

Teaching reading in Early Stage 1

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Introduction

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.

This book provides information to assist teachers in translating the ideas in *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework* into classroom practice.

The book provides:

- a guide to the implementation of a balanced reading program
- information about the management and organisation of the daily literacy session
- two teaching units set out in a day-by-day format
- information about how to use the book to support teachers' own professional learning.

The book also provides detailed information about setting up and managing the Kindergarten classroom.

The units in the book are structured into a two-week daily format. There is a unit overview followed by each day's literacy session described in detail. It is expected that the daily literacy session will last approximately 90 minutes although teachers may wish to spend longer. See *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*, page 50.

It is not intended that teachers' own programs will reflect the detail of the units provided in this book. However, teachers should include in their own programming the key ideas of:

- a daily instructional literacy session
- the teaching strategies of modelled, guided and independent reading
- a balanced program which focuses on the development of
 - contextual knowledge
 - knowledge about the sources of information
 - skills in adopting the four roles of the reader.



How to use this book

An essential starting point for using this book is familiarity with *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*. You will find this book is more relevant and easy to use if you have read *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework* and have engaged in training and development activities around it.

Getting started:

- Look through this book to get an idea of the information it provides and its organisation and layout.
- Read both the teaching units and select the one you might use first. Think about how well the unit caters for your students' needs, abilities and interests at this stage of the year. Consider what modifications you might need to make to suit your students.
- Make sure you are familiar with:
 - the structure of the literacy session as described in the unit. See *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*, page 50.
 - the key teaching strategies of modelled, guided and independent reading. See *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*, page 28.

Organising the classroom and resources:

- Ensure that you have appropriate texts for guided and independent reading and that they are organised for easy access. See *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*, page 60.
- Check that the particular resources necessary for the unit you want to teach are available. If necessary, substitute other, similar resources.
- Group your students into ability groups of about 5 or 6 students for guided reading. (Note, in the unit *Coming to School*, this is done during Week 1, not prior to the unit).
- Organise ways of assessing students' reading development and recording key information. See *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*, page 23 and photocopiable proformas in this book.
- If you have access to support personnel or parents consider how they might best be involved.

Preparing to teach the unit:

- Read the unit through carefully. Take particular note of:
 - your role in providing explicit and systematic instruction for all students
 - the organisation of the literacy session and the movement of students between activities. Consider what will be necessary to ensure this runs smoothly.
- Read the section, *Preparation for the unit*.
- Read the section, *Preparation for Day 1*.

Teaching the unit

Your own professional judgement and teaching style will influence the way you teach this unit. As you consider what modifications you want to make, think about the particular needs, interests and abilities of your students. Make sure the modifications you make are consistent with the principles of a systematic approach to teaching reading. See *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*, pages 16 and 17.

Reflecting on teaching

As you teach the unit take time to reflect on:

- what your students are learning and how they are demonstrating their growing knowledge and skill as readers. Consider what opportunities you are providing for students to demonstrate what they can do. See *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*, page 23.
- what you are learning about the explicit and systematic teaching of reading and about how to provide for the continuous development of each student. The units can provide a focus for informal staff discussion about the teaching of reading. They can also provide a focus for more formal school-based training and development activities.



Getting started in Kindergarten

The first days at school are uncertain for the new students, their parents and you. There are things you can do to help smooth the transition for Kindergarten students as they move from home, day care, playgroups or pre-school, to school. By planning ahead you will also benefit.

