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Grades 1 to 3

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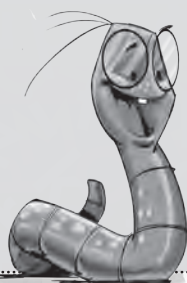Trusted by South African teachers

#1 FOR LITERACY
Proud publishers of trusted dictionaries and reading schemes for South African schools

Contents

Why teaching reading is so important

SOME WORRYING STATISTICS	WHAT THIS MEANS
	South African learners' performance in international reading assessments such as PRILS (Progress in Reading Literacy Study), show that 8 out of 10 Grade 4 learners don't understand what they are reading.
62% of Grade 1 learners cannot identify a single letter sound at the time of testing.	Internationally administered early-grade diagnostic tests of reading such as EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment) show low levels of reading proficiency in learners. An EGRA diagnostic in 3 provinces in South Africa found that 62% of Grade 1 learners were not able to identify a single letter sound at the time of testing.
About 30% of Grade 1 learners will reach and pass matric.	While access to school and enrolment have improved, low learner attendance and retention rates remain a huge concern. High drop-out rates suggest we need to focus more on the quality of learning and teaching in our schools.

Literacy skills, which include the ability to read and write are the foundational blocks to learning. We teach learners to read in the Foundation Phase so that they can read to learn during the rest of their school careers. Good literacy skills are the key that unlocks access to lifelong learning opportunities.

Reading the statistics on early grade literacy levels can be depressing. However, knowing what challenges we face is the first step in overcoming these. The good news is that increasingly more and more research is published about what works (evidence based approaches) to really improve learning outcomes. This evidence can help us to select teaching approaches and practices that are known to be effective.

So, what does the evidence say?
- A strong focus on teaching literacy skills in Foundation Phase is essential. It is during this phase that learner's transition from learning how to decode words (breaking words into individual sounds) into becoming emergent readers. They thus begin to recognise words on sight while at the same time comprehend them.
- Research shows that learners who do not reach expected reading standards at the end of Grade 3 are more likely to:
  - Experience difficulties later in school as they are less likely to access learning materials in the Grade 4 curriculum.
  - Repeat grades and/or drop out of school.
  - Have limited access to further studies and later employment options.

Oxford University Press supports teachers to use evidence of what works to improve literacy outcomes, especially for learners in Foundation Phase. We hope this guide will assist you in the important work of teaching your learners to read. This will give them the foundational skills they need to be successful later in school.

How most children learn to read

1 They do baby talk

Babies are born able to hear any sound (phoneme) possible. As soon as they can, they make sounds in order to communicate their needs. As the parents talk to their baby, the baby starts to discard the phonemes they don't hear because they aren't important for communication. Soon they start to copy the sounds they hear.

By the age of one, children start to put meaning to words they can understand and they start to say words. Obviously they start with the words they hear the most often.

2 They develop receptive language

Children can understand words said to them long before they can say the words themselves. This is called receptive language; they start to develop listening skills and an oral vocabulary. Children understand many more words than they can say and so it is important that they hear lots of words. Children from lower income families generally don't hear as much language as children from wealthier families. Poorer children are often spoken to in the negative and mostly hear short sentences made up of imperatives, such as, "No! Stop that! Don't touch!"

Teachers of such children must speak to them in full and positive sentences and use rich language in order to help improve their oral and receptive language.

During this development:
- they hear stories
- they see people read
- they repeat interesting sounds
- they hear differences in sounds and words
- they can hear plurals and identify tone.

10 They develop a reading vocabulary to match their oral vocabulary

Only when a child can sound out a word and then attach meaning to a word do they start to get meaning from what they have read.

Because we hear before we speak, and speak before we read, children have an oral vocabulary that allows them to understand what they have heard. That is why they enjoy listening to stories – because they can understand and enjoy them. Vocabulary acquisition is the active learning of a word's meaning and then learning to recognise the printed word to match the word that is part of their oral vocabulary.

How most children learn to read

Children learn a language by watching, listening and speaking to their family. The more children are spoken to, the more they learn. The more they are allowed to speak, the more confident they become using the language.

9 They learn the phonic rules

Once children have grasped the skill of phonemic awareness and the concept of the alphabetic principle, they can start to learn the sound-letter relationships found in English. Teachers should teach these rules explicitly and allow for practice of these rules. The aim is that the child will be able to use their knowledge of phonics to sound out new and unfamiliar words and develop word-recognition strategies. The more confident they are with being able to decode new words and to recognise new words, the faster they will be able to read, allowing them more brain power to follow the meaning of what they have read.

8 They understand the alphabetic principle

In order for children to be able to read printed words, and later to spell them, they need to understand that words are made up of alphabetic letters, placed in a set order or pattern to represent the sounds that create English words. They are taught that the letters of the alphabet on their own have no meaning, but when they are linked to a phonemic sound and blended with other sounds they make words that have meaning.

3 They develop expressive language

As children learn to say the words they know, they start to build an expressive vocabulary. These are the words they use to express themselves. Children should be allowed to speak and to tell their own stories. They must be encouraged to ask questions and wonder aloud about the world they experience. Here they are practicing how to communicate using words.

During this development:
- they can hear if a word is new to them
- they can hear if a word is being mispronounced
- they talk about the story or pictures in the story
- they ask a lot of questions
- they repeat parts of the story
- they sing songs and rhymes
- they use appropriate vocabulary and word order.

4 They play at reading and writing

Playing at reading and writing is a very important stage in a child's literacy development. It is through play that they develop an imagination. Imagination and make-believe is something that must be fostered in every child so that later on they can create their own stories and enjoy the stories that they read.

During this development:
- they make connections between their world and what is happening in the adult world
- they make sense of what reading and writing is
- they draw and scribble and so try to communicate through "writing".

5 They develop emergent literacy skills

Children see the adults around them use reading and writing to communicate and so understand that it has value. They learn about the concept of print and that the words they hear and speak can be written. They learn that text moves from left to right and how to hold a book and how to turn the pages.

They learn the alphabet and how to recognise, name and later write the 26 symbols that make up the English alphabet. They start to identify with the letters in their name and eventually are able to write their own name. They recognise the letters of the alphabet on signs and in shops and learn familiar words by recognising the shape of the word.

They learn how to identify words that rhyme and how to break words up into syllables. They recognise that pictures are different to printed words.

6 They should hear lots of stories

It is important that children hear stories; lots of stories. It is through listening to stories that they get to experience the imaginary worlds writers create and to be exposed to the narrative structure. Our brains are programmed to think in stories and so this is an important step in their development. They should be encouraged to engage with the story; to predict and say if they enjoyed it or not. Listening to a story should be a fun and enjoyable activity so that eventually reading the story can be fun and enjoyable.

7 They develop phonemic awareness

From a young age, children can hear the difference between words that sound very similar, such as "pin" and "pen". This is phonemic awareness – the knowledge that the words you say can be broken up into smaller sounds called phonemes (/p/e/n/ and /p/i/n/) and that if you change a sound you make a new word (/b/i/n/).
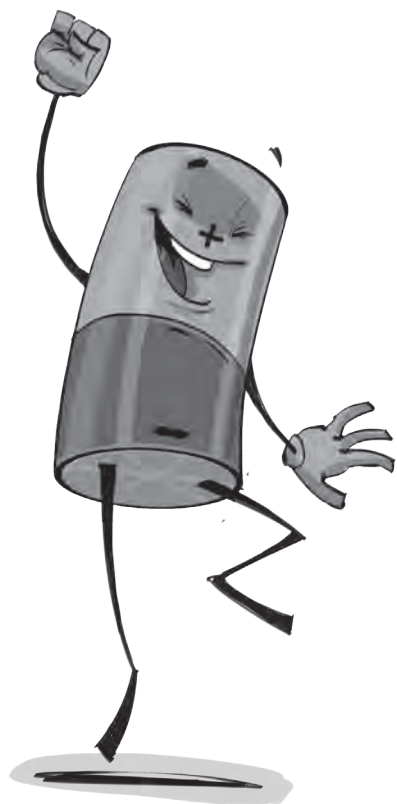
The importance of reading levels

Your class is made up of many students who bring to the classroom:

- different experiences (so their prior knowledge will differ)
- different levels of oral language (so their oral vocabulary and ability to communicate will differ)
- different levels of motivation
- different interests.

This means that one Reader or text will not meet all of your learners' needs.

It also means that it is important to assess each learner as they start the school year so that you can better understand what level of knowledge and motivation they have in order to teach them at the right level.

This assessment is important even if you are following a whole class approach to learning how to read rather than an individualised, graded approach.

What is the right level?

Texts should offer a balance between support (to build their confidence) and challenge (that requires them to do some thinking about what it is they are reading).

According to research, the right level is one where the child can read nine out of ten words and understand the text quite easily (Clay, 1991a).

There are three universal reading levels to identify and teach to:

Instructional level:
- The child will need help from a teacher or good reader to read these texts. These texts help children learn new words and practise skills. When reading aloud, they should struggle with two to five words out of 100. They should read with 95% accuracy and should be able to answer 80% of simple recall comprehension questions. If the text used here is too difficult, children will start to feel frustrated and lose motivation.

Independent level:
- The child should find this material easy to read. When reading aloud, they should only stumble over roughly one word out of 100 and should be able to answer all comprehension questions about the story. These texts are used for reading for enjoyment and independent reading to build confidence and create a sense of mastery and enjoyment.
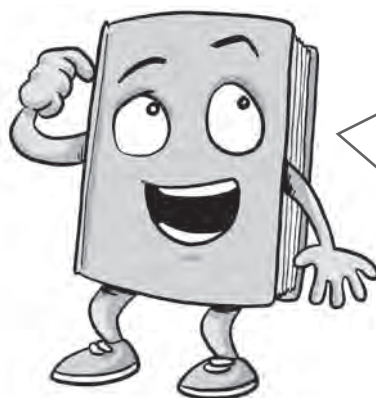
Frustration level:
- The child will find this text too difficult to read, even with support. When reading aloud they will struggle with more than five words out of 100. They will be able to answer 70% or less of the comprehension questions. Texts at this level must be avoided.

90–95% readability of the words = that child's instructional reading level.

Texts used for Shared Reading should be at the instructional level, while Group Guided Readers should be at the independent level in order to develop confidence in young readers.

The six stages of reading development

Young children develop reading skills as an ongoing process. Not all children come from the same home background and so they don't all enter school at the same place on the development continuum. Children develop at different speeds and so different learners in your class will be at different places on the continuum.

The question then is: why must a teacher know the different stages of learning to read? So that you can assess each learner and identify where on the continuum they are so that you can plan to meet their individual needs.

Stage 1: The pre-reader

- Pretends to read
- Is learning book handling and the concept of print
- Can listen to and respond to stories
- "Reads" picture books
- Retells the story from the pictures
- Knows the letters of the alphabet
- Is aware of environmental print

Stage 2: The emergent reader

- Is learning letter-sound relationships
- Understands the concept of print
- Understands that text moves from left to right
- Should hear stories at a level higher than what they can engage with in order to hear rich natural language, language patterns and new words
- Can recognise some words
- Reads along when reading familiar books
- Uses pictures as prompts to tell and retell stories
- Can sequence heard stories

Stage 3: The early reader

- Knows most letter names and sounds
- Is starting to sound out words
- Can read very simple and familiar text – lots of simple high frequency words or easily decodable words
- Reads aloud when reading on their own
- Reads word for word and is not fluent
- Can recognise common words
- Reads level appropriate books
- Uses pictures to make meaning
- Can retell a simple story

Stage 4: The developing reader

- Can retell what happened at the beginning, middle and end of the story
- Starts to recognise and pause appropriately at all punctuation
- Can decode new words
- Recognises basic sight vocabulary and knows what the words mean
- Can read longer books and can correct own errors
- Can answer questions that are not only literal, but require more reasoning
- Can identify the message behind a story and cause and effect
- Starts to read at a good pace
- Can read silently
- Joins words into phrases and not word for word reading
- Pauses appropriately at the end of a sentence
- Applies the rules of punctuation

Stage 5: The early fluent reader

- Can use reading strategies like prior knowledge to help make meaning
- Reads fluently (a minimum of 60 words per minute)
- Can answer more complex questions about the text
- Works out meaning using a variety of reading strategies
- Has a good sight vocabulary
- Uses punctuation to help make meaning
- Can read silently
- Learns from what is read
- Reads a range of material from complex stories, chapter books and textbooks
- Begins to understand implied meaning
- Can concentrate and read silently for longer periods
- Can identify plot and resolution and has knowledge of the characters

Stage 6: The independent reader

- Reads fluently and with accuracy
- Employs reading strategies unconsciously to read with understanding
- Can read books with multiple characters and viewpoints
- Reading comprehension is better than listening comprehension

The five skills needed for reading

Most academics agree that there are five key skills a child needs in order to be able to read. They are:
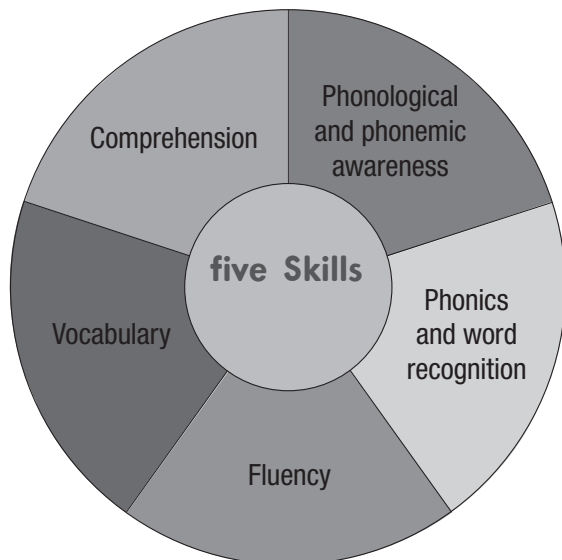
While each of these skills needs to be taught, they must be taught together within a meaningful context, as they work together when we read. They should not be taught as separate skills and one skill should not get more attention than another. Literacy demands a balanced approach where phonics, comprehension, word recognition, vocabulary and fluency are taught simultaneously, so that they can later be used together.

This is because literacy is a multi-faceted skill, requiring the learner to be able to:

- decode (use phonetic knowledge to sound out the word)
- pronounce and read words aloud
- encode (write) and spell words correctly
- make meaning from texts
- write with meaning
- understand information that isn't actually written, but rather inferred.

