roles as readers.

Texts for modelled reading can include:

- big books
- enlarged texts
- multiple copies of small books
- room print.

For more information see “Selecting texts for the reading program” page 60.

Text should provide opportunities for teaching about:

- semantic knowledge
- grammatical knowledge
- graphological/phonological knowledge
- contextual knowledge
- the roles of the reader.

*It is important to build students’ semantic knowledge of a new topic before beginning modelled reading.*
Suggested procedure for modelled reading

The following procedure is one way of presenting a modelled reading lesson. Since each modelled reading lesson will be designed to fulfil a particular teaching purpose, it will not be necessary to include all of these elements in every lesson.

1. Before the modelled reading
   - Select a text that will provide the teaching points you require. Your focus will depend on the specific aspects that are most relevant to your students at that time. Identify the teaching points you want to focus on and work out your strategy and the questions you will ask. You may want to mask the print with paper stickers so that students look closely at the illustrations in their first “reading”. It is important that students have sufficient topic knowledge to bring to the text. If the topic is new to the class, consider ways to build topic knowledge, eg an excursion, a video, a class discussion, a visit from a community member. Prepare the activities you want students to do after the reading, eg sequencing sentences from the text which you have written on paper strips.

2. Preparing for the reading
   - Introduce the text to students by displaying the cover and talking about the title, author and illustration. Discuss the purpose of the text and ask students to predict what the text type might be, and what the text might be about. Relate the topic of the text to what students already know. Perhaps begin to build up a word bank of topic words.

3. Reading the text
   - Read the text through, perhaps pointing to each word as you read, while students watch and listen. Engage students in discussion about the text. You can focus on events, characters and illustrations in narrative text and information and graphics in factual text.
• Mask the print with paper stickers and lead students through the text, page by page, discussing the illustrations and predicting what might come next. THEN, turn back to the front of the book and, removing the stickers as you turn to each page, read the text, discussing each page as you do, referring back to the predictions made earlier.

4. Working with the text
• Use the text to work with students to focus on a specific aspect of the text, or a specific reading strategy. You might, for example, mask some words on each page, and demonstrate how to use semantic and grammatical knowledge to work out the masked word. Peel back the sticker, letter by letter, to check. Involve students in reading along with you, allowing them to use your voice to support their reading.
• You can use the text to help students learn particular sight words, eg high frequency words. You might, for example, identify words in the text such as “were”, “was”, write them on cards and ask students to match them to the text.
• The use of detailed questions can focus students’ attention on the aspect you want to teach. You can target your questions to individual students depending on their needs or competence. For example, you might focus students’ attention on a particular sound/letter cluster (eg, “sh”), and use the text to find other examples before building up a word bank of “sh” words. Or you might pose questions which ask students to take on the role of text-analyst, such as “What do you think this writer believes about rainforests?”, “What do you think he wants you to believe about rainforests?”

5. Re-reading the text
• It is important for students to link the particular points you treated in “working with text” back to the original text. Therefore, read the text again, this time encouraging students to participate. For example, if you looked at inverted commas you could ask students to read the speech within the commas each time it occurs. Or you might pause before the high frequency words you treated and ask students to supply the words.
• Use this reading of the text to demonstrate phrased and fluent reading. Select a section of the text, perhaps one or two sentences, and read it with expression and appropriate pauses to enhance meaning. Ask students to read the same section in a similar manner.

6. After the modelled reading
• Modelled reading will often lead into guided reading for individuals or small groups of students, where the aspect you focused on can be reinforced and practised with each student’s guided reading text, eg the high frequency words on cards can be used to reinforce students’ familiarity with the words.
• Students will benefit from the opportunity to read the modelled text individually or in pairs, to practise the skills you have demonstrated.
• Students should engage in appropriate reading activities which reinforce the particular aspects you have focused on, eg sequencing words to reconstruct a sentence from the text using semantic, grammatical and graphological-phonological knowledge. Refer to K-6 English Syllabus and Support Document and Choosing Literacy Strategies that Work, 1 and 2, for more information about appropriate reading activities.
Modelled reading at a glance

Before the modelled reading

• Select an appropriate text.
• Build students’ topic knowledge by, eg a video or an excursion.
• Prepare for the reading.
• Prepare appropriate reading activities.

Orientation to the text

• Introduce the text and talk about its content.
• Discuss the cover, title, author.
• Revise topic knowledge and ask what this text might be about.
• Discuss the purpose of the text and what type of text it might be.
• Make predictions about the text.

Reading the text

• Lead students through the text with print masked. Discuss illustrations and make predictions, or
• Read the text.
• Pause frequently to discuss events, characters, information and to make and confirm predictions.

Select from the following:

• Demonstrate a specific reading strategy, eg self-correcting.
• Focus on grammatical knowledge, eg past tense verbs in narrative.
• Focus on word meanings, eg “huge”.
• Focus on sight words, eg high frequency words such as “were”.
• Focus on sound/letter knowledge, eg “sh”.
• Focus on punctuation, eg inverted commas for direct speech.
• Focus on literal and inferential meanings in the text.

Working with the text

• Re-read the text with students participating, eg reading the speech in the inverted commas, joining in a repeated refrain.
• Demonstrate phrased and fluent reading and have students practise.

After the modelled reading

• Link each student’s guided reading to the specific aspect you treated in “working with the text”.
• Use this text for guided and/or independent reading for some students, if at the appropriate level.
• Engage students in appropriate reading activities.
Guided reading

Guided reading involves students in supported reading of a text. The purpose of the guided reading session is to enable students to practise effective strategies which have been taught in modelled reading sessions. Teachers can work with individuals or small groups of students who are reading at the same level. The decision on which type of guided reading is best for each student (individual or group) will depend on the needs of the student and may change over time. Generally, students who are experiencing difficulty in learning to read will benefit from frequent one-to-one guided reading sessions, although it is important to work with all students individually from time to time to assess their reading progress.

During guided reading the teacher scaffolds the students, providing support as they use their knowledge and strategies to work out the text. The teacher reminds the students of strategies that were introduced in modelled reading, and shows how these strategies can be applied to this new text. Teachers use guided reading to give positive feedback to students to reinforce successful processing strategies, eg “I really liked the way you reread that sentence to help you work out that word”. Through the use of questions which act as “prompts” the teacher leads the student to draw on and integrate their:

- semantic knowledge
- grammatical knowledge
- graphological/phonological knowledge

to construct meaning from the text.