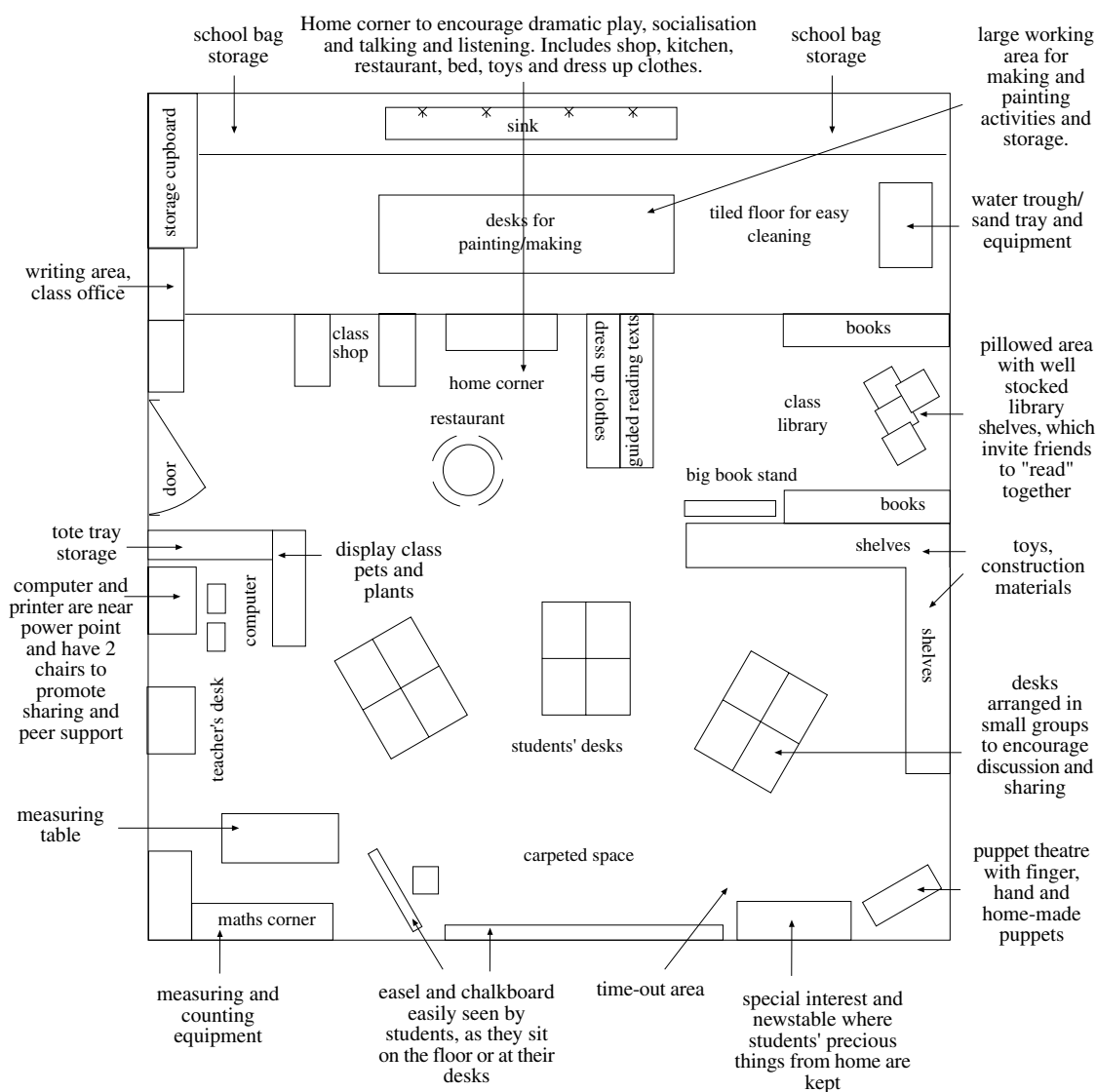
Preparing for the first day at school

The following pages show the areas in a Kindergarten classroom. The three diagrams provide information about:

- the room layout;
- the equipment needed; and
- the print on display.