From *Oxford Reading Tree's Floppy's Phonics* Stage 2: *Jack*
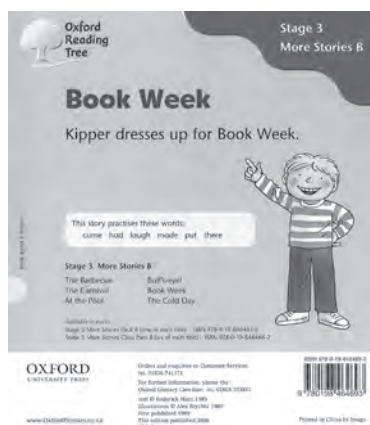
From *Oxford Reading Tree* Stage 3 More Stories B: *Book Week*
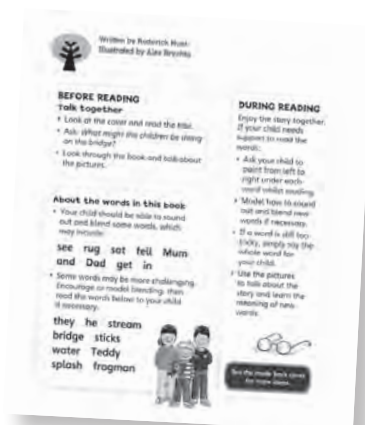
From *Oxford Reading Tree*

From *We Are Growing*

From *Aweh!* Level 2 Reader 6: *What's inside me?*

I. Phonological and phonemic awareness

English is based on an alphabetic system, so children have to get information from letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) in order to read and spell. That is why phonological awareness is a necessary skill for reading (the decoding of words) and writing (the encoding of words).

As soon as a child starts to recognise spoken words and to use them, they have phonological awareness; it is a part of having oral language. Phonological awareness is the ability to recognise and change the sounds used in spoken words.

Phonological awareness is extremely important for reading and spelling. Research shows that children who struggle with phonological awareness struggle to read. Children can learn the rules of phonics (the knowledge of letters and sounds) but struggle to use these rules if they don't have phonological awareness.

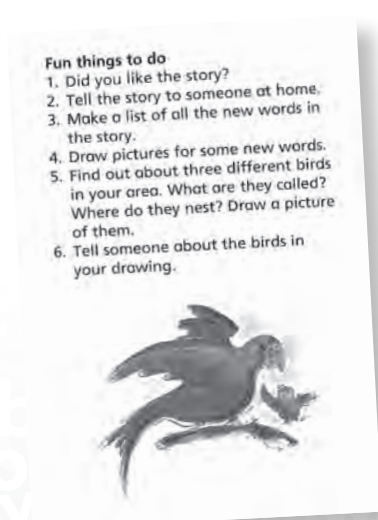| Phonological awareness	Phonemic awareness	Phonics
• Phonological awareness is the ability to recognise that heard speech and printed words are made up of different sounds. • A child must have phonological awareness in order to use phonics.	• Phonemic awareness is a part of phonological awareness. It is only what you hear and doesn't involve print. • Phonemic awareness only focuses on phonemes and allows the child to hear, identify, blend, segment and manipulate sounds and words.	• Phonics is the relationship between sounds and alphabetic letters. • Phonics allows children to read, write and spell.

A heard word can be approached on many different phonological awareness levels:

At a word level (word awareness)

Identify how many words are in a sentence

At a syllable level (syllable awareness)

Break up words into syllables

Segment and blend words with many syllables

Phonological awareness skills

At a sound level (phonemic awareness)

Isolate the beginning and end sounds in a word

Manipulate words by deleting and replacing a sound

Blend sounds

Segment sounds

At a rhyme level (rhyme awareness)

Understand the concept of rhyme

Segment and blend words with many syllables

Recognise words that rhyme

Produce words that rhyme

Word awareness

Learners need to understand the concept of what a word is and that the speech they hear can be broken up into words with a beginning and an end.

Test and teach the learners that words in a sentence can be isolated. For example, have learners clap for each word they say in a sentence.

- This will help them to learn the difference between a word and a syllable.
- This will help learners understand the job of function words (words like "the", "and", "of") that don't have meaning but are used to join content words into a sentence.

Word awareness will be strengthened as learners follow text being read with their finger. They will see the spaces between words in the text they read.

This is why *Aweh!* has exaggerated spaces between words in Levels 1 to 4, as can be seen on the right.

From *Aweh!* Level 1 Reader 3: *What am I?*

> Develop word discrimination skills by playing simple oral games with your learners, for example: Which word doesn't belong: hot, hit, pot, dot? Answer: hit. Why doesn't it belong?

Syllable awareness

Most young children are aware that words have beats to them. These are syllables, chunks of sound that together make the word. Focusing on syllables helps learners to concentrate on the structure of words.

Test and teach learners that each time their jaw drops as they say a word, that that is a syllable. You can have your learners clap or nod as they segment words into syllables.

Syllable segmentation is when you give your class a word and they need to break it down into its syllables, for example: learner = lear / ner.

A more advanced activity is syllable blending. This is when you give your class syllables and they need to blend them back into a word, for example: lear + ner = learner.

Syllable awareness is very important later on when learners start to write and spell.

Rhyme awareness

By asking children to focus on words that rhyme, they are expected to listen to sounds *inside* a word. This supports the concept of syllables because it teaches the idea that a word is made up of parts.

To understand the concept of rhyme, the learner must know which part of the word holds the rhyme. Rhyme does not involve the beginning or end sound, but instead the whole rime (the letters that represent the spoken rhyme).

At first, learners should be able to choose which words in a poem or story rhyme.

If you ask your learners to come up with rhyming words, remember that they should be allowed to make up nonsense words. Their vocabulary is limited and vocabulary is not what you are testing or developing with this activity. By allowing learners to create made up words, you make this a stress-free activity where you can assess whether they have identified the correct rhyming sound.

| fang | lang | pang |

A more developed skill is to identify rhyme if the word has more than one syllable.

The ability to identify where the rhyme sits in a word requires the learner to be able to split the word between the onset and the rime, for example: m/op; h/op; t/op. This helps learners later when they use recognised chunks to read a new word, for example, "throw" and "float" will help them to decode and read "throat".
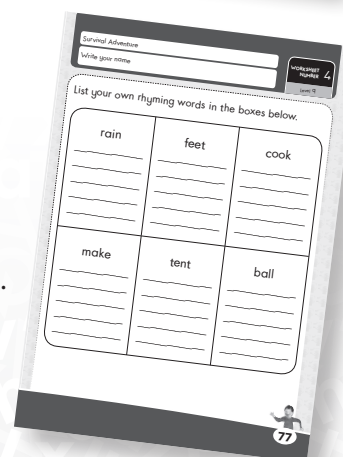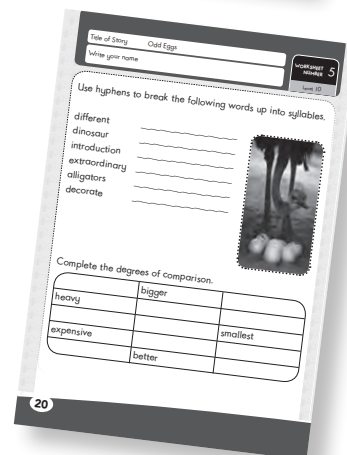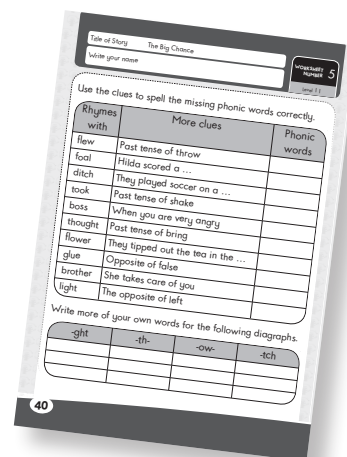
Words can be divided into **onset** and **rime**. You call all sounds before the vowel the onset. All sounds after the vowel (including the vowel) is called the rime. It is these sounds that are called word families, for example:

Word	Onset	Rime
dog	d	og
log	l	og
sheep	sh	eep
ship	sh	ip

From *Aweh!* Level 4
Reader 5: *The Rain Queen*

Phonemic (Sound) awareness

Phonemic awareness focuses on the sounds that make up speech. It is the understanding that speech is made up of a sequence of sounds and the ability to recognise these individual sounds and how they make words.

The word "sip" has three sounds (phonemes) that, when blended, form the word "sip". The phonemes are /s/, /i/ and /p/. The word "ship" also has three sounds to it: /sh/, /i/ and /p/.

A skilled learner uses their phonemic awareness to work out how a new word may be pronounced, based on knowledge of how another word is said. For example, the word "she" can be used to work out how "sheep" is pronounced: */she/ /ee/ /p/.*

Learners must learn and become good at a range of phonemic awareness activities, moving from simple to the most difficult.

Easy → Difficult

Skill	Explanation	Example
Sentence segmentation	Breaking sentences up into words	Clap your hands or nod your head for each word you hear.
Word and sound recognition	The ability to recognise if a word or sound is different from another	Which word doesn't fit? "hop", "mop", "**dog**"
Rhyming	Matching the endings of words that belong to same word family	Which word rhymes with "mop"? "**top**"
Syllable segmentation	Breaking words up into syllables	cat / er / pil / lar = 4 syllables
Compound words	The ability to recognise the words that make up a compound word and can split and blend compound words	wheel + chair = wheelchair
Onset and rime blending and segmentation	Blending and segmenting the beginning consonant (onset) from the sound that holds the vowel (rime)	/c/ /at/ /ch/ /air/
Phonemic segmentation	The ability to hear each sound in a word	/s/ /a/ /t/
Phoneme deletion	The ability to say how a word would sound if a sound was deleted	What is "sat" without the /s/ sound? "**at**"
Phoneme manipulation	The ability to say how a word would sound if a sound was changed, added or removed	Which word would you have if you changed the /s/ to a /b/? "**bat**"
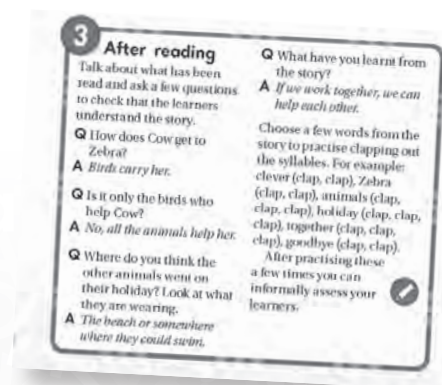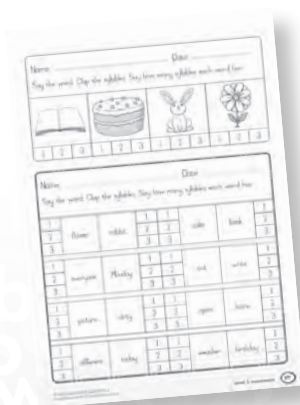
From *Aweh! Grade 1 Teaching Notes*

2. Phonics

Phonics teaches learners that certain sounds are connected to and represented by certain printed letters of the alphabet. Learners are then taught word recognition skills, teaching that letters can be blended together to form words. It is therefore very important that your learners understand the alphabetic principle.

The alphabetic principle

In English, the writing system is based on an alphabetic code. The understanding that letters (graphemes) represent sounds (phonemes), which in turn form words, is called the alphabetic principle. Learners need to understand that the sounds of spoken English are represented by patterns of letters that make up written English.

> **Phonemes** are the smallest units of sounds within words. The phoneme is put between / / to show that we are referring to the sound, for example: /f/.

> **Graphemes** are the letters and groups of letters that represent these sounds or phonemes, for example: "ph" represents the sound /f/ in the word "**ph**one".

The first step is for learners to become comfortable users of the letters of the alphabet. They must be able to:
- name the letters of the alphabet
- say the letters of the alphabet
- write the letters of the alphabet (both lower and upper case letters).

> Here are some ideas on how to improve your learners' alphabetic knowledge:
> - Sing alphabet songs or play games to allow weaker learners to catch up with the rest of the class.
> - Have your learners "write" the letters or graphemes that they are focusing on.
> - Match grapheme to phoneme instruction – if your learners are learning about the /d/ sound, have them write the letter "d".

Teaching sound-letter relationships

There are two types of phonics teaching: explicit or implicit.

> **Explicit phonics** teaching isolates the sounds linked to the letters and the sounds are blended together to form the word, for example, learners are taught the sounds /a/ /m/ /t/ and /p/. Learners can then use these taught sounds to blend words like "tap", "map", "mat" and "pat".

> **Implicit phonics** teaches the sounds linked to certain letters within the context of a whole word. With a lot of guidance, learners read or say a word and listen for the focus sound. This approach reinforces the idea of context as learners are encouraged to use pictures and context to work out what the focus sound may be.