Texts for guided reading should be carefully matched to students’ instructional reading level and interests. See “Selecting texts for the reading program” page 60. Factual as well as literary texts should be used for guided reading.

Guided reading is a key strategy for assisting students with reading difficulties. See “Assisting students with reading difficulties” page 45, and also in each of the Teaching Reading in Stages books. While these students will participate with the class in other aspects of the literacy program, it is essential that they receive focused guided reading instruction targeted to their individual learning needs. This instruction should be provided by the class teacher or other teaching personnel.

While the following suggested procedure for guided reading involves students reading aloud, guided reading sessions can also involve the teacher guiding small groups of students in the purposeful silent reading of texts.

Guided reading – suggested procedure

1. Before guided reading

- A group for guided reading should have no more than five or six students. Select students who are at the same level, ie you have implemented the procedure for matching students to text and you have grouped the students who are working from the same book box (see “Selecting texts for the reading program” page 60). It will be necessary to check over time that your placement of students in a group is accurate. Keep your groups fluid, allowing students to move to other groups as they develop in reading competence.
• Ensure that a suitable text has been selected for the group and that you have one copy of the text for each student. See “Selecting texts for the reading program” page 60.

• Withdraw the group to a comfortable area. Make sure that the rest of the class is working purposefully and that you will not be interrupted. It may be possible to arrange for school support staff or parents to work with the other students while you are engaged in the guided reading session.

2. Orientation to the text

• Introduce the session by re-reading a known book or a page or two of the current book with the students.

• Introduce the new text to the group and talk together about the cover, title, illustration and author. Question them about what they already know about the topic of the text, and ask them to predict what they might find in this book.

• Talk about the possible text type (eg _Do you think this book will give information or tell a story? Why do you think so?_) Focus attention on specific words, letters or letter clusters in the title that are significant for these students today. Remind them that they will be able to use everything they know about the topic and the sounds and letters to help them read the text.

3. Reading the text

• Turn to the title page and ask the students to read with you. Focus attention on the same words and letters you talked about on the cover (eg _How did you know that word was “caterpillar”?_).

• Turn to the first page and ask one student to begin reading. (You may want to read with the student for a sentence or two to support them into the particular language flow of the text.)

• Monitor as the student reads. Listen for:
  – inflection that tells you the student understands what is being read

When the text being read is a factual text, include specific activities to activate students’ background knowledge, eg brainstorming what they already know about the topic.

The purpose of this part of the session is to scaffold the readers in both the meaning and the language of the text. You are developing semantic, grammatical and graphological/phonological knowledge for the students to use as they read the text.

Guided reading provides opportunities for in-depth exploration of a text.
– phrased and fluent reading (i.e., words grouped according to meaning as in “One evening – when the boys got home from school – there was no one – to greet them!”)
– self-corrections that tell you whether the student is reading for meaning and monitoring their own reading strategies.

• Select a different student to read the next section – monitoring them as before. (The amount each student reads will depend on the length of the text and the time you have available. Each student in the group should have a chance to read at each guided reading session.)
• As each student reads, keep a record of what behaviours you notice. Identify any points for future teaching (see “Recording assessment information” on page 27 for sample recording sheet).
• At the end of each page, or at an appropriate point, pause to talk about what is being read. Focus your questions and comments on:
  – the meaning
  – the illustrations
  – what might come next
  – the particular teaching points you emphasised in that day’s modelled reading.

To reinforce phrased and fluent reading, return to a particular part of the text and
  – demonstrate by reading the part yourself, emphasising fluency, while running your finger under the line of print.
  – ask the group to read the part once or twice with you, emphasising fluency.

• If a student comes to a word they don’t know remind them that they can use what they know to work it out. Say:
  – Read that part again. What do you think that word might be?
  – What would make sense here?
  – What word would sound right in this sentence?
  – What does the word start with? What other letters can you see?
    a. If the student supplies the correct word, praise them, then continue the reading.
    b. If the student supplies the wrong word identify which system of information (semantic, grammatical, graphological/phonological) they are finding difficult and focus your questioning around that.

For example:
  i  Semantic difficulty (the word does not make sense).
    eg One evening when the boys got home from school there was no one to … them.
    (Student says “grill”)
    Say:  Does that make sense?
          Do you think the boys want someone to “grill” them?
  ii  Grammatical difficulty (the word does not fit the grammar of the sentence).
    eg One evening when the boys got home from school there was no one to … them.
    (Student says “green”)
    Say:  Does that sound right?
           Does that fit with how the sentence goes?
           Would we say “green them”?
iii Graphological/phonological difficulty (the word does not match the letters on the page)

eg One evening when the boys got home from school there was no one to … them. (Student says “meet”)

Say: Look carefully at the beginning of the word. What letters do you see? Look at the rest of the word. What letter patterns do you see? Say the sounds. (You might want to say the sounds with the student, and demonstrate how to blend them.)

Involve the rest of the group in helping to work out the word. When the word has been worked out, reread the sentence before continuing the reading. If the student can’t work out the word, tell them what it is and reread the sentence together.

c. Sometimes students do not make an attempt at a word. If after questioning (What word might make sense here? What would fit?) the student doesn’t respond, say the word and reread the sentence together.

Guided and independent reading often occur at the same time in the classroom.
4. Working with text

- The guided reading session is an ideal time for an in-depth exploration of the text that will help students with the problem-solving strategies they use in reading and writing.

With emergent readers the focus could be on the development of phonemic awareness, concepts of print, high frequency words, and the ability to use the four sources of information to solve unknown words in text. Using letter tiles or magnetic letters, the students may be asked to make a word from the text, then identify letter/sounds within the word. Using individual sets of letters, new words may be made by substituting other letters, eg hat > hot > hit.

For a group of beginning readers the activity may focus on a particular letter pattern within the text, eg ee in the word meet.

Focus students’ attention on the ee pattern and ask them to make the pattern with letter tiles. Or write the word on a small chalkboard, then substitute the initial sound to make another word or write other words containing the ee pattern.

While some students may pick up language features incidentally as you draw their attention to them, it is essential to provide explicit teaching of text features related to the students’ own level of reading development.