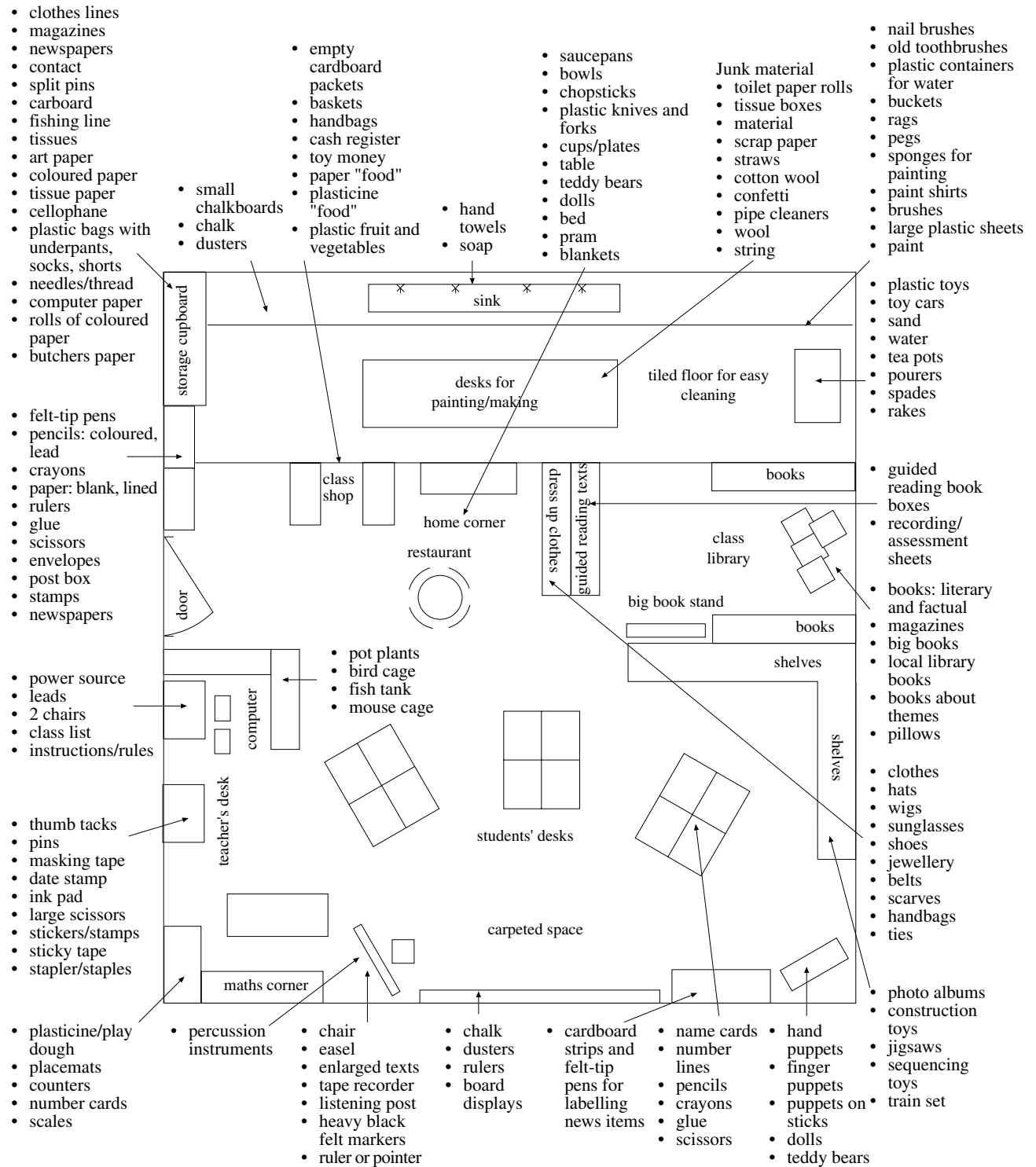
Plan your *room layout and organisation*

When planning the layout of your room, consider making space for these areas:



Areas in a Kindergarten classroom

Collect and/or make a range of equipment



Equipment in a Kindergarten classroom

Decide on the *print* you will display around the room

Please turn the tap off

Labels in different languages

Library Corner

Labels describing different areas

Label furniture

Individual desk alphabet cards

Students' name cards on desks, bag hooks, tote trays and the board ledge

Additional print could include:

- books on display
- text displayed on chalkboard and easel
- big books
- enlarged texts, eg songs and poems
- magnetic letters
- letter box
- price lists and catalogues for the class shop
- magazines
- organisational charts/daily plans

Classroom print and labels in a Kindergarten classroom

Classroom print and labels in a Kindergarten classroom

Talk and plan with others including:

- executive, to clarify and streamline how students will be introduced to you, their classroom and others in their class
- other Kindergarten teachers, to share any ideas for the smooth running of the first day
- clerical staff, in case help is needed with children lost after recess or lunch.
- adult helpers such as last year's Kindergarten parents or grandparents
- older students, to become buddies to the new Kindergarten students

Make decisions including:

- What essential routines do you wish to build into each day?
- What behaviours will you reinforce and how will you do this?
- What units of work will you plan?
- What social, language, cognitive and fine and gross motor behaviours will you expect to see?
- How will you ensure you observe all students, systematically?
- How will you record your observations?
- How do you plan to ensure all students are happy, secure and motivated to learn?



Week one, the first day

What follows are some ideas which might help you and your students settle in on the first morning.

- If all Kindergarten students enrol at the same time on the same day try following this routine:

9:00am Ensure some helpers (parents from last year's Kindergarten, P & C members, older students, your new Kindergarten's buddy class) are in the room or out in the playground with you. These people will be invaluable helpers.

Introduce yourself, and once you and your new class are sitting down in your room, pin name cards onto each new Kindergarten student. The students' own parents can help too. Make sure you explain toileting routines early in the day. Bags can be put away and the morning's routine explained.

Invite students to participate in some of the activities you have prepared, eg play in the home corner, look at the books in the class library. Parents may wish to stay in the classroom for a few minutes, until they are reassured their child is calm. Spend time talking with individuals and small groups of students, getting to know them and helping them feel comfortable.

10:00am Show students how to pack up, and join you in a central spot, by your chair.

Read a book, sing a song, say some poems and do some movement activities.

10:20am Invite students to sit at a desk and complete an activity, eg draw a picture, 'write' a sentence, dictate a sentence.

10:35am Ask students to join you again for another story.

10:40am Prepare students for morning tea, show them how to line up and go to the toilets and wash hands. Walk to the playground and find a place to sit and eat. Show them where to play and what to do when they hear the bell. Explain that you will be either staying in the playground or returning to it in 15 minutes. Your new students will probably need to know where you are at all times.

- If Kindergarten enrolments are staggered over the first day or the first week, new Kindergarten students will be arriving at different times. In order to allow yourself enough time to welcome each child and their parents, show them where to put their bags and introduce them to another child in the class, the room will need to be set up with a range of activities. These activities could be placed on desks and around the floor, and supplement the learning centres and play areas available. After each child has been welcomed, help them settle to an activity. Welcome the parents. They will probably have plenty of questions. Make sure you know who will be picking their child up at home-time and that parents know where to meet their child. You may also have the opportunity to introduce some of the new parents to each other. Invite parents to stay until both they and their child feel comfortable, and then they can say their goodbyes. Include some of the activities above if you have time.

Plan an activity for the new Kindergarten students to complete at their desks so that they have something to take home from their first day at school. Also be mindful that most students are expecting to learn to read and write on their first day at school. Reading highly repetitive big books and scribing sentences onto students' pictures will encourage all students to think they are starting to learn to read and write by home-time on that first day.

Ensuring a calm morning

It can be traumatic for some children to separate from their parents. One way to help students settle into the classroom each morning for the first three or four weeks is to invite parents and grandparents to bring their Kindergarten children directly to the classroom.