As the teacher, you are best equipped to decide how quickly new sounds can be introduced to your learners. However, the curriculum does give guidance on the pace, and in some languages, the sequence, of introduction. As *Aweh!* is aligned to the curriculum, it has followed the pace and order as prescribed. The *Aweh!* Grade 1 Levels 1 to 4 alphabetic code can be found on the next page.
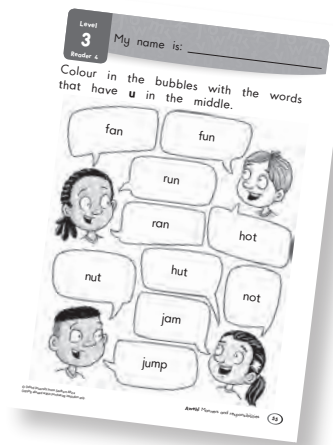
Activity

Ask your learners to use their bodies to make the shape of the "n" grapheme. They need to bend over and put one arm on the floor. Bend the other arm at the elbow and stick the elbow in the sky. This will make the little stick on the "n".
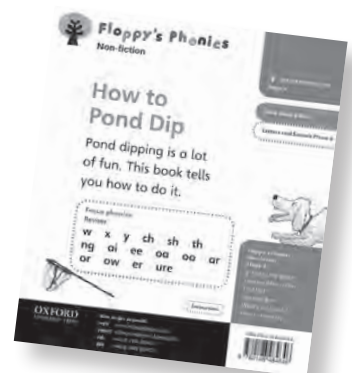
An example of an Alphabetic code

Sound and picture	Grapheme and example word
/s/	**-s** sock · **-ss** dress · **ce** cell phone · **ci** circle · **cy** cycle · **-ce** dance · **-se** mouse · **sc** scissors · **-st-** listen
/a/	**a** ant
/m/	**m** mouse · **-mm** summer · **-mb** lamb · **-mn** autumn · **-me** frame
/t/	**t** tomato · **-tt** letter · **-ed** barked · **-bt** doubt
/h/	**h** horse
/b/	**b** bird · **-bb** rubbish · **bu** builder
/i/	**i** ink
/e/	**e** elephant · **ea** bread · **ai** said
/p/	**p** pot · **-pp** grasshopper
/n/	**n** nest · **-nn** sunny · **kn** knee · **gn** gnat · **-(i)ne** engine
/o/	**o** orange · **(w)a** watch · **(a)lt** salt
/c/	**c** car · **ck** clock · **ch** school
/k/	**k** kettle · **qu** squeak
/d/	**d** door · **-dd** add · **-ed** added
/g/	**g** goose · **-gg** bigger · **gu** guitar · **gh** ghost · **-gue** dialogue
/u/	**u** umbrella · **o** onion · **-ou** double · **-ough** through · **-er** builder · **-our** favour · **-re** centre

Sound and picture	Grapheme and example word
/f/	**f** fire · **-ff** off · **ph** phone · **-gh** laugh
/l/	**l** leaf · **-ll** ball
/r/	**r** rain · **-rr** arrow · **-wr** wrong · **rh** rhino
/j/	**j** jacket · **-ge** huge · **-age** cabbage · **g(e)** germ · **g(i)** giant · **g(y)** gym · **-dge** fridge
/v/	**v** vet · **-ve** glove
/w/	**w** wall · **wh** wheel · **-u** penguin
/kw/	**qu** queen
/y/	**y** yoghurt
/ks/	**x** box · **ks** books · **-cks** rocks · **-kes** cakes
/z/	**z** zebra · **-zz** fizz · **-s** knees · **-se** cheese · **-ze** prize
/sh/	**sh** shoe · **ch** machine · **-ti** direction · **-ci** special · **-ssi** discussion
/ch/	**ch** chair · **-tch** watch
/th/ unvoiced	**th** thief
/th/ voiced	**th** mother
/oo/ long	**oo** spoon · **-ue** glue · **-ui** fruit · **-ou** soup
/ee/	**ee** sheep · **ea** eagle · **e** me · **-y** baby · **ey** key · **ie** niece · **e-e** these

How is phonics different from phonemic awareness?

When teaching phonics, the focus is on teaching sounds and recognising the spelling of the sound. Therefore, phonics is reliant on print. Phonemic awareness focuses on the sounds in spoken words and how these individual sounds make words. Most phonemic awareness tasks are therefore oral tasks. However, there is a strong connection between phonics and phonemic awareness. The learner has to first have phonemic awareness in order to understand that written and spoken words are made up of sounds, before they can understand phonics, which is the relationship between sounds and the written word. Without the awareness that a word is made up of a series of sounds, the learner will not be able to understand the instruction of phonics.

AFTER READING
Identify the sounds in spoken words
- To help your child spell simple words, say the words very slowly to identify the sounds all through the words. Say the following words slowly (each has four sounds) and ask your child to listen for the sounds and say them in order: *help, fact, clip.* A word like *dentist* can be spelled in two halves: d-e-n: t-i-s-t.

How phonics helps learners read

How English words are written is not always how they are spelt, for example, both "enough" and "phone" are pronounced with the /f/ sound, but the "f" grapheme is not used to represent the sound. Phonics teaches learners to read the correct sound even when the grapheme is not in the written word.

Good readers can look for known letter patterns when they are faced with an unfamiliar word. These are called word families, "pronounceable word parts" (Gunning, 1995) or "chunking".

Children learn on their own that these sounds (phonemes) can be:
- isolated
- segmented (pulled apart)
- blended (put together)
- substituted and
- deleted.

WHAT IS BLENDING?
For reading (decoding) say the sounds from left to right of the word and blend the sounds to hear the whole word.

How to blend
Point under each letter or letter group as you say the sound, then run your finger under the whole word as you say the whole (or blended) word.
e.g. **sh-ar-k   shark**

The aim is for the learner to learn words automatically and no longer have to sound them out. This is called word recognition. Words and sounds should be focused on before learners meet them for the first time in a story. This allows for learners to recognise the word within the context of a meaningful text and recognise the word outside of this context when the word is on its own.

Word recognition

A learner with a developed oral language ability will recognise heard words and perhaps use these words in their own speech. As they learn about print and engage with printed words, the goal is to match the known oral word to its printed version and start to recognise it automatically. While developing this skill (automaticity), learners will need to sound out the words they see in order to read them. This is called decoding. Once read and said correctly, they can then match the read word to one in their oral vocabulary and know what the word means. The goal is that eventually the learner will recognise the word automatically and no longer have to sound it out. The more words they can recognise, the less brain power it takes for them to read, the quicker they can read (fluency) and better understand what they have read (comprehension).

> Word recognition starts with letter recognition and this is tied in strongly with visual discrimination. For example, how is "b" different from "d" and "p"?
>
> Teach your learners that the words they hear and say match patterns of letters that are usually predictable. For example, the long /oo/ sound in "m**oo**n" and "sp**oo**n", but that English is full of exceptions, for example, "gl**ue**".
>
> Use worksheets like this example to help learners who struggle with letter recognition.
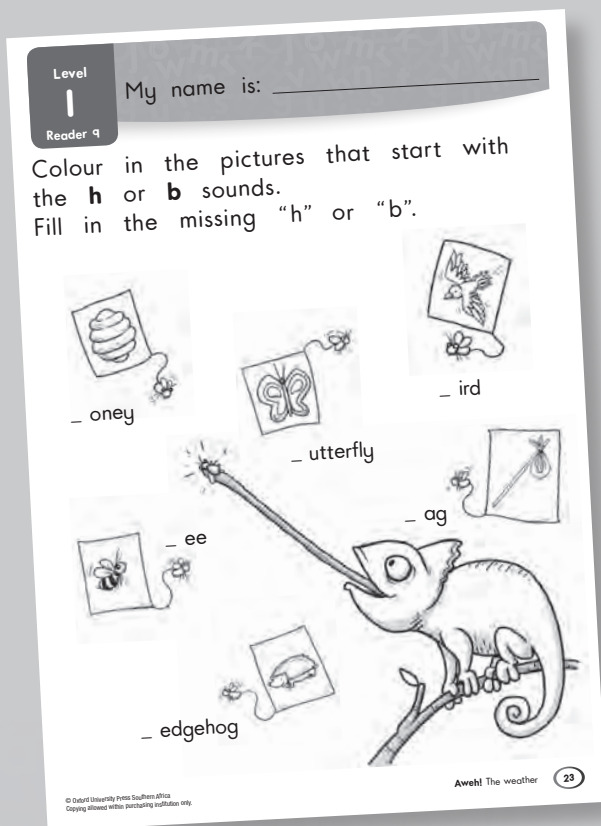
These are some strategies to help develop word recognition:

- Decoding – sounding out the word: Have the learner break the word down into each individual sound. Once they have done this correctly, have them blend the sounds into the word and say it out loud.
- Recognise letter chunks and patterns: Have the learner point out any letter chunks that they may know, for example, /an/ in "ant", "man", "hand".
- Recognise common endings (suffixes): Teach and have learners identify common endings, for example, "-tion", "-ed", "-ing", "-es".
- Recognise common beginnings (prefixes): Teach and have learners identify common prefixes, for example, "dis-", "un-", "in-."
- Recognise syllable patterns: A developed reader should be able to recognise a syllable as a pattern on its own and sound it as a single sound automatically. For example, /oo/ + /k/ = /ook/ in "book" and "looked", making it easier to decode "looking".

Decodable words

Decoding text is the act of segmenting a word (breaking it down into individual sounds) and then blending the sounds together in order to say the word.

Words are decodable because they follow the rules of phonics. This means that they are spelt the way they sound, for example, "ant" = /a/ /n/ /t/

The problem is that for every rule, English has words that don't follow the rule, for example, the word "school" has the letters "ch" but unlike the words "chair", "ch" is now pronounced like a /k/.

That is why learners are taught to recognise and say words that are not decodable. These are called sight words.

Sight words

Examples of sight words:

the

picture

what

house

earth
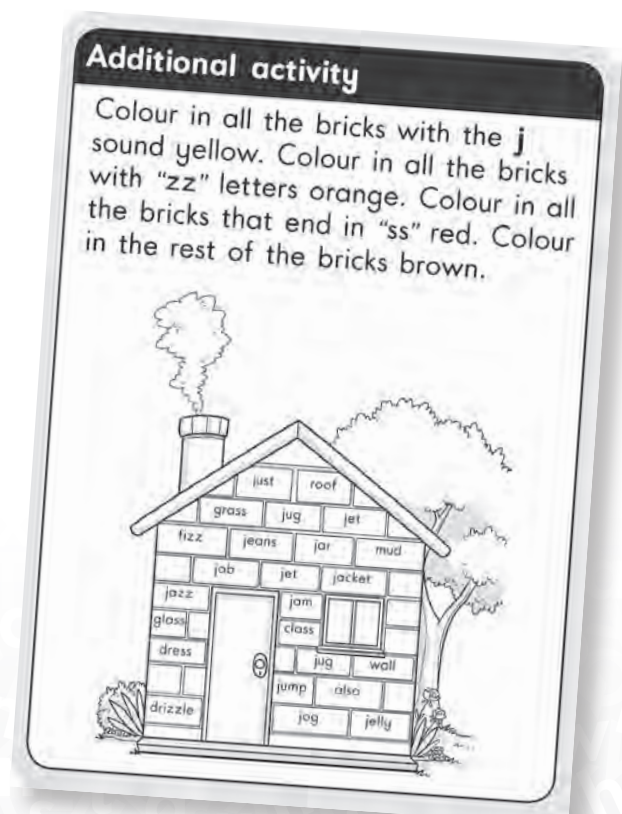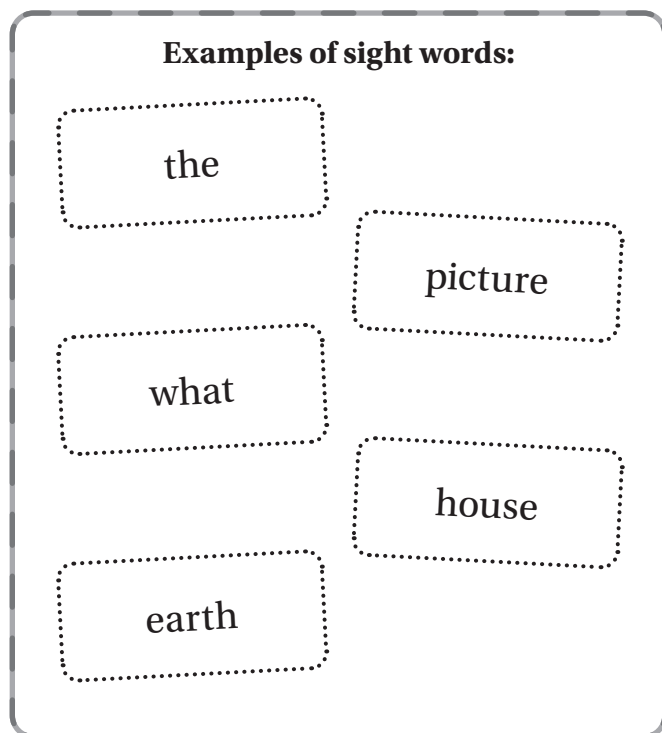
A sight word is a word that does not follow the rules of phonics, spelling or the rules around the six types of syllables.

These words must be taught and learnt so that they are immediately recognised by the learner. The more words recognised on sight, the less brain power is used to decode unknown words. This in turn means the learner can read with more accuracy (with fewer mistakes) and with more fluency (at a good speed), allowing more brain power to be available to follow the meaning of what they are reading (comprehension).

A sight word is not necessarily a word a child will read often; it is simply a word that is not decodable. However, a sight word may also be a high frequency word.

High frequency words

Some words will appear in text often, making them a high frequency word. These words may or may not be decodable but they are important for the learner to recognise because they will help the learner read more fluently and with increased comprehension.

Often, you will have to teach a high frequency word because it appears in a Reader, but it has sounds that your class has not been taught yet. That is not a problem because it is more important that your learners learn the new word because it will appear often in what they read. If you wait until they know and understand that particular phonic rule, you will frustrate learners who want to read independently and learners who struggle to read.

How to teach phonics

Phonics teaching should be focused and purposeful.

Step 1: Explain the sound-spelling relationship.

↓

Step 2: Allow your learners to sound out example words and blend the focus sound into words that they know.

↓

Step 3: Read words containing the focus sound in meaningful texts that contain example words.
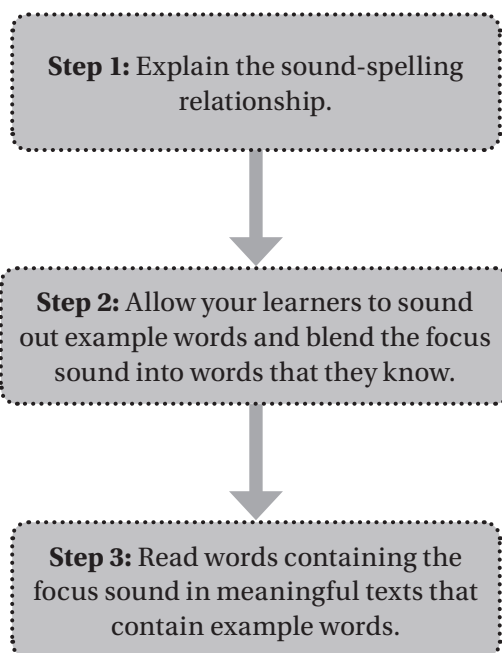
It is very important that learners apply the new sound by seeing it being used within a context so that word recognition and vocabulary can be built.

Without Step 3, learners will not understand the relevance of the phonic activity and will simply repeat the sound because you are asking them to and they will not be motivated to learn the focus sound and the sound-spelling relationship.

Words your learners should know

A sight word is a word that the learner cannot decode using phonic rules. The following words are the most frequently used sight words in English. By the end of Grade 1, a learner should be able to read all of these words on sight, in the context of a sentence as well as on its own.

Aweh! Teaching Notes

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3. Fluency

What is fluency?

Fluency is the ability to read at a good speed and with expression, without making too many mistakes. When a reader can read fluently they are better able to understand what they have read. This is because they aren't spending time and brain power deciding what every word is and how to say it.

Steps to producing a fluent reader

Because you get better at something the more you do it, children must read often for different purposes and read different types of text. They must also reread the texts so that they practise the same words, phrasing and punctuation until they can read it fluently.