- Guide students’ understanding of the text by asking questions that help them practise the roles of text-participant, text-user and text-analyst, eg:
  - Literal and inferential questions about the text. (Text-participant role: working out what the text is trying to say.)
  - What do you think is the purpose of this text? What have you learnt about the topic from this text? (Text-user role: using an information text to gain information.)
  - What does the writer want you to think about rainforests? (Text-analyst role: analysing the text to work out what the writer wants you to believe or feel.)

5. After the guided reading

- Students can form pairs and re-read part of that day’s text to each other.

- Students can use texts which have been successfully read in guided reading for later independent reading. They might also read the text to a partner or take it home to read to their parents.

- Ask students to complete activities to reinforce the particular teaching points of today’s lesson. For example, they can work with sections of the texts which you have written onto cardboard strips to read and sequence them, before checking with a copy of the text. Or you could write today’s high frequency words on cards (each word on two separate cards) and show students how to play a matching game with them.
Guided reading at a glance

Before guided reading
- Group students according to similar learning needs.
- Identify students who may need individual guided reading.
- Prepare a guided reading record.
- Match each student to a guided reading level.
- Select texts for each guided reading group.
- Prepare a suitable area for the guided reading lesson.
- Ensure that the rest of the class is working purposefully.
- Arrange for school support personnel or volunteers to work in the room.

Orientation to the text
- Re-read known text.
- Introduce the new text.
- Discuss cover, title, author.
- Talk about the topic of the text to activate students’ background knowledge.
- Discuss the purpose of the text and what type of text it might be.
- Focus on any potentially difficult words in the title, eg “elephant”.
- Ask students to make predictions about the text.

Reading the text
- Read the title page together.
- Have students read in turn. Prompt if necessary.
- Monitor and support each student’s reading.
- Make notes on each student as he or she reads.
- Pause to discuss events, characters, information and illustrations.
- Highlight particular reading strategies and show students how to use these in their reading.

Working with the text
- With each group focus on specific teaching points, eg:
  - sight words
  - concepts of print
  - graphological/phonological knowledge
  - grammatical knowledge
  - vocabulary development
  - understanding of literal and inferential meanings in the text.
- Work with each group to help them take on particular roles as a reader, eg:
  - code-breaker role: show students how to use their knowledge of meanings, grammar and sound/letter relationships to work out unknown words
  - text-participant role: talk with students about the meanings in the text
  - text-user role: talk with students about the type of text they are reading and how it might be used in situations outside the classroom
  - text-analyst role: talk with students about the author’s purpose in writing the text.

After the guided reading
- Engage students in activities to reinforce the particular teaching points of the day, eg sound/letter matching, sequencing of sections from the text.
- Encourage students to re-read the text in pairs or independently.
Independent reading

Independent reading involves students in opportunities to practise and integrate the skills and strategies they have learnt in modelled and guided reading by providing uninterrupted time when they can read silently or to themselves. Significant periods of reading from books which are at a student’s independent reading level are an essential part of the reading program. Students can be encouraged and supported to read at home as well as at school to increase their opportunities for learning from text. Teachers play a significant role in independent reading by:

- ensuring that a range of quality and appropriate texts are available to students
- providing ways to record what each student reads
- monitoring each student’s independent reading to ensure
  - the texts are at the right level for the student
  - the student reads every day
  - the student is reading sufficient quantity given their level of reading development
  - the student reads at home as well as at school
  - the student is aware of the available texts and knows how to select appropriately
- providing opportunities for students to respond to what they read.

Texts for independent reading should include a wide range of interesting and appealing books that cover the range of reading abilities in your class. (See “Selecting texts for the reading program”, page 60.)

As well as opportunities to read independently at their own level students should also be encouraged and supported to engage with a wide range of books according to their interests.

Students should have access to a wide range of interesting and appealing texts for independent reading.
Suggested procedure for independent reading

1. Before independent reading
   - Ensure that you have sufficient books of an appropriate range for the students in your class. Group the books in levels of difficulty.
   - Introduce the books to the class. Explain that they will be used for quiet reading in the classroom. Show three or four of the titles and describe what each is about. Select one book to read aloud to the class. Explain how the books are arranged, and which shelf or shelves each student can select from.

2. Selecting books
   - Explain that students can select their own books, with guidance from you. Demonstrate a procedure for selecting a text; for example, students can:
     - choose three books that might be interesting from the shelf at their level
     - look at the cover of the first book, read the title and author and the blurb on the back
     - open the book and read the first page, turning down one finger each time you meet a word you don’t know. More than five unknown words on a page means the book is probably too difficult. (This procedure is suitable for more competent readers. You may need to work one-to-one with beginning readers to help them to select appropriate books.)
     - do the same for the other two books
     - select the book you think you will enjoy, and put the other two back
     - if none seems suitable, ask the teacher to help you and repeat the process with three new books

Independent reading provides opportunities for students to practise and integrate the skills they have learnt in modelled and guided reading.
• Allow time for each student to select a book and begin reading. Provide assistance to those students who you think might have difficulty or might need some direction.

• Give each student a copy of a sheet you have prepared for them to keep a record of what they read, or keep a record yourself of what each student reads. The amount of information you ask for will depend on the stage of development of the student. See “Recording assessment information” page 27, for a sample of an independent reading record.

• Allow time for students to record each day’s book. Some teachers like students to keep their own sheets in a folder, others prefer to keep all students’ sheets themselves.

3. Independent reading

• Allow time for students to read.

• Use the time when most students are reading independently to take guided reading with one or more groups.

• Remind students to complete their reading record, or do so yourself, concentrating on four or five students each day.

4. Response to reading

• Group students into twos or threes and ask each student to tell the others something about their book (response to the text). In subsequent sessions this step can be extended to include:
  – a brief oral book review
  – a description of one of the characters (narrative text)
  – a short reading from part of the book
  – a report of something the student learnt from the book (factual text)
  – a description of the illustrations
  – the student’s opinion of the writer’s purpose in writing the book

5. After independent reading

• Each week talk to each student individually about the books they have read. Refer to the student’s Independent Reading Record to monitor their reading and to decide whether they need further guidance. Use the knowledge you have gained from your guided reading with them to decide whether they need to change the level or quantity of books they are reading.