Have pillows from the class library scattered around the floor and a range of books near them. Parents can assist their children to put their school bags away and then they and any toddlers can sit on the pillows or at desks, reading stories or looking at pictures in books from the class library. This reading time allows adults and children a calm time to say goodbye. Then at an allotted time, say fifteen minutes after the morning bell, ask children to say goodbye to their parents, put the books away and then come and sit on the floor.

Alternatively, you could set up various activities around the tables and floor, similar to the first day at school. Parents and caregivers can then join in a game with their children, until the allotted time. Once again, parents and children can then pack up, say their goodbyes and students can come to the floor to begin the day's lessons.

If a child is distressed in the mornings, make sure you invite parents to ring the school to check if their child has settled.

Weeks 1 and 2 in Kindergarten

Use the first two weeks of the year to begin finding out about your students and to begin establishing routines.

You will want to get to know your new class and their parents and to introduce the students to the routines, places and expectations of school. You will decide upon class rules and consequences. And, you will begin exploring each student's understandings across a range of developmental areas including social and emotional, fine and gross motor, language, cognitive and creative developmental areas. Try make each member of your class feel special, looked after, clever and happy.

How can you best find out what each student knows, understands and can do?

During these first two weeks offer students a wide range of activities, in different settings and in various groupings. Take time to observe and talk with each student as they engage in these activities, and make notes of your observations.

The teaching units in this book will provide many opportunities for you to observe and record what your students know and can do. Use the *Revised Early Learning Profiles* to help focus your observations and record these as a basis for your ongoing assessment throughout the year.

Establishing a routine:

Even though every teacher and every school will have different routines and expectations, you may find following this routine, or one similar, helpful.

- 9:00am Settling into the classroom: parents bring students directly to the classroom for 15 minutes of quiet reading or developmental play activities.
- 9:15am Pack away, say goodbye to parents and bring students to a central spot. Read a story, mark the roll, count the children (write this on the board), find out which day of the week it is and what the weather is like (write this information on the board or on a prepared chart).
- 9:30am Do a circle game, movement activity, dance or action song.
- 9:45am Read a big book. Refer to *Choosing Literacy Strategies that Work, Vol. 1*, page 95, which gives examples of texts and lists characteristics of texts which are appropriate for students at Foundation and Transition levels. Choose repetitive texts and ones with highly predictable text, so students will feel they are beginning to learn to read.
- 10:00am Have students do an activity at their desks, based on the big book, eg by drawing a picture of one of the characters.
- 10:20am Read a story.
- 10:30am Prepare for recess: get morning tea, go to the toilet, wash hands, find where to sit. Recess.
- 11:00am Read a story.
- 11:10am Maths groups: form students into groups and ask them to work for 10 minutes at activities of your choosing, then rotate groups around the other activities.
- 11:40am Writing time: demonstrate how to write a sentence while students watch. Ask each student to 'write' their own sentence or draw a picture. If students ask, scribe a sentence for them.
- Noon: Alternate between Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Personal Development/ Health/ Physical Education, and Creative and Practical Arts activities based around a unit of work or a theme, until lunch time.
- Lunch
- 2:00pm Developmental Play activities: include a range of ongoing activities as well as specific activities set up for each day. Variety and balance in these activities are essential. Offer a balance of activities between indoor/outdoor, quiet/active, individual/small group/large group, large muscle/small muscle, student initiated/ teacher initiated. The activities can often be linked to the day's literacy session. Refer to the *Kindergarten, the first year at school*, Department of School Education, and *The Importance of Play*, Board of Studies.
- 2:45pm Pack away, read a story, talk about the day's events, summarise the day's learning and collect work to take home.
- 3:00pm Home time: be available to talk with parents and caregivers.

Weeks 3 and 4 – The literacy session

After the first two weeks you will have established routines and now you will be able to begin introducing the morning literacy session. During weeks 3 and 4 follow the activities outlined in the *Coming to School* teaching unit in this book.