> Allow for rereading of a text to be fun and creative. Read the text using different voices or at different speeds. Read the text very slowly or very quickly; your class will find this funny and it will help them to recognise how the text should be read. Let your class choose what emotion or character they want you to use when reading. For example: sad, silly, monster, giant, fairy, baby, etc.

Model fluent reading

A child learns what good reading sounds like when they hear it. That is why it is important that learners hear good reading being modelled for them and that they are encouraged to mimic what they have heard.

Struggling learners especially will benefit from **echo reading**, which is when the teacher reads a few words and the learner repeats or echoes these words.

By listening to good and fluent reading, learners are taught:
- how a reader's voice can help written text make sense
- how to use punctuation to make text easier to understand
- how to make the text come alive and be fun to read.

Encourage repeated reading

After modelling of reading has happened, the learners need to read the text again. This is called repeated reading. Reading the text four times should be enough for their fluency to be improved, but a lot can be gained from the learner rereading a text until they can read it without making any mistakes.
- A different skill can be taught or practised with each reading, for example, you can focus on punctuation marks, adjectives, etc.
- Rereading helps learners deepen their understanding of the text (comprehension).
- Rereading improves learners' word recognition (accuracy) and vocabulary.

Reading with expression means taking notice of any punctuation used.

= voice goes up
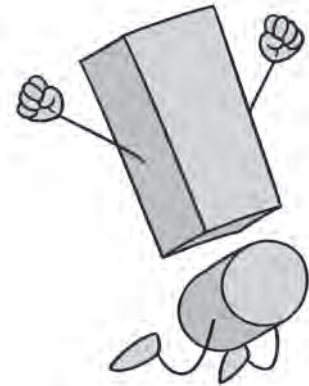
= voice gets loud or excited
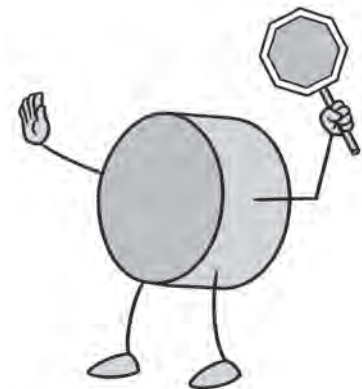
= long pause
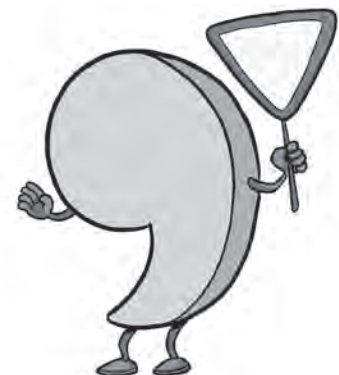
= short pause

Shared Reading and then **Guided Reading** automatically allows for the rereading of a text. During this process, make sure that you:

- teach any new words
- practise reading these words and what they mean
- read the words with your learners as many times as possible and in different contexts (story text, poem, non-fiction text, etc.)

Accuracy is a very important part of reading fluently and is developed when learners can recognise basic words. Learners need to be given opportunities and spend time on a daily basis learning how to read words accurately.

> Learners should not be forced to read faster before they are ready, as this encourages them to guess at words rather than focus on careful reading.

Teaching strategies you can use
Various teaching strategies can be used to develop fluency.

Choral reading: The teacher reads aloud along with the class. A book must be chosen that is not too long and that will be at the independent level of most of the learners. Choral reading provides the learner with the benefit of following the teacher's pace, having a model, and at the same time practising to read aloud. The teacher then has the opportunity to:

- pause and ask questions
- explain the reading material
- identify and discuss vocabulary
- make sure everyone is participating.

Lower performing learners may have trouble keeping up with the pace, but they will benefit from hearing words being read accurately, pronounced correctly and read at the correct pace. By rereading the book with the rest of the class, they will become more confident in their reading as they recognise the words. This will lead to them eventually being able to read the text on their own.

Cloze reading: The teacher reads aloud but the learners follow and read quietly. Every so often, the teacher leaves out an important content word and the learners must fill it in by reading it out loud. Cloze reading does not give the learners much opportunity for oral reading, but is an alternative to having learners suffer potential embarrassment in taking turns to read out loud. Although less competent learners may struggle to keep up, they will not feel singled out and they will have the advantage of listening to an example of skilled reading.

Paired reading: More fluent readers can be paired with less fluent readers. The more competent reader can model the reading of the text and the less fluent reader can then follow reading the text aloud.

- The fluent reader first models reading the passage, reading at a good speed and with expression.
- The less fluent reader then reads the passage with the help and guidance of the fluent reader, who supports and gives praise.
- It is important that the fluent reader gives the less fluent reader immediate and constructive feedback that will motivate them to read the passage again.

If it is not possible to pair a more fluent reader with a less fluent one, two readers of the same ability can be paired after the teacher has given instruction. The readers can then practise rereading the text after listening to the teacher read it.

Help create a home environment of reading

It is important that parents and caregivers are encouraged to read to the learners at home. The learners need to hear as many models of fluent reading as possible. Reading must be seen as an important skill to have that is valued and has currency in the home.

Allow your learners to take their readers home so that they can share what they have learnt with their families.

Reading with an audio version of the text

If you do not feel comfortable modelling the reading of text, make use of recorded versions of the text that don't have any sound effects or music. They must also be at the independent reading level of the learner.

- Play the audio version through without stopping so that the learner can enjoy the story as a whole.
- Let the learner follow, using their finger to follow each word in the text.
- Next, the learner must try to read along with the taped version.
- Allow the learner to read along with the tape until the text can be read independently, without any audio support.

4. Vocabulary

Why is vocabulary so important?

The ability to understand what has been read (comprehension) is the aim of reading. For children to understand what they have read, they need to know what each word means or be able to work out in context what an unknown word may mean. This store of word knowledge is vocabulary and it is kept in our long-term memory.

When we first meet a new word, the word and what it means is kept in our active working memory. A Grade 1 child has a working memory of about one minute. So, the moment they think about something else, the word and what it means is gone. In order for the word to be remembered, they need to meet the word at least ten times before it moves into their long-term memory. The more words stored in their long-term memory means they can read more fluently, accurately and better understand what they have read.

To be effective, the vocabulary taught needs to be linked to the child's curriculum and communicative needs.

The vocabulary gap

Children enter school with very different levels of vocabulary because they come from different backgrounds. Every Grade 1 child starts school being able to speak and understand their Home Language. This oral vocabulary is called **expressive vocabulary** because it is what you use to express yourself.

As children learn that the words they speak can be written and read in print, they start to match their expressive vocabulary to printed words. This is called **receptive vocabulary**, which means words you can read, write and know the meaning of.

From *Oxford Reading Tree* Stage 5 More Stories C: *Safari Adventure*
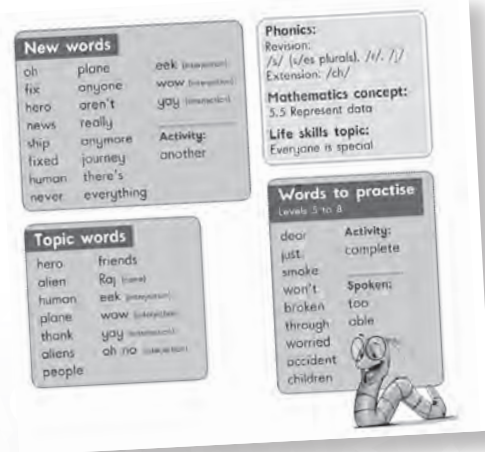
From *Aweh!* Level 5 Reader 7: *The hero and the aliens*
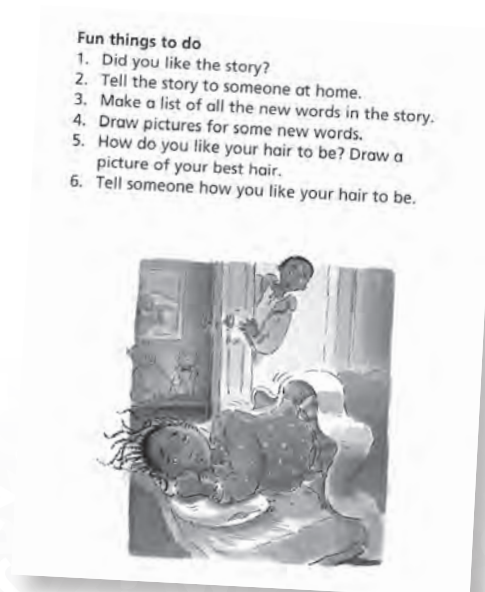
From *We are Growing: Betty's braids*

What research tells us

The aim of reading is comprehension, and you cannot have comprehension without vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary needs to be actively taught and acquired. The list that follows is a summary of what recent vocabulary research has found to be true:

- Children need to meet a word many times (between five to sixteen times) before they learn it.
- These meetings should be within a meaningful context and not in a list – context helps a learner to associate a word with its meaning.
- Words are best introduced orally (through talking) before they are read.
- New words are best learnt if they are attached to a theme or story because then they are part of a context.
- Words are best learnt if they can be linked to what the learner already knows.
- It is easier to learn a word if it is in a sentence with words already known to the learner.
- Learning a new word must be an active exercise.

Foundation Phase teachers can do a lot to improve a learner's vocabulary, and in so doing, improve their comprehension.

What you can do to build learners' vocabulary

Read to your class

Read often and read different genres. This reading is fun reading where you read aloud to your class for the pure enjoyment of it. Not only will this help create a love for books and reading, it will create opportunities where your class can hear new words within the context of a story or theme. Choose books that have a natural tone and are written in rich language.

Get your class to read

The more words they read, the more confident your learners will be to read. Repeated readings will help new words move from the short-term memory into the long-term memory.

Allow for mistakes and for trying. Encourage your class to retell stories and share what they thought of a story.

Speak to your class

Children learn new words through hearing new words. They are naturally curious and so will want to know what a word means. After hearing a new word a few times, they will start to use it.

- Talk to your class, making use of rich and meaningful language.
- Always explain the context and reason for what you are saying and doing.
- Speak in full sentences.

Get your class to talk

You may teach children who are not encouraged to speak at home. These children may not be getting to practise or grow their oral language enough.

Allow your class to discover the power of language:

- Encourage your learners to explain their thinking.
- Prompt your learners to answer in full sentences and to explain their answers.
- Help them to explore a thought and connect ideas.
- Choose a word for the week and encourage your class to use this word as often as possible in a full sentence and in the correct context.

Get the family involved

Your learners need a lot of support in order to achieve and stay motivated. The home must be a place where they can explore what they are learning at school and where literacy has value.

- Try to get your whole class to watch certain television programmes. The class will then have a common experience to talk about. They will have been exposed to oral language in the home and can talk about what they watched with their family.
- Send home homework that is interactive and needs adult involvement. This will encourage adult-to-child conversation and parental support.

Build word consciousness

Children take in a lot of new information every day, so it is a good idea to train them to notice a new word and to want to learn it (intrinsic motivation). Build word consciousness by allowing your class to play with language:

- Play word games.
- Sing songs and rhymes.
- Make up nonsense words that rhyme, allowing your class to recognise elements of the new word.
- Many learners learn better if they can be physical or put an action to what they are doing.
- Choose a word of the week and the class can clap when they hear the word.
- Hold word competitions: have more than one focus word. Each time a learner uses or hears a focus word, the word gets a tick. The learners will enjoy seeing which word is winning.
- Let your class act out the meanings of words or phrases, for example, "I am sick" or "Be careful!"
- As part of their writing activities, ask learners to draw what they think a word means.
- Ask learners if they know of a word that means the same thing as another word, for example, "hop" and "jump". This will introduce the concept of synonyms.
- Encourage your class to share what a word means in their Home Language. This will support additive bilingualism.
- Write simple sentences on the board. Leave out words and ask the class which word is missing.

Choose what words you teach

Teaching time is limited and so it is best to ask yourself these questions about a word before you decide to focus on it:

1. How important or useful is this word to my class academically (CALPS) and for everyday communication (BICS)?
2. How often will my class hear or read this word?
3. How easily can I explain this word?
4. Is this word connected to my class's known environment? (Is it relatable?)

Choose how you will teach the word

- Explain or define the word using words already known to the learners. (Don't introduce a different new word when explaining a particular new word.)
- Where possible, show learners a picture that explains the word. (Children think in pictures as words are still new to them.) Use flashcards, pictures and posters when teaching a new word.
- Use teaching moments to teach and consolidate words in different contexts, for example, if you are talking about transport, use this opportunity to talk about what colours the vehicles on the poster are. Tie this into the learners' personal experience and ask whose parent drives a blue car. This teaching will help the learners make connections.
- Ask your class if they can use the new word in a different context or situation.
- Try to find another story or book that uses the new focus word. Help your learners understand what the word means in a new context.

Focused vocabulary teaching

Stop and focus on new words that are not part of your class's everyday life.

Create a word/language-rich classroom

Many children are not exposed to books and reading at home and so the classroom must fill the gap:

- Label objects in your classroom.
- Have a theme table with labels.
- Put up posters. If the poster doesn't have labels, write out key words and connect them to objects on the poster using wool or string. To support additive bilingualism, make labels in both languages you are teaching.
- Make a word wall. Word walls grow through the year and so they are a good visual of how many words have been taught and learnt. The words should stay on the wall so that learners can reference the wall to check their spelling and use. Choose how you want to organise your word wall – it can be organised alphabetically or by theme.
- Make a book corner or classroom library. This is a special place in your classroom where learners can sit quietly and choose a book to read. This is very important, especially if your school doesn't have a library. Ask parents to donate books for your book corner. The books should be at the independent level or below, and learners should be encouraged to read these books for enjoyment or as silent reading.
- Put up pictures or writing your class has done. It will motivate your learners to see their work displayed and will help them feel ownership of the classroom.