• It is important to keep the supply of books fresh and interesting. Each week add some new titles and remove some old ones. Each term make a complete change. Students will benefit from being involved in the selection of books.
Independent reading at a glance

Before independent reading

• Select a range of suitable texts.
• Display the texts in the classroom.
• Ensure each student is matched to an independent reading level and knows how to select books.
• Provide an independent reading record sheet to be completed by you or by the student.

Selecting books

• Explain the procedure for selecting books.
• Allow time for students to select their books.
• Assist students who need help.
• Distribute a record sheet and explain how to complete it.

Independent reading

• Allow time for students to read.
• Use this time to take one or more guided reading groups.
• Remind students to complete their independent reading record.

Response to reading

• Group students into twos or threes.
• Indicate one or more ways that they can share their response to the book they have read.
• Allow time for response.

After independent reading

• Talk to students about their reading.
• Remember to add new books to the independent reading selection from time to time.
Supporting ESL learners in reading

Students learning English as a Second Language come from a wide range of language backgrounds, and may or may not be Australian-born. ESL learners may already be literate in their first language, while others may still be developing first language literacy (L1) and some may never have had the opportunity to develop L1 literacy.

ESL learners will have varying levels of spoken fluency both in their first language and in English. Those students who have limited spoken language in English will require a range of experiences and interactions to support their learning. Talking and listening are central to language learning, and play a key role as a foundation for learning to read.

Learning to read happens only once. Understanding of concepts of print that are part of learning to read will contribute to the students’ reading development in English. Students who can already read in another language, however, are still required to adapt to a new set of sound symbol correspondences, sometimes a new script, punctuation and directionality when they read in English.

These factors are only some of the many which face students who are learning English as a second language.

All languages encode meanings differently. Cross-cultural differences might pose particular challenges for the ESL learner. Idioms (raining cats and dogs) are one example, but there are other less obvious examples in words and phrases which are very familiar to native speakers of English (He lived in the bush; she made trouble wherever she went; they needed a hand).

Word order (syntax) might also pose particular problems for some students. When asked “Does that sound right?” or “Does that look right?”, an ESL learner may not have enough experience with the English language (and English “book” language) to know whether the words either sound or look right. Consider, too, that there is a lack of predictable sound/symbol correspondence between the language the students hear and the language they see in the printed material. Reading aloud to the students gives them familiarity with “book language” – patterns and conventions of printed language. Shared book experiences and taped stories which accompany the written text will provide useful support.

Spend time building up both the language of the topic being covered, as well as knowledge about how texts work. For ESL learners particularly, building up knowledge supports their reading and improves their successful interaction with the text being read.

Some ways to build up knowledge of the topic include:

- videos
- shared experiences
- reference books, posters, charts
- first-hand observations
- comparisons
- classifications
- discussions (pair, small group, whole class)
- organised classroom practice sessions with high-frequency vocabulary, associated with the topic.
Consider encouraging students to discuss the topic in their first language with a peer prior to a small group or whole class discussion. Some students may have information (books, posters, information cards) in their first language they could bring from home.

Some ways to build up knowledge of how texts work include:

- pointing out different parts of a book and discussing what they are for
- making directionality explicit (although we read blocks of written text from left to right, we do not read all texts the same way – consider labelled diagrams, speech bubbles, captions and headlines)
- pointing out the different fonts in texts and the different sizes
- discussing how illustrations might work in different texts.

ESL learners benefit from reading texts in their first language.

Link the parts of the text with its likely purpose, ensuring the students have an opportunity to link their previous understandings with new understandings (eg the difference between a cover and a title page; the difference between the contents page and the index).

ESL learners are supported by systematic and explicit teaching. Practice in prediction, about both the content and the organisation of the text, will particularly support learners as they prepare for reading. Without this practice in prediction, and without topic knowledge, ESL students tend to over-rely on graphophonetic sources of information and fail to grasp the text’s meaning.

Teachers need to be aware of the cultural bias encoded in many of the texts chosen for reading. Discussing different orientations to the same topic, and providing some explicit input on the cultural context of a text, will support all learners and particularly those students from a range of language and cultural backgrounds.

The ESL scales provides additional information which will be useful when planning and programming for ESL learners.
Assisting students with reading difficulties

Some students have difficulties in learning to read. These difficulties may relate to a range of factors and not all students experience reading difficulties in the same way. Some students find difficulty with the language structures of particular texts, others may not have acquired the topic knowledge to construct meaning from a text, while still others may have gaps in their sound-letter or sight word knowledge. It is important that teachers gather detailed information about students who are experiencing difficulties in learning to read so that they can design an instructional program which will meet the student’s specific needs.

The daily guided reading lesson provides the most significant opportunity for teachers to work with students experiencing difficulties in learning to read. During guided reading students can experience structured and explicit teaching with careful attention to the sequencing of skills. The guided reading lesson planned for students experiencing reading difficulties should be carefully matched and sequenced to their learning needs.

It is particularly important that students with reading difficulties participate with the rest of the class in all aspects of the literacy session.

Students with learning difficulties need to be organised into small groups according to their learning needs for instructional purposes during guided reading because it:

- is an efficient way to teach new skills and knowledge
- allows for individualisation of instruction to cater for different learning needs
- allows the teacher to closely monitor student progress.

Students experiencing difficulty in learning to read will need frequent opportunities to visit, revisit and practise understandings about reading. Modelled reading lessons will introduce and reinforce concepts about reading and how texts work. Guided reading, which provides explicit instruction, and independent reading, where students read texts matched to their reading level, will provide constructive practice on text.

Students experiencing reading difficulties need explicit and structured guided reading sessions regularly. Daily instruction would be ideal.

Planning and programming

When planning and programming guided reading the teacher needs to:

- choose text at an instructional level which contains examples of the skills being taught
- carefully sequence the skills to be taught from easy to more difficult, to avoid confusion
- provide opportunities for daily practice of skills
- provide opportunities to revise skills previously taught
- closely monitor students’ reading development in each session and over time
- utilise other personnel to assist in program planning and implementation where possible, eg Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, English as a Second Language teacher, Reading Recovery teacher, Aboriginal Education Assistant, volunteer tutors, parents, integration aide.