As you work through these activities refer to the *Revised Early Learning Profiles*, to focus your observations and to help you decide which outcomes your students are working towards. Also refer to the *K-6 English Syllabus and Support Document, Choosing Literacy Strategies that Work, Vol. 1*, and the *Kindergarten Workbook*.

The rest of the term – The literacy session

Continue to work with the routines you have established, varying them according to the needs of your students. Begin a new unit of work, either one you have written yourself or the second unit in this book, *Signs and Letters*.

As the term progresses, literacy sessions usually last for 1 1/2 to 2 hours every day. A suggested routine could be:

- 9:15-9:20am Each morning start the day with the class seated on the floor, watching quietly while you write a **secret sentence**. Encourage students to take turns building up information about the sentence, the letters, the words, the punctuation, and together act as code-breakers to decode the words and find the meaning.
- 9:20-9:30am **Read to the class** (from literary or factual texts). The text chosen may be linked to the integrated topic currently being discussed.
- 9:30-9:40am Ask students to find a partner, and take turns telling some **news**. They may have brought an item from home, they may retell an event, or tell of something that will happen in the future. Then ask the class to sit in front of the *News book*, and re-read past entries. Ask one person to tell their news or retell their partner's news. Scribe their dictated sentence onto a new page in the news book. Read it together and point out individual letters, high frequency words or grammatical points. Then ask the student who dictated the news to illustrate the page.
- 9:40-9:55am Read a **big book** or an **enlarged text** with students, modelling the reading process. Usually this text will be related to your topic and will enable students to find out more about letters and words, and how to gain meaning as they read.
- 9:55-10:25am Students complete a reading activity specifically designed to reinforce the modelled reading, or they choose from a range of **reading activities** available in the room. These regular activities could include reading in the class library, listening to stories on the listening post, making words out of plastic letters, magnetic letters or plasticine, word/picture/letter matching activities, letter recognition activities, sequencing cut up familiar texts, etc. While students are working on these reading activities, either help specific students complete the activity or withdraw small groups for **guided reading**.

Organise to see each student at least once each week and work with students experiencing difficulty with reading more often. Use graded book boxes and record your reading observations every day, in the form of a brief note on prepared recording sheets. See 'Selecting texts for the reading program', p.60 in *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*. After each group has read with you, ask them to **read independently** from their book boxes and the class library, before returning to the reading activities.

- 10:25-10:35am Demonstrate or jointly construct aspects of the writing process during **guided writing**.
- 10:35-11:00am Students **write independently** in their writing books or folders. Date their work. Work with a number of students individually, each day and comment briefly on each student's work each day.
- 11:00-11:15am Complete a **handwriting** activity, emphasising handwriting movements and aspects of fluency or letter formation.



Photocopiable proformas

This section of the book contains a range of proformas which teachers can use or adapt.

The proformas include:

- **Guided reading record:**

A sheet on which you can record details as you assess students' reading development during guided reading and can indicate areas that need further work.

- **Independent reading record:**

A sheet on which details of each student's independent reading can be recorded. The record can be kept by the teacher or by students themselves.

- **Observation matrix:**

A sheet on which you can record your observations of students' reading behaviours at any time in the literacy session.

- **Literacy session planning overview:**

A sheet on which you can plan the content of your week's literacy session. You can use this overview after you have completed the units in this book and are ready to plan your own.

- **Guided reading planning proforma:**

A sheet on which you can plan the guided reading you will do with each group each week. You can use this sheet after you have completed the units in this book and are ready to do your own.


- **Guided reading proforma for students with reading difficulties:**

A sheet on which you can plan guided reading in detail for students with reading difficulties. Teachers can use this sheet when jointly planning with the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties or other support staff who will also be working with these students.



Using the observation matrix

Teachers can use or adapt this matrix to record observations of students' reading behaviours. A photocopyable proforma is provided on the next page.