An example of a focused vocabulary lesson

New word: dinner

1. Does anyone know the word "dinner"? What other words sound like dinner? What about "thinner" or "winner"?

2. Let's look at the picture. Can the picture help us to work out what the word "dinner" means?

3. What is she doing? Yes! She is eating.

4. What meals do you eat in a day? Yes, breakfast, lunch and supper. Let's write these words on the board.

11. Does anyone know what this animal under the ground is called?

5. Do any of these words look like the word "dinner"? Yes, "supper" also ends with an "-er".

10. Where is she? Is she under the ground or on top of the ground?

6. "Dinner" is another word for "supper". Well done.
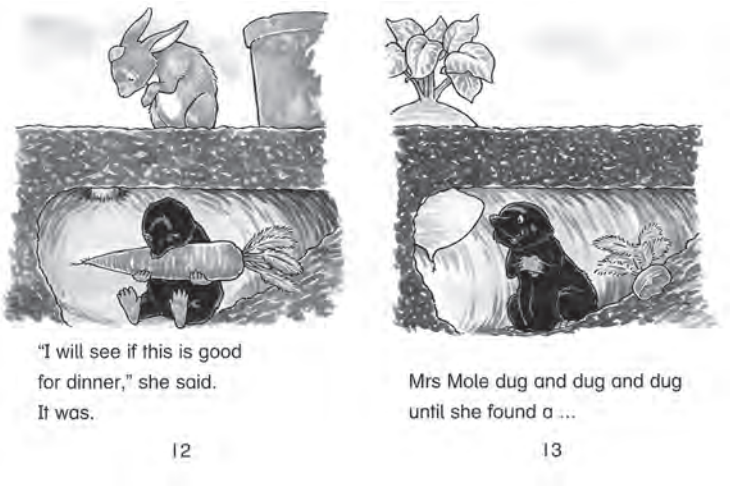
9. Who can give me words to describe what you think the rabbit might be feeling?

8. Do you think the carrot was hers? How do you know?

7. What is she eating?

"I will see if this is good for dinner," she said. It was.

12

Mrs Mole dug and dug and dug until she found a ...

13

From *New Way* Pink Level: *What's for dinner* and *Tails*

Teach learners to explore words themselves

By the end of Grade 3, the aim is for learners to have strategies to use when they meet a word which they don't know the meaning of. But in order for them to want to use the strategies, they must be naturally curious and want to know and remember what the word means. Start this curiosity by helping them to think critically about the words they meet:

- Ask if the new word sounds like another word which they know. Have them pronounce the focus word and say how it is similar or different to another word, for example, "chick" and "cheek". This will help them to identify the word better when they read it, as they have focused on the phonological make-up of the new word.

- Draw their attention to how the word is spelt. This will reinforce the rules of phonics, which will help them to be better writers as they will need to spend less time focusing on how the words are spelt.
- Ask them to compare and contrast words, for example: Which word sounds happy? Which word is longer?
- Ask if they know a word that means the opposite of the focus word (antonym) or another word that means the same as the focus word (synonym).
- Ask if you could use the word in different situations, for example: Could you tell the principal to jump? No. Why not?

From *Oxford Reading Tree Grade 2 Photocopiable Worksheets*

From *Oxford South African Illustrated School Dictionary*

From *Aweh! Grade 1 Photocopiable Worksheets*

5. Comprehension

Reading for meaning must become a habit for your learners so that by the time they get to Grade 4 they can begin to "read to learn" rather than "learn to read".

If your learner can decode and properly say out loud the words they read, but can't understand what they have read, they are "barking at print'" and cannot actually read. That is why research has proven that there needs to be a proper balance between phonics teaching and the skills needed to read with meaning.

Reading comprehension skills and strategies must be taught and practised over a long period of time.

Once a learner has mastered the basics and can read the words on the page, then the real work of comprehending what they have read begins.

Reading is a complex process that relies on the reader using all of the skills together (phonological awareness, phonics and vocabulary), along with actively thinking, questioning and employing different reading strategies.

A good reader does this before they read, while they read, and then after they have read.

Reading comprehension is ...

Personal

Reading is personal as each reader brings to the text their own:
- skill
- experiences.

Using reading strategies

- Predict
- Identify
- Visualise
- Infer
- Question
- Evaluate
- Connect

Interactive

- Person ➔ text
- Prior knowledge ➔ context

Monitoring your understanding

A good reader:
- reads with accuracy
- tests what they are reading
- concentrates
- connects sentences and paragraphs
- works out what any new words mean
- changes reading strategy.

Active

Before reading readers decide:
- what they already know (prior knowledge)
- what they think will happen (make predictions)
- what they expect to get from the text.

During reading readers:
- test that they are understanding correctly
- use different comprehension strategies to help understand what it is they are reading
- work out what any new words mean.

After reading readers:
- decide how they feel about what they read
- assess how well they read and understood.

Reading comprehension strategies

There are many strategies good readers use when they are actively engaged with a text and trying to understand what they are reading. Some strategies are simple and some are very complex, but only the simple ones should be taught to young readers. Teach your learners to:

- activate prior knowledge
- make predictions
- make connections
- ask questions and
- visualise.

It is important to match your pace of teaching to your class and your reading material.

> Reading comprehension strategies must be taught and practised until they become habit.

Strategy 1: Activating prior knowledge

Prior knowledge is background knowledge; it is what the learner already knows or has experience of. What the learner needs to be taught is to *activate* or find this knowledge and connect it to what they will read (make a connection). If new information is connected to what is already known, then less brain power is needed for understanding to take place. Background knowledge is:

- factual information
- what the learner has experienced
- existing vocabulary
- knowledge of the text type (this is a story, so …).

Strategy 2: Making predictions

A prediction is a guess based on information you know. For example, if you show your class the cover of a book where there is a picture of a dark cloud, your class can predict that it will rain in the story. The learners have used their prior knowledge of seeing the clouds go dark before it rains to make a connection with the picture, and so make a prediction. Then, as they read the story, they can ask questions to see if their prediction was correct.

The following elements can help your learners make predictions:

- the title of the story
- the genre of the Reader
- the cover artwork
- the blurb
- the inside artwork.

Who knows what a storm is?

When is a storm bad?

Let's make a prediction: What do you think the story will be about? What do you think might happen in the story?

How would you feel if you were this family? What would you do if you were this family?

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STAGE 2

The bad storm
Dawn Daniels, Gcina Mhlope, Sindiwe Magona
Illustrated by Colette Kemp

Look at the picture. Do you think a storm is happening here? How do you know? Do you think it is small storm or a big storm?

While you read the story or text, model asking questions that lead to a prediction.

> What do you think will happen next?

Strategy 3: Asking questions

Good readers ask questions as they read and they think about or find the answers. This strategy helps them to:
- check that they understand
- make connections
- make predictions and test them
- find the main idea
- test new information against prior knowledge
- summarise new information
- decide on a new reading strategy.

While you read the story or text, model asking questions that lead to making connections and then a prediction. Below is an example of the type of leading questions that can be asked.

Who is saying "Look at me!"?

Have you ever carried apples?

How many could you carry?

Is this a lot of apples to carry?

What is he carrying? How many is he carrying?

Do you think Zazi can carry so many apples?

What do you think will happen next?
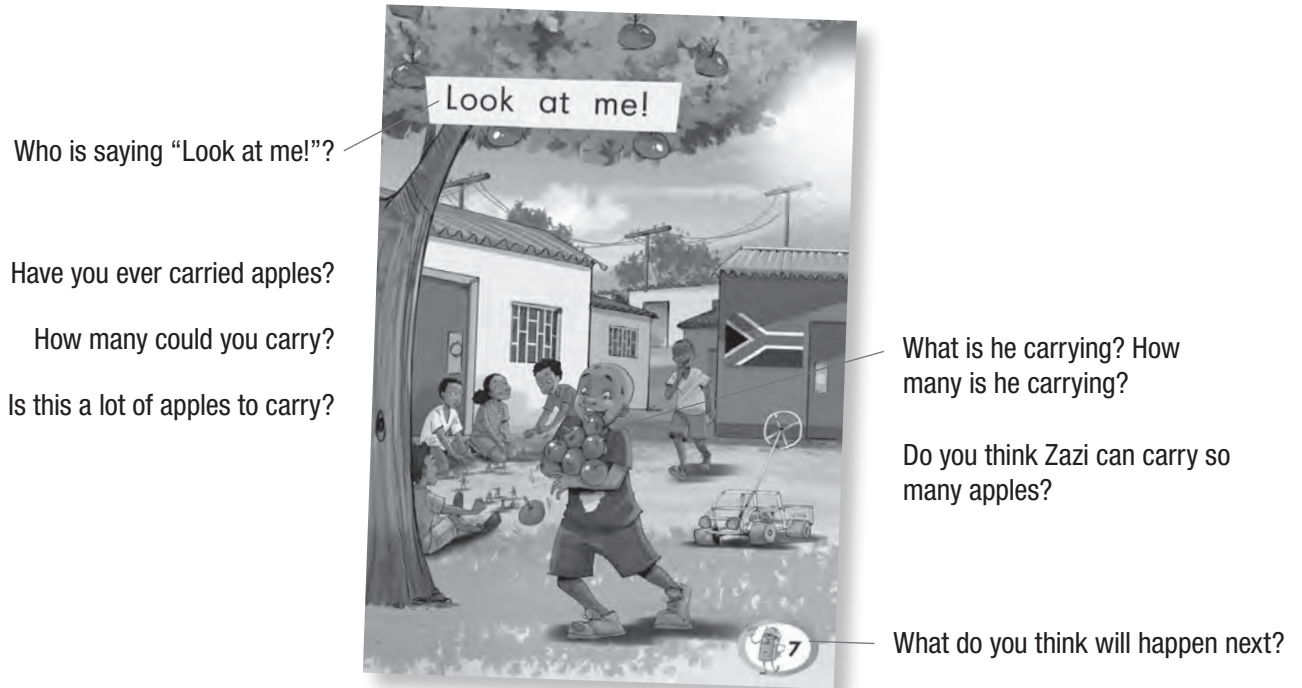
From *Aweh!* Level 1 Reader 2: *Zazi and the ants*

Where do you think they are? (At the beach)

How do you know this? (Clues: water, sand, towels, they are wet)

Who has been to the beach? [Prior knowledge]

What do you do at the beach? (Swim) [Making connections]

Show me what you do when you are very cold. [Making a connection to their own life]

What do you wear when you swim? [Prior knowledge]

Who is *very* cold? How do you know? (Shiver lines around his body) [Making connections]

What do you use to dry yourself? [Prior knowledge]

After you swim, are you hot or cold? [Making connections]

Do they look hot or do they look cold? How do you know? (Little boy is shivering; they are huddled under towels and are covered) [Making connections]

Strategy 4: Making connections

Children learn through listening, watching and making observations. In this way, they build up structures of thought and understanding (called schemas). These schemas are built up and changed as children meet new information.

Help your learners to link what they are reading about in a text to what they have experienced in life. This will build their prior knowledge and will teach them to actively make connections while reading.

Link the text to self

Lead the learners by asking them what a particular story reminds them of in their own lives. Help them create links to their own lives and experiences. If the story is about playing with friends, ask the learners how they feel when they play with their friends and what they enjoy the most about the experience. Encourage them to share what the story reminds them of and if the setting is similar to where they play with their friends. They can also be encouraged to relate the similarities and differences between the story and their own experience of playing with friends.

Link the text to other texts

It is important when introducing characters, setting and events of a new story to create links with the characters, setting and events of a story that the learners are familiar with. Lead them to think of their favourite character in the book they have read. Is this character like the character in the new story? Encourage the learners to explain how the new character is different from the character in the familiar story. Lead them to discussing the setting in the story that they know well and lead them to identify the setting in the new story. The same connections can be made with the events and the learners can draw parallels between the events in the two stories.

Link the text to what they know of the world

Discuss events that are in the learner's frame of reference. These are events that the child would know about that would give them a link to understanding more about what they are about to read. If the story is about the celebration of a special day, discuss special days like Mandela Day, or ask them to share how they celebrate their birthdays. Lead them to think about what happens in real life on special days so that they can connect with the story at a realistic level.

Strategy 5: Making pictures (Visualising)

A good reader makes a mental picture of what they read as they read. They almost see a film version of the story in their heads. The ability to do this shows that they are able to comprehend what they are reading. Research shows that young readers who can visualise have better recall of what they have read.
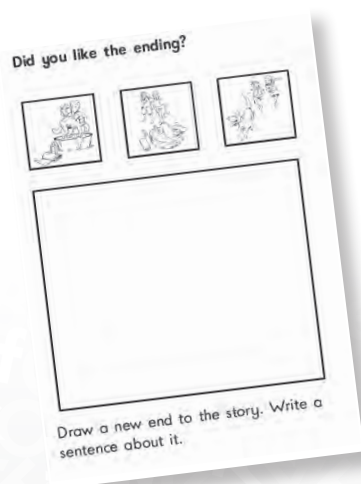
From *Aweh!* Level 3 Reader 3:
Aslam, Didi and the dog

From *Aweh!* Level 3 Reader 1:
Who stole Sam's necklace

The reading process: Before, during and after reading

A good reader chooses and uses reading strategies **before** they read, **while** they read and, to make sure that they have engaged properly with the text, **after** they have read.

The tables that follow explain what you are helping your learners to achieve as they read.

Before reading, a good reader:		
	Sets a goal or expectation	• Do I want to enjoy/understand/learn from the text? • How will this text help me?
	Notices any text features or text structure	• Is this a story or information text? • Are there any headings? • Are there any pictures or diagrams?
	Activates prior knowledge	• What do I know about this topic? • What other books have I read about this? • Have I seen this in real life?
	Makes predictions	What do these tell me? blurb title contents page cover genre

During reading, a good reader:		
	Reads with accuracy	• Makes few mistakes • Reads at a good pace
	Uses context to understand any new words	• Uses word knowledge • Uses prefix and suffix knowledge • Uses word attack skills
	Checks (clarifies) that they have understood – monitors comprehension	• Asks themselves questions • Rereads parts to better understand • Tries a new reading strategy
	Tests new information against prior knowledge	• Builds schemas of knowledge by adding and adapting according to what they are reading

	Can make connections	• Links what they are reading to:
		  – prior knowledge
		  – own experience
		  – other parts of the text
		  – other books they have read

	Adapts and makes new predictions	• Tests predictions made before reading • Keeps predictions or • Makes new predictions based on what has been read
	Asks questions raised by what they are reading	• Is curious and engages critically • Actively thinks about what they are reading
	Rereads parts of the text	• Enjoys what they are reading and so rereads • Realises that they don't understand and so rereads
	Makes inferences	• Uses what they know and have read to make decisions about the plot, characters, information based on a guess and not because the author has made it clear • Keep track of who is speaking when reading dialogue text

	Thinks about what they have read	• Did I enjoy/understand/learn from the text?
		– Why? Why not?
		• How will this text help me?
		• Do I believe what I read?
		– Why? Why not?
	Can identify the main point or points	• This is a good sign of comprehension
	Summarises what they have read	• Identifies the main points
		• Keeps the most important information only
	Can retell what they have read	• Can remember:
		– the main points
		– the sequence of events
		• Can retell in their own words to show understanding
	Can assess predictions	• Were my predictions correct?
		• Yes – how did I get it right?
		• No – where did I go wrong?
	Can sequence	• If the story was told in chronological order this is a good test of recall
		• If the story was told out of chronological order this is a good test of comprehension

LEVEL 1

Reader 6

Big Book 3
Non-fiction

Wash your hands!