Each student’s reading development is primarily the responsibility of the class teacher. When support staff and additional personnel are available, teachers need to work collaboratively to design programs which meet the needs of students experiencing difficulty.
A suggested procedure for guided reading

This section needs to be read in conjunction with “Guided reading – suggested procedure”, page 33. Students with reading difficulties need to engage in a range of activities as part of their guided reading instruction. These activities will usually include:

• a focus on text reading to:
  – introduce the text chosen for guided reading to the students,
  – allow students to discuss content which could be found in the text
  – involve students in discussion and prediction about the text, eg title, cover, headline
  – encourage recall of strategies for reading unknown words
  – enable students to read aloud, supported and prompted by the teacher
  – enable teachers to monitor and assess each student’s reading

  *During this step students:*
  – focus on the cover and make predictions about the text
  – listen to the text read by the teacher
  – talk about the meaning of the text and the illustrations
  – read along with the teacher
  – read individually with the teacher supporting the reading and monitoring for accuracy and fluency
  – retell the text.

• a focus on conventions of print to:
  – assist students to revise known and introduce new aspects of print, eg print direction, full stops, quotation marks, exclamation marks, question marks, inverted commas

  *During this step students can:*
  – revise known conventions of print, especially those introduced in the previous lesson
  – explore new print conventions in the text being read.

• a focus on sounds, letters and words to:
  – highlight the similarities and differences between sounds in words and words in sentences
  – match the sounds in words with letters, common English letter clusters and whole words
  – assist students to become familiar with words commonly found in texts

  *During this step students can:*
  – revise some known letter/sound correspondences
  – revise some known high frequency words
  – explore new letter/sound correspondences in the text being read
  – explore new high frequency words in the text being read
  – blend new sounds and known sounds to read words
  – make words with letter cards, using new sounds and known sounds
  – play word recognition games, using high frequency words
  – use plastic letters to make high frequency words.
• a focus on meaning to:
  – assist students as they read for specific purposes
  – assist students to explore literal and inferential meanings of texts
  – allow teachers to assess students’ understanding of the texts

  During this step students can:
  – talk about the events, characters and information in the text
  – compare the texts with others they have read
  – discuss questions which focus on their role as text-participant, text-user and text-analyst.

• a focus on writing/spelling to:
  – allow students to demonstrates their understanding of sound-letter correspondence
  – show teachers the spelling strategies students use as they write.

  During this step students can:
  – copy words from a model
  – write words from memory
  – write their own text related to the text they have read, eg innovation on the text.

• a refocus on whole text to:
  – allow students to practise what they have learnt
  – consolidate skills and knowledge
  – demonstrate to students how the skills they are learning fit into connected text.

  During this step students can:
  – read the day’s text independently or in pairs.

As part of guided reading students with reading difficulties can engage in activities which focus their attention on aspects of the text they need to learn.
A guide for instruction

Students undertaking a new task need to move through a series of phases:

- acquisition
- fluency (getting faster)
- maintenance (remembering over time)
- generalisation (using their new knowledge in different situations).

A cycle of instruction which includes these features involves the following steps:

- review (teacher summarises previous knowledge)
- presentation (teacher introduces new concepts)
- guided practice (students read while supported by the teacher)
- independent practice (students read using all known reading strategies)
- cumulative review (teacher summarises the reading experience).

Home partnerships

The home-school partnership is important for all students, but particularly for students experiencing difficulties in learning to read. Parents need to be involved at the outset and throughout the process. Frequent contact with parents about their child’s learning needs and strengths will help develop such partnerships. Parents can help their children at home by being involved in home reading programs, where students practise reading familiar texts at home every day. Students need to be given feedback on their progress as they become competent readers, and parents need to be kept informed of the progress their child is making.

Whole school approach

In order to support students with reading difficulties the school will need to develop a coordinated whole-school approach. This will involve:

- identification of students who need extra support in reading as early as possible
- consultation with the student’s parents
- planning of a suitable learning program for the student
- modification of the program if needed
- regular monitoring and reporting to parents.

For further information to assist students with reading difficulties consult English K-6 Literacy, Interim Support Document for Students Experiencing Learning Difficulties, Board of Studies.
Guided reading at a glance for students with reading difficulties

- introduces the text chosen for guided reading to the students
- allows students to discuss content which could be found in the text
- involves students in discussion and prediction about the text, eg title, cover
- encourages recall of strategies for reading unknown words
- enables students to read aloud, supported and prompted by the teacher
- enables teachers to monitor and assess each student’s reading

Focus on text reading

- assists students to revise known and introduce new aspects of print, eg print direction, full stops, quotation marks, exclamation marks, question marks, inverted commas
- highlights the similarities and differences between sounds in words and words in sentences
- matches the sounds in words with letters, common English letter clusters and whole words
- assists students to become familiar with words commonly found in texts

Focus on conventions of print

Focus on sounds, letters and words

Focus on meaning

- assists students as they read for specific purposes
- assists students to explore literal and inferential meanings of texts
- allows teachers to assess students’ understanding of the texts

Focus on writing/spelling

- allows students to demonstrate their understanding of sound-letter correspondence
- shows teachers the spelling strategies students use as they write.

Refocus on whole text

- allows students to practise what they have learnt
- consolidates skills and knowledge
- demonstrates to students how the skills they are learning fit into connected text.
Organising the literacy session

Daily literacy sessions include opportunities for students to engage in talking, listening, reading and writing activities. These sessions should occur within a rich and stimulating language environment which supports students’ language learning.

Teachers will plan activities to enable students to participate in a series of whole-class, small group, pair and individual experiences.

The content of these activities will be based on teachers’ assessment of students’ needs and knowledge of how students learn to read.

Components of the literacy session should include:

- setting the scene
- modelled reading
- reading activities
- guided reading
- independent reading
- guided writing
- independent writing
- teacher reading
- concluding the session.

The amount of time teachers spend on each part of the session will be determined by the needs of the students and may vary from day to day and over time.

While not all of these components might be included every day, it is expected that each day’s session would contain most of the above elements. For example, teachers might choose to do guided writing one day and independent writing the following day.

At some times activities can occur concurrently, for example, teachers can work with guided reading groups while the rest of the class is engaged in independent reading.

It is important to establish a routine so that students become familiar with the components of the literacy session and what is expected of them. When changing the routine or introducing new elements students should be told clearly what the new elements are.