 **Observation matrix**
Focus: _____ Term: _____ Week: _____

What specific aspect of reading will you observe this week?

Write one student's name at the top of each box.

Write actual observations of students' reading behaviours.

This sheet can be used to record specific observations about students' reading behaviours. Use this sheet in conjunction with 'Reading... a pathway of development' on pages 14 to 15 and 'What to include in the reading program' on pages 19 to 21 of *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*.



Observation matrix

Focus: _____

Term: _____

Week: _____



Using the literacy session planning overview

Teachers can use or adapt this overview to assist in planning their literacy session. A photocopyable proforma is provided on the next page.

Identify the introductory activity you will do each day.

What text will you use for modelled reading. What specific teaching points will you focus on?

What reading activities will students do? How will the activities reinforce the teaching points you have modelled?

What will you focus on during independent reading this week?

What particular text will you use this week? What features will you demonstrate?

What text are you reading aloud to the class?

How will you conclude the session so that students have a sense of achievement? Can you focus on particular students who may need extra encouragement?

Literacy session: Planning overview Week: _____

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Setting the scene					
Modelled reading					
Reading activities					
Guided reading					
Independent reading					
Guided writing					
Independent writing					
Teacher reading					
Concluding the session					

What will be the focus of guided reading? How can you reinforce the teaching points you have modelled. See page 25 for a planning sheet to record the detail of each group's guided reading. See page 27 for a sheet on which to plan guided reading for students who need extra support.

What will students write this week?

This sheet can be used to plan an overview of your literacy sessions for a week. Use this sheet in conjunction with 'Organising the literacy session' on pages 51 to 53 and 'What to include in the reading program' on pages 19 to 21 of *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*.



Literacy session: Planning overview

Week: _____

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Setting the scene					
Modelled reading					
Reading activities					
Guided reading					
Independent reading					
Guided writing					
Independent writing					
Teacher reading					
Concluding the session					



Using the guided reading planning proforma

Teachers can use or adapt this proforma when planning guided reading. A photocopyable proforma is provided on the next page.

Guided reading planning sheet:
Whole class Week: _____

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
What text will each group use?					
What features will you cover this week for each group?					
What reading strategies will you reinforce for each group this week?					
What specific teaching points will you work on with each group this week?					
What activities will students engage in that will reinforce their learning?					

This sheet can be used to plan the detail of guided reading for each group. Use this sheet in conjunction with 'Guided reading' on pages 33 to 38 of *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*.



Guided reading planning sheet: Whole class

Week: _____

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Text					
Orientation to the text					
Reading the text					
Working with the text					
After guided reading					



Using the guided reading planning proforma for students with reading difficulties

Teachers can use or adapt this proforma when planning guided reading for students with reading difficulties. A photocopyable proforma is provided on the next page.


What texts will you use each day?
Consider both new texts and familiar texts that will give the student confidence.

Which reading strategies will you reinforce this week?

What sounds, letters and words should be the focus of instruction for students this week? Which ones need to be revised?

Will you focus on literal or inferential meaning, or both? If the text is factual what information strategy will you introduce or revisit?

What texts will students re-read?

 **Guided reading planning sheet:
Students with reading difficulties** Name: _____
Week: _____

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Text					
Text reading					
Conventions of print					
Sounds, letters and words					
Meaning					
Writing, spelling					
Whole text					

What print conventions will you introduce or revisit?

What specific activity will students engage in?

This sheet can be used to plan guided reading for students who need extra support. The content of each day should be based on a careful assessment of the students' learning needs. Use this sheet in conjunction with 'Guided reading for students with reading difficulties' on pages 45 to 49 of *Teaching Reading: A K-6 Framework*.



Guided reading planning sheet: Students with reading difficulties

Name: _____

Week: _____

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Text					
Text reading					
Conventions of print					
Sounds, letters and words					
Meaning					
Writing, spelling					
Whole text					