Reading strategy

Making connections: For learners to understand the Reader, they need to be able to make links in their minds between what is happening in the Reader and what they already know about the world. Although they may not be able to decode the words yet, to gain meaning from the Reader they need to be asking themselves questions like:

1. Do I wash my hands?
2. Do I always use soap when I wash my hands?
3. Do I need to change the way I wash my hands?

1 Before reading

Point to the cover of the book and discuss the picture with the learners.

Q What is the little boy doing in the picture?

Q What do you think the book is about?

Now point to the title *Wash your hands!*

Q Does the title tell us what the book is about?

A *Yes, it tells us it's about washing our hands.*

Page through the first few pages and point to the pictures.

Q What is the first picture showing us? (p. 4)

A *Dirty hands*

Q What is happening in the second picture? (p. 4)

A *Someone is turning on a tap.*

Q What is the child doing in the big picture? (p. 4)

A *The child is wetting their hands under a running tap.*

Q Why must we use soap when we wash our hands? (p. 5)

A *To kill the germs on our hands*

2 During reading

Read the book aloud to your class without interrupting the flow too much. Point out and explain words that your learners may find difficult. For example:
Point out the word "rinse" (p. 6) and explain what it means. If you rinse something, it means you wash it with water only. Usually you rinse something to remove the soap, like when you wash your hair or clothes. It's an important step in the cleaning process.

Q Can you point to the picture that shows a towel? (p. 7)

Use your learners' home language to explain the word if they can't identify the towel in the picture.

3 After reading

Talk about what has been read and ask questions to make sure your learners understand the content and sequence of instructions.

Q Do you wash your hands like the children in the book, or do you wash your hands differently?

Q If I close the book, can you tell me what the steps are to washing your hands properly?

A *1. Wet your hands with water.*
2. Wash your hands with soap.
3. Rinse your hands with water.
4. Dry your hands with a towel.

Q Why are there pictures of children eating and baking at the end of the book?

A *The children have clean hands so they can touch food now.*

The role of the teacher in teaching the reading process

Before reading

- Teach any *new* key words/phonics.
- Revise any key words/phonics.
- Ask questions to activate prior knowledge.
  - Look at the cover.
  - Look at the cover artwork.
  - Look at the title/topic.
- Help learners make predictions.
- Walk through the Reader by just looking at the pictures.
- Help adjust any predictions.

During reading

- Read the story through without stopping, to model fluency and accuracy.
- Check if predictions made were correct.
- Take your learners through the story looking at:
  - how the text and the artwork work together (visual literacy)
  - the new words taught, what they mean and how to say them.
- Model word attack skills:
  - How can the artwork help me work out what the word means?
  - How can the other words in the sentence help me?
  - How do I look up a word in the dictionary?
- Ask your class questions that will help them make connections with what they already know or have learnt.
- Help learners identify the beginning, middle and end of the story.
- Help learners use non-fiction text features to gain understanding of the text.
- Help learners find the main point/s and then to summarise what they have read.
- Model how to monitor comprehension by stopping, asking questions to clarify meaning, and then rereading sections.

After reading

- Teach your learners to think about what they have read.
- Help them make connections and grow their schemas of understanding.
- Attach a writing activity to what has been read to deepen understanding.
- Help learners plot the story on a simple story map.
- Have your class retell the story to each other or act it out.
- Allow learners to change the ending of the story.
- Encourage learners to say whether they enjoyed the story or not and to have a reason for their answer.

Everything a good reader knows to do has to be taught in a way that the learner sees why it is important to do and how it works. They will see this through you modelling the reading process.

Barriers to learning how to read

The following tables will help you identify and help with some barriers to learning how to read.

Decoding problems			
What you will notice	**Cause**	**What you can do to investigate**	**What you can do to help**
• Squinting	Poor eye sight	Eye test	Suggest the learner gets glasses
• Skipping lines • Struggling to follow • Using their finger to help them follow	Poor eye coordination	Eye exam by an optometrist	• Give exercises to help develop eye coordination • Suggest the learner gets special glasses
• Making errors with vowel sounds • Guessing at words	Problems identifying sounds that letters create (typically vowel sounds)	Ask the learner to repeat each hard and soft vowel sound	Offer remedial teaching with regard to the phonic rules governing vowels and vowel sounds
• May have no difficulty with decoding short words but take longer with longer words • Guesses based on the first letters of the word	Problems separating words into syllables	Show known and unknown words that contain three or more syllables and learner must read them	• Teach learner to clap or feel for a jaw drop when saying longer words • Show how words get broken into syllables of two to three letters with a vowel in each part

Comprehension problems			
What you will notice	**Cause**	**What you can do to investigate**	**What you can do to help**
Learner may not understand the text due to not understanding the words	Limited vocabulary	Even if the learner is able to read the word correctly, ask for the meanings of important words in the text	• Work on expanding their vocabulary • Learners to have their own word dictionary
Taking very long to read a short text	Reading books that are too advanced for the learner's ability	Make sure books are at the correct level of difficulty for the learner	Make sure that the text has no more than five words on each page that the learner is not familiar with (the five-finger rule)
Reading fast but without expression	Difficulty visualising what they are reading	• Learner to explain what they have just read • They must try to draw what they have read	• Learners need to practise visualising what they have read • They can draw to help them create visual images
Reading but afterwards showing that they were not concentrating on what they were reading	Not internalising the information at a deep enough level	Ask and make sure that the learner can grasp and interpret what they have read	Learners must make notes in the margin so that there is engagement with what is being read
Unable to connect what they are reading to what they already know and being unable to readily offer what they already know about a topic being covered	Being unable to process new information and add it to existing knowledge	Ask the learner to establish what they know and to find out how they are remembering new information	• Help the learners to connect to background knowledge before they read • Help them to organise the new information by making a visual display of words with a meaning based connection

As discussed, a learner has different types of language skills when they enter your classroom. It is always helpful to identify where the possible problem lies. The following information can be used to create an observation checklist.

Social language:
- Does not make eye contact
- Speaks over others and struggles with turn-taking
- Struggles to hold a conversation

Receptive language (understanding what is heard):
- Struggles to listen
- Struggles to concentrate
- Needs instructions to be repeated
- Forgets the next step in an instruction
- Misunderstands words that have been said

Expressive language (language used to speak):
- Has a limited vocabulary
- Speaks in simple sentences
- Is shy to speak in front of others
- Uses words incorrectly because they sound like other words

Methodologies to teach reading

Scaffolding

Not every learner in your class will be at the same level when it comes to skills' development and pace of learning. That is why it is important to scaffold your teaching so that you try to meet all their needs.

For every new thing a child learns, there is a gap between what they already know and what they need to know. This gap is called Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Scaffolded teaching using Shared Reading and Guided Reading techniques, can help learners get over this gap.
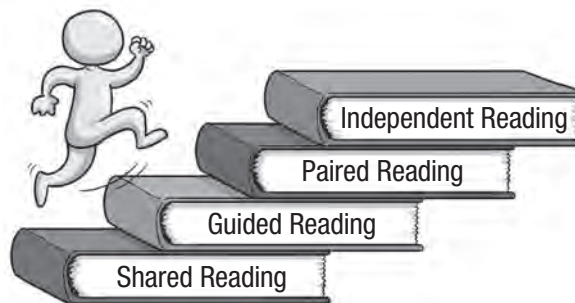
> Scaffolding means to provide support as people try to get to a higher level.

Plan all of your teaching and texts to be at the right level.

Not too difficult	Not too easy	At the right level
Reading texts must not be at the learners' frustration level (too difficult). These books are to be used for reading for enjoyment, when you read to your class just for fun so that they hear rich language.	If your class knows all the words and the content of the book, they will get bored and frustrated. Put these books in your book corner as they are perfect for Independent Reading. These books allow the child to feel confident when they read because they know all of the words and so can read with better fluency and focus on comprehension.	If the language level is just above that of your class, it is at their Instructional Level. These books are good for Shared Reading. They will create teaching moments where you can teach new words and skills. Your class will then be in the Zone of Development as they can add to what they already know. After you have completed the Shared Reading of the Big Book text, you can move your class to the matching Reader for Group Guided Reading where you can help individual learners practise words and skills taught during Shared Reading.

Shared Reading

A Shared Reading lesson means that the learners share the reading of a text with the teacher and then gradually take over the task of reading. The process is a shared one.

In Shared Reading:
- reading is usually done as a whole class
- it is important that it takes place in a relaxed learning environment so that learners feel free to take risks and guess at words
- it is your opportunity to teach and demonstrate good reading
- accept all attempts and guesses from your learners and use their responses to promote the learning process
- praise your learners for trying
- understand that mistakes are part of the learning process
- read to your learners from a big book or from a text that has been enlarged so that the learners can follow and read with you
- read with fluency and expression
- learners share in the reading of the text, joining in when they are able to while you provide guidance and support
- think out loud so that your learners can see reading strategies being demonstrated.

The benefits of Shared Reading

Shared Reading allows for learners to observe and learn the process of reading. Not only do they participate in the process and learn important concepts about how print works, but they also get a feel for learning and start to see themselves as readers.

- Learners have the benefit of engaging with material that they normally would not be able to read on their own.
- Learners grow confidence through working in a group.
- It shows the relationship between printed and oral language.
- Learners are led to connect background knowledge with new information.
- It teaches learners how to create meaning from text.
- It increases comprehension skills.
- It helps in the teaching of frequently-used vocabulary.
- It develops the learners' ability to predict and develop their sense of story.
- It helps learners in focusing their attention.

Guided Reading

Guided Reading involves the teacher working with a small group of learners who read a similar level of text and share certain reading behaviours. In Guided Reading there is an opportunity for the teacher to scaffold literacy learning, in other words, to help learners increase their understanding. It is not an approach that relies on testing a learner's comprehension, but rather an opportunity to guide and actually teach and help a learner to improve.

> Guided Reading is not for testing; it is for teaching. Its purpose is to allow you to focus on smaller groups of learners and to give individual and focused attention to learners.

In Guided Reading:
- choose a text that is appropriate to the group of learners
- the text must be simple enough for the learner to read with a certain amount of fluency and about 90% accuracy. But, it must still offer challenges that require problem solving
- give the learners some background to the text, leading them to draw from their own experiences
- provide support to the learners as they work their way through the text; talking about it, reading it and thinking about it.

> During Guided Reading, students can enjoy and understand the story while drawing on their own strategies supported by the introduction that the teacher has given. The learners focus on meaning, but use problem-solving strategies to deal with challenging sentence structure, difficult and unknown words and ideas that they have not faced in print before.

When working with the learners during Guided Reading, it is important to balance the difficulty of the passage with support for the learners reading the passage. You must introduce the story to the group, have brief discussions with the learners as they read to support them, and discuss the text with them afterwards. In this way, individual readers are given the opportunity to move forward in the reading process.

Paired Reading

Paired Reading is when a learner gets to practise what they have learnt in a safe and supportive environment.

Paired reading can be organised in many ways:
- You can pair same-ability learners.
- You can pair a strong reader with a weaker reader so that the strong learner supports and guides the weaker learner.
- You can ask parents to read with their children.

The pair then takes turns reading the text to each other. They then give each other feedback. This is the critical part and should be guided by you. Set your pairs a discussion point or guide them as to what they should be listening for, for example, intonation or pace. This encourages peer support and teaching. It also helps learners to develop a critical ear for what is good reading and what is weak reading.

Most importantly, it allows you to walk around and watch your class as they read. Use this time to make notes on your learners or to fill in observation checklists.

Independent Reading

Independent Reading is reading that the learner does on their own, outside of class readers and teacher-led reading.

Independent Reading is very important as it:
- gives the learner a sense of control. Learners are allowed to choose what they read and this builds intrinsic motivation to read
- should be fun. It is often called "reading for enjoyment"

- builds confidence. It is crucial that your learners are taught which books they should read independently. If they choose books that are too difficult, they will find reading alone frustrating and will lose confidence. However, if they choose a book where they know all of the words and they can then enjoy reading it, this will make them more confident readers.

How to meet the learning needs of all learners

Not everybody learns in the same way, and part of running an inclusive classroom is meeting the different learning styles of all of your learners. This involves planning different activities and teaching techniques.
   The notes that follow explain how you can plan diverse reading activities for your class.

Visual

This learner thinks in pictures and will enjoy the bright, learner-centred artwork in the Big Books and Readers. Allow this learner time to enjoy the pictures and encourage them to develop their imagination.

Auditory

This learner learns through hearing and listening to information. They will enjoy the teaching that takes place during a Shared Reading lesson using the Big Books. They will also enjoy listening to the stories being read from the USB audio and singing the phonic chants and rhymes.

Verbal

This learner will enjoy sharing what they know and think with the class, either through talking or writing. They enjoy using words and find it easy to express themselves. You will have to curb their enthusiasm and remind them that other learners in the class also need a chance to talk. This learner will enjoy reading, learning new words, and completing the Writing activities and the worksheets.

Physical/ Kinaesthetic

This learner is tactile and learns by doing, preferably something active and physical. They will enjoy acting out the stories and learning actions that match words. They will enjoy acting out the alphabet chant or any rhymes that involve body movement.

Logical/ Mathematical

This learner is able to problem solve, and logic and reason is very important to them. They will enjoy reading the non-fiction Readers and will be motivated by the inquiry-based questions the worm asks. All the levels' plots are linear and logical and they will be able to identify any cause and effect events in the story lines.

Social

This learner enjoys working with others and sharing what they think and what they have learnt. They are good communicators and good listeners. This learner enjoys the Group Guided reading sessions and will make strong mentors if you pair them with a weaker reader.

Solitary

This learner is independent and likes working alone. They can concentrate for longer periods and stay focused on a topic. They will enjoy working on worksheets and the Writing activities if they are done individually. They need to be given time to do independent reading and reading for enjoyment sessions on their own.

How to make reading lessons learner-centred

The aim of learner-centred teaching is to give each child a sense of ownership around their growing skill of reading and to use this ownership to create a reading identity.