The following pages provide:

- a description of the purpose of each of the components of a literacy session
- a description of the role of the teacher in each component
- models of different ways of organising the class to incorporate all the components into a 90-minute literacy session. The times suggested may need to vary according to students’ needs or levels of development.
Components of a literacy session

Day X

Setting the scene

- Introduces the day’s activities and provides a starting point for the day’s literacy learning.
- Brings the class together to establish routines during the daily literacy session.
- Builds on prior knowledge.

Teacher’s role:
- remind students of previous activities which link to today’s session and review previous skills and knowledge
- read known texts, wall displays, students’ work or new texts
- build up knowledge about the topic

Teacher works with the whole class.

Modelled reading

- Involves students in structured demonstrations of what effective readers do.
- Shows how experienced readers vary their reading for different kinds of texts.
- Demonstrates specific teaching points.
- Allows and encourages students to enjoy reading experiences.

Teacher’s role:
- demonstrate reading strategies such as re-reading, reading on, using illustrations to predict and confirm meaning and using graphological information
- discuss text organisation and features of the text
- demonstrate how to draw on sources of information to read the text.

Teacher works with the whole class using an enlarged text.

Reading activities

Involves students in working more closely with written texts at their instructional reading level so they can learn:
- more about how the texts are structured
- how to access and interpret the ideas and information in the text.

Teacher’s role:
- observe and assess students’ performance as they complete the reading activities
- assist students experiencing difficulties
- ensure all students are purposefully involved in the reading activities
- encourage independent and cooperative work habits
- coordinate with support personnel and parents to decide how they may best help students complete their tasks successfully.

Students are involved in individual or small group reading activities.

Teacher may work with one or two groups of students to help them complete the reading activity.
Day X (continued…)

Guided reading
- Provides specific reading instruction for students at their instructional level.
- Allows teachers to observe and record students’ use of various reading strategies.
- Allows students to practise skills demonstrated in the modelled reading session.

Teacher’s role:
- group students based on their reading abilities
- match students to texts at their instructional level
- make a guided reading timetable to ensure all students are included every week
- provide instruction at students’ stage of development
- ensure students with reading difficulties receive focused instruction
- make planning and programming decisions based on observations of students’ reading
- ensure the rest of the class is involved in purposeful activities
- keep detailed records of students’ reading achievements and needs.

Independent reading
- Encourages students to read texts independently.
- Enables students to practise the reading strategies that have formed the focus of modelled and guided reading instruction.

Teacher’s role
- ensure students are reading texts at appropriate level
- observe students’ reading habits and preferences
- encourage students to engage with texts independently
- provide a wide range of texts from which students may choose
- show enthusiasm about this reading time
- provide ways for students to share their responses to the texts they have read
- provide ways for students to keep a record of what they have read.

Guided writing
- Demonstrates how effective writers construct a text.
- Involves students in joint construction of written text.

Teacher’s role
- lead students in the construction of a written text
- demonstrate how to solve writing problems
- share information about the writing process as you write
- provide a classroom rich in print
- make explicit the purpose for writing and the features of text which are being demonstrated.
Independent writing

- Allows students to create their own texts.
- Provides opportunities for students to practise and gain control of an increasing range of text types.
- Helps students to understand the relationship between reading and writing.

Teacher’s role:
- question students about their writing
- direct students to sources of information and assist students with editing
- share students’ successful writing strategies with the class
- encourage students to assist each other during the writing tasks
- assess students’ writing, to plan and program future guided writing sessions.

Teacher reading

- Provides models of language in literary and factual texts.
- Introduces students to various text types.
- Reinforces the importance of reading for enjoyment and information.

Teacher’s role:
- read a wide variety of texts
- observe students’ preferences for different text types
- encourage students to comment on texts
- demonstrate critical appraisal of the text read
- be enthusiastic about reading.

Concluding the session

- Consolidates the day’s experiences.
- Enables students to share some successful reading and writing strategies.

Teacher’s role:
- encourage students to evaluate their own learning
- encourage students to share their expertise.
Grouping for learning

Teachers will group students in various ways at different times in the literacy session to suit the needs of their students and the demands of the tasks. Often, different types of groups will be working in the classroom at the same time as students work with the teacher or another adult, with each other or independently.

Classroom groupings are basically of two main types:

**Cross ability groups**
These occur when students of different ability levels work together. These groups can range in size from pairs to the whole class.

Cross ability groups are useful for:
- setting the scene for the literacy session
- modelled reading by the teacher to the whole class or a large group
- reading aloud by the teacher to the class
- pair reading, where a more competent reader reads with a less competent reader from the same or another class
- reading activities, where a pair or small group of students works on a task cooperatively
- guided writing of a joint text
- concluding the literacy session and sharing successes.

**Ability groups**
These occur when students of a similar ability level work together. These groups can range in size from pairs to six or more.

Ability groups are useful for:
- small group guided reading with the teacher
- independent reading in pairs
- reading activities where a pair or small group of students works on a task cooperatively.

**Independent work**
At times in the literacy session students will work independently to:
- read their own text
- write their own text
- work on a task
- reflect on their own learning
- talk with the teacher about their work.
Structuring the daily literacy session

There are numerous ways of organising a classroom literacy session.

The four options suggested on the following pages are appropriate for any class from Kindergarten to Year 6, whether composite or multi-age, with or without support personnel.

For a successful literacy session it is important to have:

• many and varied texts in the class library
• students matched to appropriate texts for guided and independent reading
• a print-rich environment including labels, wall displays, charts etc
• organised spaces for each of the activities
• students familiar with the routine of the session and able to take responsibility for completing tasks.

Students should become familiar with the routine of the literacy session and accept responsibility for completing tasks.
Classroom organisation – Option 1

Introduce the day's activities.

5 mins Setting the scene

Students seated on floor or at desks.

15 mins Modelled reading

Decide on purpose for modelled reading. Choose big book, wall charts, posters.

Provide open-ended activities to cater for a range of abilities.

Cross ability groups.

20 mins Reading activities

Assess students, briefly record observations.

Work with individuals or groups of students giving specific instruction and assistance.

10 mins Guided writing

Assess students' reading. Note key points for future instruction.

Choose a clear purpose for the guided writing.

Students help construct the text.

Work with 2-3 guided reading groups in this 20 minute session.

Ensure interesting texts are available.

20 mins Guided and independent reading

Group students according to reading ability.

Students choose texts from graded book boxes or class library.

Students sit at desks, on floor, or in class library area.

Make a guided reading time-table.

20 mins Independent writing

Assess students' writing.

Students write independently for half the session.

Assist students as they write.

Show students how to solve writing problems independently.

Ensure all students are writing.

Work with targeted students individually.

Encourage students to help their classmates solve writing problems in the last half of the writing time.

20 mins Concluding the session and teacher reading

Students share their reading and writing successes.

Read texts for enjoyment and/or information.

Students share problem solving strategies.
Classroom organisation – Option 2

10 mins Teacher reading
- Show enthusiasm for the texts you choose to read.
- Students are listening to evocative language.
- All students sit comfortably on the floor or at desks.
- Group students according to ability.
- Some students work with teacher.
- Modelled writing to least competent readers.

10 mins Concluding the session
- 10 mins Modelled writing
  - Decide on the purpose of the modelled writing session.
  - All students watch the teacher model a writing strategy or text type.
  - Prepare a range of reading activities and writing tasks linked to the focus of instruction.
  - Students work in small groups or individually.
  - Ensure you work with least capable readers frequently.
  - Work with 2 guided reading groups at this time.

10 mins Modelled and independent reading
- Students are listening to and viewing different texts.
- Students are listening to evocative language.
- Read a range of texts.
- Students read texts matched to their reading abilities.
- Less confident readers read independently.
- More confident readers read independently.
- Have multiple copies of guided reading texts.
- Assess students’ reading ability.
- Small group for guided reading. Ability grouped.
- Students continue to read texts matched to their reading abilities and/or a range of texts available in the class library.

15 mins Guided and independent reading
- Students explain an aspect of their work.
- More confident readers read independently.
- Less confident readers read independently.
- Students are listening to and viewing different texts.
- Read a range of texts.
- Students read texts matched to their reading abilities.
- Have multiple copies of guided reading texts.
- Assess students’ reading ability.
- Small group for guided reading. Ability grouped.
- Ensure you work with least capable readers frequently.
- Work with 2 guided reading groups at this time.

30 mins Reading activities and independent writing
- Students are listening to and viewing different texts.
- Read a range of texts.
- Students read texts matched to their reading abilities.
- Have multiple copies of guided reading texts.
- Assess students’ reading ability.
- Small group for guided reading. Ability grouped.
- Ensure you work with least capable readers frequently.
- Work with 2 guided reading groups at this time.

Assist independent writers.
Classroom organisation – Option 3

- **15 mins Teacher reading**
  - Discuss the text with students and comment on features.
  - Read the serial text.

- **15 mins Modelled reading or modelled writing**
  - Decide on the purpose of the demonstration.
  - Demonstrate an aspect of the reading or writing process.

- **30 mins Independent and guided reading**
  - Students continue reading their own texts, independently.
  - Students sit comfortably.

- **30 mins Reading and writing activities**
  - Prepare reading tasks.
  - Provide assistance to several students.
  - Move between groups.

- **15 mins Concluding activity**
  - Use information gained in this session to assess students' understandings.

- **15 mins Teacher reading**
  - Read with students individually or in small groups, guiding their reading.
  - Small groups are based on ability.
  - Assess each student's reading as you read together.

- **15 mins Modelled reading or modelled writing**
  - All students are involved.
  - Alternate between writing and reading demonstrations over several days.

- **30 mins Independent and guided reading**
  - Students continue reading their own texts, independently.
  - Small groups are based on ability.
  - Assess each student's reading as you read together.

- **30 mins Reading and writing activities**
  - Integrate reading and writing activities with other key learning areas.
  - Students work individually, in pairs or in cross ability groups.

- **15 mins Concluding activity**
  - Students ask for assistance from peers to problems they may have encountered.
  - Students share successful reading and writing strategies.
  - Students listen to peers discuss their work.
  - Students offer suggestions.
Classroom organisation – Option 4

10 mins Teacher reading with buddy class
- Decide on appropriate text.
- Read to students in own class and their buddy class.

15 mins Modelled reading
- Decide on appropriate text.
- Demonstrate successful reading strategies.
- Over time use a range of text types.

15 mins Guided and independent writing
- More capable students write independently.

15 mins Guided and independent writing
- Jointly construct text with more capable students.

10-15 mins Independent writing
- Students write independently.

20 mins Reading with buddies
- Students sit with their buddies from another class.

30 mins Reading activities and guided reading
- Parents work with groups.
- Work with 1-5 students at a time, for guided reading.
- Students grouped according to ability levels.

10 mins Concluding activity
- Encourage students to share successful strategies and products with their peers.

- Observe students and record their reading behaviour and text choices.
- At the end of the reading buddy class leaves.

Ensure students are available.
Encourage students to discuss the text as they read.
Students choose texts to read with their buddies.

- Support Teacher, Learning Difficulties takes a group for 30 mins guided reading.
- Decide on which skills, knowledge and understanding about the writing process and text type to demonstrate to students.
- Jointly construct a text with students.
- Students divided into ability groups.
- Work with less competent readers.

- Second teacher models listening skills.
- Note students' engagement with text.
- Students sit comfortably watching the enlarged text.

- Students grouped according to ability levels.
- Parents work with groups.
- Work with 1-5 students at a time, for guided reading.
- Students grouped according to ability levels.

- Summarise the day's language work.
- Model appropriate questions and reinforce appropriate questioning techniques.
- Assist students and assess their writing.

- Second teacher models listening skills.
- Note students' engagement with text.
- Students sit with their buddies from another class.

- Students choose texts to read with their buddies.
- Observe students and record their reading behaviour and text choices.
- At the end of the reading buddy class leaves.

Ensure students are available.
Encourage students to discuss the text as they read.
Students choose texts to read with their buddies.

- Support Teacher, Learning Difficulties takes a group for 30 mins guided reading.
- Decide on which skills, knowledge and understanding about the writing process and text type to demonstrate to students.
- Jointly construct a text with students.
- Students divided into ability groups.
- Work with less competent readers.
Selecting texts for the reading program

The English K-6 syllabus recommends the use of whole texts as the basis of the English language program. These texts should include:

- texts students encounter in everyday situations, such as advertisements, newspapers and magazines, notices, posters, timetables and environmental print
- a variety of literary and factual texts from all key learning areas.