Type of teaching	Type of learner
Teacher-centred: the teacher lectures and learners must sit quietly and do only what they are told. Shared Reading where the teacher reads the book but doesn't engage the learners falls into this category.	• Reads a book because the teacher chose it. Chants along as the teacher reads. • Follows instructions and doesn't think for themselves. • Finishes work out of fear of punishment. • Has no commitment to learning.
Learner-centred: the teacher guides learners through activities and helps them connect prior knowledge to what they are learning. Where pace and content matches the learner's needs and the learner is allowed some choice and voice.	• Asks questions about the book. • Helps set goals with the teacher. • Shares what they have learnt with others.
Learner-driven: the teacher is the facilitator to the learners' self-controlled learning.	• Takes control of what they learn and how. • They ask questions and then find the answers. • They work independently or collaborate with others. • They monitor themselves and set their own goals.

The following diagram illustrates how to make the learner the centre of a reading lesson.

Choose reading material that is relevant to the child and linked to the life they experience. Link what they read to their background knowledge and help them link what they read to their lives.

Make reading fun and child-centred. Create a happy, open, creative and responsive atmosphere when children are reading.

The next day, I tell Lola the secret plan, "We must stand together. We must work as a team."
10

From *We Are Growing* Stage 2: *The big bully*

Reading is about me!

Create moments of success.

Create a social reason to read.

Build a sense of ownership.

This is why the back story, in the *Aweh!* series, Mama Africa and her Umthombo are so important. It gives the child a reason to read as well as a social reward when they have done so. By reading a book (any book), they are helping to charge the Umthombo. On each double page of a Reader, there is a battery that shows how the book is being charged as it is being read. At the end of the Reader, the battery is charged and the child has a natural moment of success. Children can charge the Umthombo in groups, as a class and as a family. All of these factors will help to create a sense of ownership. "I read because I choose to help Mama Africa."

Non-fiction

Why is non-fiction important?

It is very important that young children read non-fiction texts. Non-fiction texts encourage academic thinking, academic language use and show children different text types.

They will soon notice that non-fiction texts are different to stories. You can show them that you use different reading strategies when reading an information text as opposed to when reading a story.

Fiction (not real)		Non-fiction (real)
To entertain Story language	**Purpose**	To inform Factual language
Plot: beginning ↓ middle ↓ end Problem and solution	**Structure**	Contents page Headings Each page can be read independently
Illustrations	**Visual**	Photographs Diagrams Captions and labels
Enjoy Imagine	**You read to …**	Learn Get information
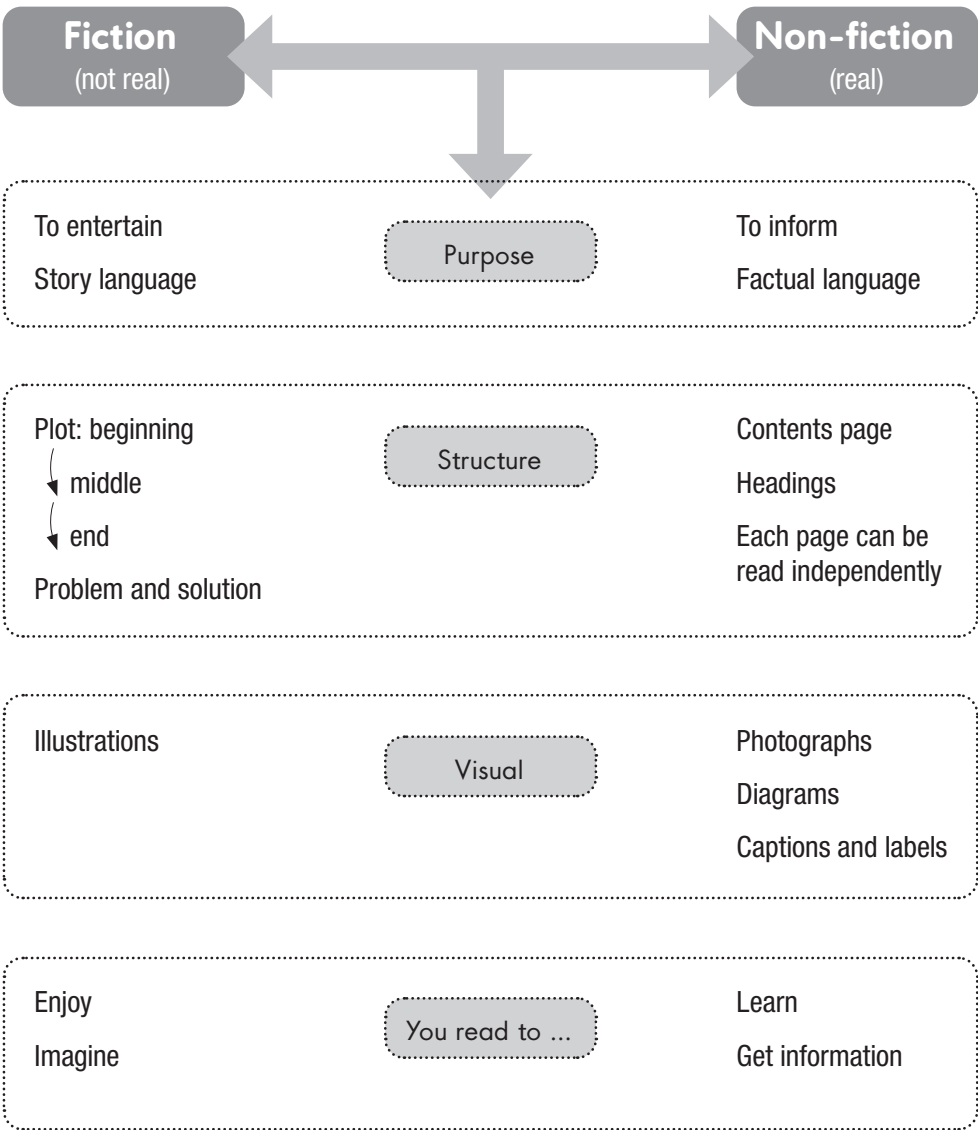
Trussell-Cullen (1999: 2) defines non-fiction as a way to "document and celebrate the real world and that means everything about the real world that is actual, observable, recordable, demonstrable and experienceable."

That means that non-fiction texts show the child how the world works. The child should be able to step away from the non-fiction book that they are reading and to identify what they have read in their own world or reality.

Non-fiction is also known as informational text. Its main intention is to inform the reader instead of the focus being on a character or an adventure.

These readers, with enquiring minds, will be ready to read and understand their academic textbooks in Grade 4.

There are very important benefits that come from early exposure to non-fiction texts.

Non-fiction texts:
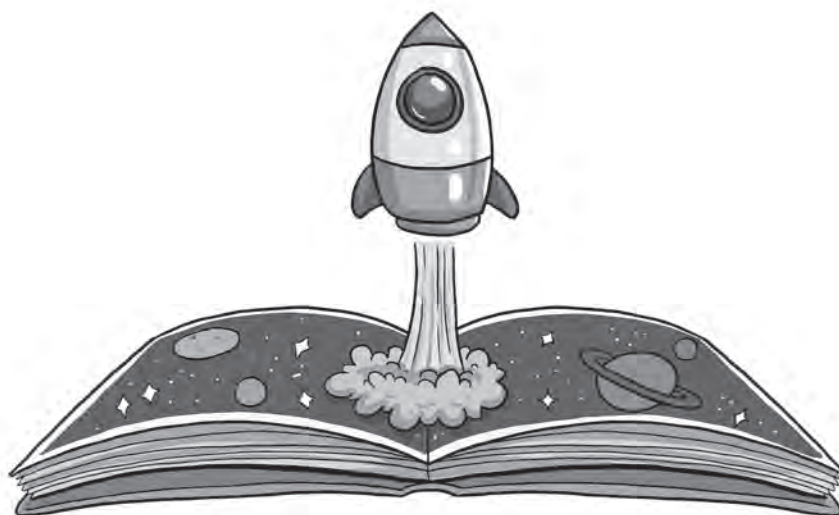
include important information from across all subjects that prepare children for the learning that is going to take place across the curriculum.

help learners acquire new vocabulary by introducing them to specialised or technical words. This can foster a love in them for a specific field that they have been exposed to.

are used for assessment that takes place in later grades. Learners who are familiar with non-fiction texts find it easier to navigate the complexity of these texts. Early exposure to non-fiction texts is the best way to prepare learners to cope with the increasing academic demands of the intermediate grades.

use visual stimuli like photographs which excite the imagination and encourage creativity.

have a different structure to narrative texts and children need to learn how to extract meaning and read these texts with understanding.

teach children how books are put together and how they work. They learn that a book can convey more than just a story, but has other aspects such as its components (introduction, glossary, photographs, etc.).

expose learners to a variety of different literacy sources and can then build on their existing knowledge and answer questions.

contain a type of depth and thinking that is more in line with the real world and that promotes more mature thought processes.

are a very important part of extending the learner's knowledge about an aspect of a fictional book they are reading. In other words, if the learner is reading a story about a zebra, the teacher can then follow it up with a non-fiction book teaching them the facts of real life zebras. This helps to develop depth of thinking in learners and to expand their knowledge of the real world.

Non-fiction reading and writing is an essential part of the kind of active learning that happens by learners having to pose questions and problem solve. It should therefore be a critical part of the early childhood curriculum.

Children who only read storybooks are not prepared for Grade 4 when they have to read textbooks for learning. However, non-fiction should not just be a photograph and text saying what is in the photograph. Instead, it should spark curiosity, questioning and inquiry leading to research.

Examples of *Aweh!* inquiry-based non-fiction Readers

The learning focus of Level 2 Reader 2 below is helping your family at home. The Reader shows different jobs that a child can do at home.

The new diary text type is used to show the days of the week.

As many realities as possible are shown.

The text is supported by the image to show that what is being said is observable.

The worm is the inquiry guide. He models the questions and helps the child to transfer learning to their environment.

The learning focus of Level 3 Reader 4 below is good manners. The Reader shows different everyday situations and asks what the polite way to greet this person is.

The focus question is asked and answered on page 6.

The focus question is asked again on page 7.

To show that there are three possibilities, question marks have been used to prompt the child to ask if this option is correct.

The polite greeting is shown in a speech bubble to reinforce that the greeting is said.

The image shows a South African classroom, teacher and learners.

The afternoon greeting convention is contextualised by the clock showing that it is afternoon.

The repetition of the clock showing that it is afternoon reinforces the teaching that took place on page 6.

The worm is the inquiry guide as he models the question.

CAPS/Curriculum information regarding reading

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Foundation Phase English First Additional Language (2011) is very clear about how reading in the Foundation Phase must be approached and how much time each week must be spent on each skill.

The infographic below highlights what CAPS considers to be important and the times and assessments that are prescribed.

Read alouds

Shared Reading

Guided Reading

Paired Reading

Independent Reading

Balanced approach to learning to read

Phonemic awareness

Word recognition (phonics and sight words)

Comprehension

Vocabulary

Fluency

Home Language

First Additional Language

Mathematics

Life Skills

CAPS

Listening and Speaking	Thinking and Reasoning and Language Structure and Use are integrated into all of the language skills.
Reading and Phonics	
Writing and Handwriting	

Additive bilingualism

Home Language Teaching Time per week	
Grade 1	8 hours
Grade 2	8 hours
Grade 3	8 hours

First Additional Language Teaching Time per week	
Grade 1	3 hours
Grade 2	3 hours
Grade 3	4 hours

Social language versus academic language

Social language: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

An American researcher, Jim Cummins, created the term BICS. He described BICS as being the basic everyday language we use when we are interacting and communicating with people (1986). Children use BICS when they are playing, and for general conversation.

BICS is comfortable language because the language structure is simple. Once children have a working vocabulary, they have the skill to use this informal language without too much concentration. BICS involves less cognitive (brain) power because the social context is clear. For example, if they are playing soccer, they already know what vocabulary to use (team, ball, goal etc.). They know that they can shout and give orders without having to put "please" and "thank you" at the beginning and the end of sentences, when speaking to friends.

When learning an Additional Language, children usually develop BICS within six months to two years. That means that by Grade 3, an EFAL learner *should* be able to hold comfortable informal conversations. However, it is important to remember that just because a learner sounds proficient when speaking in a BICS setting, that doesn't mean that their academic writing and reading skills are strong. For that, they need to have CALP as well.

Academic language: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Jim Cummins coined the acronym CALP to describe language skills needed in a classroom to understand and communicate academic learning (1986). CALP covers the listening, speaking, reading and writing of content subjects such as Science and the Social Sciences.

The skills needed are:
- academic vocabulary
- subject vocabulary
- to be able to analyse and synthesise
- to compare and contrast and classify
- to evaluate and infer.

CALP takes a lot more cognitive brain work and concentration because the context is usually not known to the child. They have little to no background knowledge in which to understand any new terminology or explanations. Lots of new ideas, concepts and words can be introduced to the learner at the same time, and they must remember it and regurgitate it later when they are tested.

The average Additional Language learner develops CALP five years behind that of a Home Language speaker. That means that if you have Home Language English speakers along with Additional Language learners in your Grade 6 class, the Additional Language learners are operating at a Grade 1 level in terms of academic understanding of the content.

It is therefore crucial that all Foundation Phase learners develop academic language skills. They must read non-fiction texts and be taught how to think in an academic way and how to explain their thinking.

A comparison between BICS and CALP

BICS	CALP
• Everyday oral communication	• Classroom-based communication
• Social language so colloquial speech is allowed	• Written, read or spoken language that is more formal
• The social context is known	• Context is limited
• It is easy to follow social language because:	• Difficult to acquire because:
– non-verbal cues can be seen (facial expressions, hand gestures, general body language)	– there are no non-verbal cues
– information can be explained in another way	– it is often abstract content
– you can see the other person's reaction	– little face-to-face communication
– you can pick up on verbal cues (tone of voice, intonation, emotion)	– prior knowledge is usually required and at times this can be culturally specific
	– content vocabulary knowledge is needed
	– explanations are flat and usually to be read
• **Takes approximately two years to develop**	• **Takes five to seven years for an Additional Language learner to develop the language of the classroom**
	• *However, the stronger the CALP is in the Home Language, the quicker the learner will acquire CALP in the Additional Language*

We use different types of language for different purposes and audiences. For example, the social language we use when speaking to friends and family is very different to the academic language we use when answering a test question. It is important that children learn both types of language as they acquire or learn any language.