In order to meet the different demands of the classroom reading program, a variety of texts for modelled reading, guided reading and independent reading will need to be included.

Texts for modelled reading

In modelled reading teachers:

- involve students in structured demonstrations of what effective readers do
- present a range of texts and explain how they work.

Therefore, texts for modelled reading need to:

1. be good examples of effective text, for example:
   - quality literary texts including texts by recognised children’s authors
   - quality factual texts in a range of key learning areas
   - everyday texts such as posters and newspapers
2. be at an appropriate level for the students in your class
   - because students are scaffolded in modelled reading to gain meaning in a supportive situation, the texts you use need not be simple enough to be read independently by all students. It is important to ensure, however, that each student can participate in the modelled reading session in the reading of the text and the subsequent discussions of its meaning and features.
3. provide examples of the teaching points you want to present to students, for example:
   - include text structures and language patterns you want to focus on
   - include sound/letter relationships you want to focus on
   - include punctuation features you want to focus on
4. provide opportunities to demonstrate reading strategies, for example:
   - re-reading
   - reading on
   - predicting
   - self-correcting
5. provide opportunities to demonstrate how to construct meaning from the text by taking on the roles of the reader, for example:
   - using illustrations to gain meaning from a text
   - asking questions about the writer’s purpose
6. be large enough to be seen by all students, for example:
   - big books
   - enlarged version of a text
   - text on charts, posters and chalkboard
   - room print
   - class made big books
   - text on overhead transparencies

7. be interesting and relevant to students’ social and cultural backgrounds

8. cover a range of text types. Over time, the texts used in modelled reading should cover a range of text types, e.g.
   - literary texts: narrative text, poetry, drama
   - factual text in all key learning areas
   - text which includes illustrations
   - text which includes such features as
     * a table of contents
     * an index
     * maps, tables, graphs and diagrams
     * section headings and sub-headings.
**Texts for guided reading**

In guided reading, teachers support students in reading a text at their instructional level. A text is at a student’s instructional level if the student can read between 90% and 95% of the words independently.

To select appropriate texts for each student to use in guided reading, teachers can use the following procedure. The procedure has two parts:

A - Putting texts into levels

B - Matching students to text.

The procedure is more effective if done with colleagues.

**A. Putting texts into levels**

1. Collect a range of books that you think cover the range of reading abilities in your class. Choose literary and factual texts and a range of text types. The books can come from various sources, including the school and classroom libraries, literature collections and reading schemes. Ensure that the books you collect are quality texts with language which reflects real language use. You will need to select several times the number of books as you have student in your class.

2. Use your judgement (or combined judgement if working with a colleague) to put the books into three piles: easy, average and difficult.

3. Take each pile and split it into two, making six groups in all, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>easy</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>easiest</td>
<td>less easy</td>
<td>easy average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Collect and label six boxes to indicate six levels. You may want to use colours, numbers, animal names or some other labelling system. Place the six groups of books into the six boxes. Remember, these are NOT Reading Recovery levels; for classroom use it is not necessary to use the fine gradations of the Reading Recovery levels.

   * This is a start. You will find that you have a range of books at each level. As you work with students using the books you will find that some books have been wrongly levelled and need to be placed in a different box. Over time, as your students progress through the boxes you will need to create new levels at the difficult end and to phase out the lower levels.
B. Matching students to text

You will find that you have a range of texts at each level, and not all texts in a level will be suitable for each student. In order for a book to be suitable for guided reading for a student it needs to:

• be at an instructional reading level for that student
• be of interest to the student
• have content that relates to the student’s real-world knowledge
• be culturally relevant to the student
• contain language structures that the student knows

In matching students to the levels in the six book boxes you have created, you should work individually with each student as follows:

1. Select a level that you think would be appropriate for the student. Ask the student to choose a book from that box.

2. Ask the student to select one book from the level below and the level above the first book selected.

3. Sit with the student and explain that together you will find the level that is right for them.

4. Begin with the lowest level of the three books selected. Ask the student to read to you. As they do, take a running record or monitor their reading, taking note of any UNCORRECTED errors.

5. If the student makes more than one error in each ten words the book is probably too hard and you will need to go to the next level down (or select some easier books if you are already at the lowest level).

6. If the student makes between one and two errors in each twenty words the book is probably at their instructional level. Check by selecting another book from the same box and asking the student to read to you.

7. If the student makes very few or no errors the book is probably not challenging enough for guided reading. Move on to the next level of book selected and ask the student to read to you, monitoring the number of uncorrected errors as before.

8. Continue the process with books of increasing difficulty until you feel you have matched the student to the appropriate level.

9. During subsequent guided reading sessions continue to monitor the student’s reading. If the uncorrected error rate falls below 1 word in 20 the student is probably ready to move to the next level. If the uncorrected error rate rises you may want to drop back a level, or spend more time at the current level. Check this on several books in the box and, if necessary, move the student to a lower level for a while to allow them to practise and consolidate their skills on text they can manage.
Once you have decided on a level for each student it is important to select texts from that level that will be interesting and relevant to the student.

It will take time at the beginning of the year to match each student to an appropriate text, but it will provide the basis for a great deal of your instructional reading program so it needs to be done with care.

Your purpose is to move each student through the levels, using each new text to teach them about the features of the text and the strategies they can employ to read effectively.

Students can be assisted to select their own texts for independent reading.

Texts for independent reading

Students should have independent reading texts that are easier for them than their guided reading texts, however, they should also have opportunities to engage with a range of texts to pursue their particular interests.

Texts for independent reading should include:

- texts at students’ independent reading level, that is, texts that the student can read unassisted with at least 95% accuracy.
- a range of literary and factual texts
- texts which students have previously read in modelled and guided reading. (These texts will provide less competent readers with added support through their familiar language and content.)
- texts selected with students that are relevant to their interests and cultural background

Spend some time selecting a range of texts for the classroom. You might want to consult the teacher-librarian or other school staff as you make your selection. You will need books to cover the range of reading abilities in your class. Select about three times more books than there are students in the class. Back in the classroom group the books in levels of difficulty (for example, easy reading, average, hardest), and arrange the books so that they can be easily accessed by students.
Bibliography


NSW Department of School Education, Assessment and Reporting Directorate, 1996, *Principles for Assessment and Reporting*.