BICS and CALP are equally important to Home Language learners and Additional Language learners. Standardised testing in South Africa has shown that young learners cannot read and write in their Home Language as well as in their Additional Language. That is because most forms of testing rely on a learner having CALP.

How to support the development of BICS

In many homes, young children are not encouraged to speak and are often not spoken to beyond being given instructions. This stunts their development of BICS. Therefore, a Foundation Phase classroom should not be a stagnant, quiet classroom. It should be filled with talking, playing and engagement.
   What you as the teacher can do:
- Have conversations with your learners and speak with respect and politeness; this will model for them how they should speak to others.
- Talk to your learners a lot. Let them hear as much rich language as possible. Read stories to your class.
- Encourage learners to ask questions and answer their questions honestly, using full sentences.
- Divide your class into talking groups. Allow them time to talk within their groups and share knowledge, understanding and experiences. They will learn better if they are collaborating.
- Start each day with learners sharing their news and stories from home.
- When your class is on the mat, develop a system of a "mat friend" or "elbow friend". If you want the class to test their understanding with each other, you can then tell them to share what they think with the friend sitting at their left or right elbow.
- Teach your learners that it is alright to make mistakes. Don't allow other learners to laugh at mistakes. Mistakes show that the learner has tried, and that needs to be rewarded and encouraged.
- Create a classroom that is non-threatening, motivating and where the Home Language is always celebrated.
- Encourage your learners to verbalise their thoughts. Praise them for their thought and then reword it correctly so that you model the correct pronunciation, grammar and word order.
- Correct group mistakes; don't single out one child's mistake and correct it in front of the whole class.
- Allow your class to play with language. Have them role play situations like buying bread at the shop. While they are having fun, they are learning and practicing a BICS situation that they may encounter in real life.

How to support the development of CALP

"Many studies have found that cognitive and academic development in the first language have an extremely important and positive effect on second language schooling." (Collier, 1995)
   What you as the teacher can do:
- Create a context-embedded classroom and approach to all teaching.
- Teach content through known contexts – when learners read about something they already know about and can recognise, they learn new words and concepts more quickly.
- Start every new teaching of content with first identifying what the learners already know.
- Bring contextual clues to the classroom. Set up a theme table and bring objects, props, books and pictures and play sound clips and videos.
- Allow learners to discuss what they are learning in their Home Language.
- Allow learners to talk to other learners about what they understand. They will learn better from each other because they can explain the content using BICS and by following interpersonal clues.
- Let learners learn in small groups; they can take turns being the teacher and explaining the concept to the rest of the group. Collaborative learning is best.
- Repeat new information many times and rephrase it if your learners are not understanding.
- Model how to approach new information. Show what types of questions work and model how to answer these questions.

Skills learnt are interchangeable between the Home Language (Language 1) and the Additional Language (Language 2). So skills, reading strategies and concepts learnt in the Home Language are transferable to the Additional Language. That is why learners need to be proficient in their Home Language. The L2 (Language 2) must not overtake or replace the L1 (Language 1).

Additive bilingualism

As a Foundation Phase teacher, you will be teaching your learners the basics of their Home Language as well as facilitating their acquisition of an Additional Language, which will probably be English.

By the end of Grade 3, the aim is to produce learners who can read and write with meaning in both their Home Language and Additional Language. This is called additive bilingualism, as you are adding a language. At no stage must the learners' skill in the Additional Language (L2) be stronger than that of their Home Language (L1). That is called subtractive bilingualism because you have removed or subtracted a language.

The aim is to produce bilingual learners; L1 + L2 must equal L1 *and* L2.

Allow the Home Language to dictate to the Additional Language. As learners grow in the Additional Language, they will pick up on any new rules naturally.

✔ additive bilingualism $L1 + L2 = L1 + L2$

✗ subtractive bilingualism $L1 + L2 = L2$
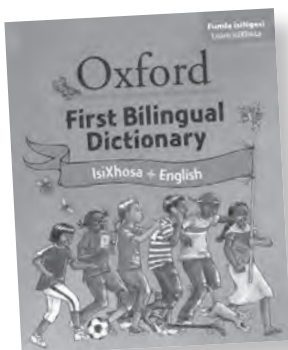
Assessment

The process of learning to read is a complex one involving different skills and strategies. Therefore, it makes sense that you will need different types of assessments and assessment tools in order to get an overall view of a learner's reading ability. You will need to develop a system of assessment that can provide you with a complete picture of:
- what skills a learner already has
- areas of weakness and intervention
- areas of strength
- effectiveness of teaching.

The role of assessment

For the most part, assessment is used to track a learner's progress so that you can get enough evidence together in order to report on a specific child to the Education Department and the child's parents (summative assessment). But assessment should also be used by you to check how successful your teaching methods are and to change them based on the results of your assessment (formative assessment).

You can gather evidence by:
- observing (watching) your learners and taking notes
- filling in checklists that help you to look for certain behaviours
- marking written work
- formally testing certain skills on a one-on-one basis
- giving standardised tests.

Your task is to teach your learners the curriculum, to assess how well they are doing and to adjust your style of teaching to meet the needs of your learners so that they can learn what the curriculum requires them to learn.

Your assessment plan should give you feedback that is:
- continuous (all the time)
- coherent (necessary and important)
- specific.

Curriculum

Formative assessment (assessment for learning)

Summative assessment (assessment of learning)
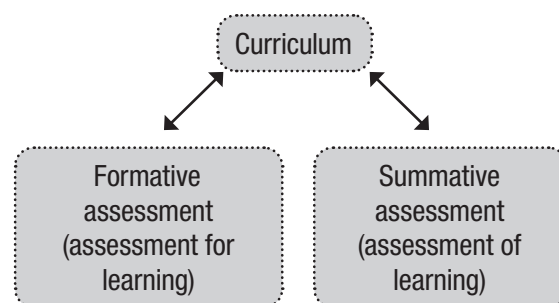
This feedback will help you to adjust your pace or focus of teaching and give you concrete evidence to report with confidence on every learner.

Types of assessment

Types of reading assessments

Baseline assessment – what do your learners know or not know?

Formative assessment – helps you form your teaching focus while your learners are learning

Summative assessment – what have your learners learnt?
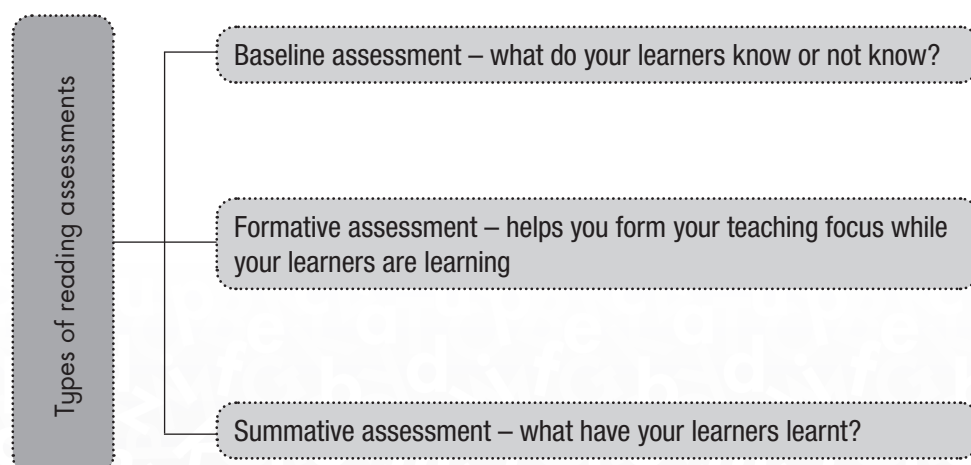
Five steps to implement effective assessments

Step 1: Plan the assessment

- Decide on the type of assessment.
- Once you have decided on the type of assessment, you need to check that you have covered everything and if the assessment is valid, fair, and reliable.

Ask yourself

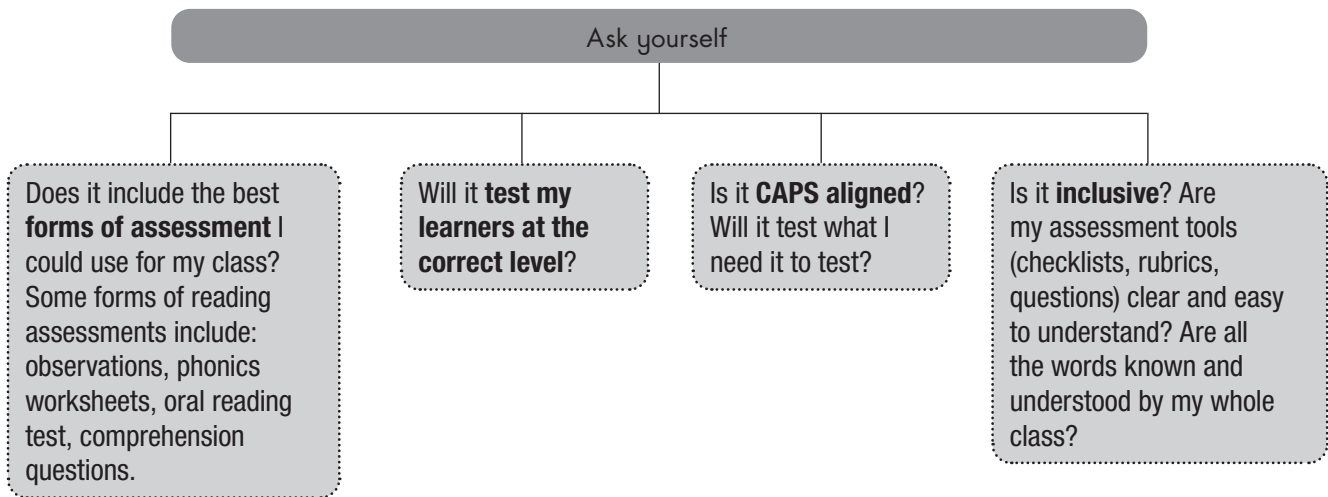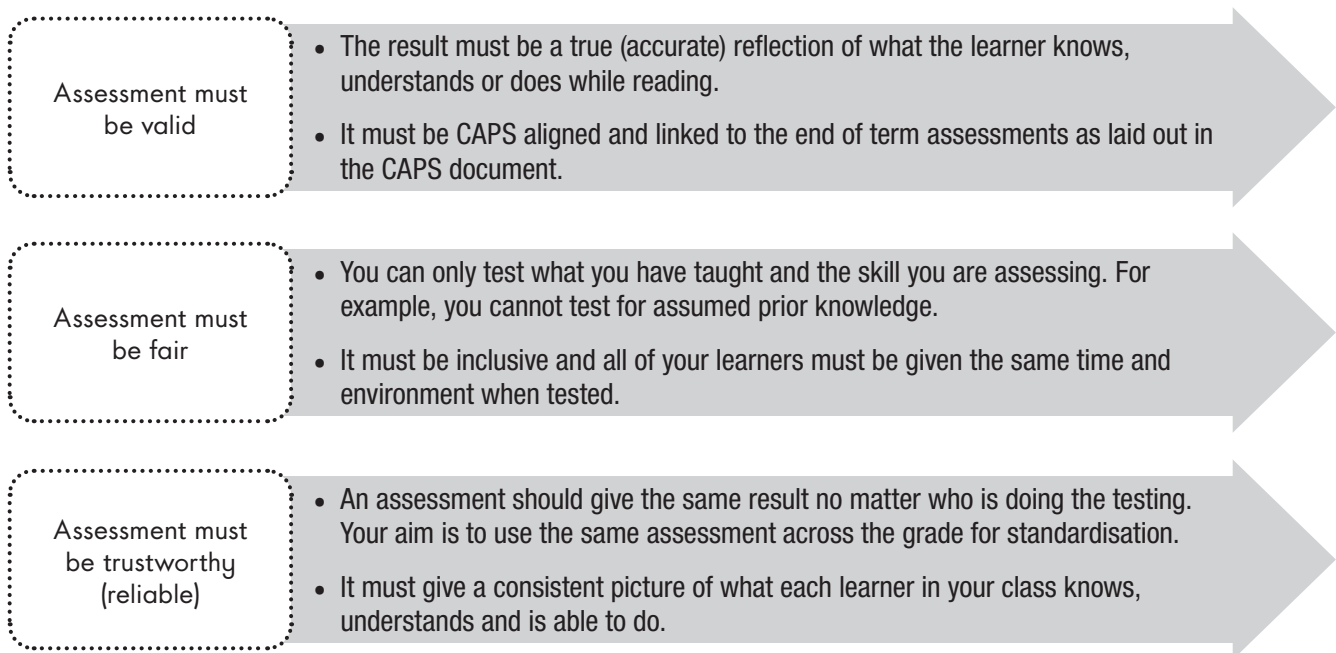| Does it include the best **forms of assessment** I could use for my class? Some forms of reading assessments include: observations, phonics worksheets, oral reading test, comprehension questions. | Will it **test my learners at the correct level**? | Is it **CAPS aligned**? Will it test what I need it to test? | Is it **inclusive**? Are my assessment tools (checklists, rubrics, questions) clear and easy to understand? Are all the words known and understood by my whole class? |

Assessments must be valid, fair and reliable for all learners.

Assessment must be valid	• The result must be a true (accurate) reflection of what the learner knows, understands or does while reading. • It must be CAPS aligned and linked to the end of term assessments as laid out in the CAPS document.

Assessment must be fair	• You can only test what you have taught and the skill you are assessing. For example, you cannot test for assumed prior knowledge. • It must be inclusive and all of your learners must be given the same time and environment when tested.

Assessment must be trustworthy (reliable)	• An assessment should give the same result no matter who is doing the testing. Your aim is to use the same assessment across the grade for standardisation. • It must give a consistent picture of what each learner in your class knows, understands and is able to do.

Step 2: Conduct the assessment

- Decide when you will conduct the assessment. For example, Baseline Assessments can be conducted at the beginning of the school year, during the first term to establish the entry levels of reading and to inform your teaching planning and preparation.
- When testing learners one at a time, make sure the learner feels comfortable and at ease. Avoid terms such as "test", or "assessment", as these could make the learner nervous.
- If you are assessing learners on an individual basis, plan purposeful activities for the rest of the class so that you are not disturbed when conducting the assessments.
- If the assessment is a class test, explain that learners should give their own answers and not copy what other learners are doing.

Step 3: Record the results

- If the assessment is an observation, you will record the results while conducting the assessment. For example, you might use a checklist or a rubric. You will then need to transfer the results onto a class list or record sheet.
- If the assessment is a class test you will first need to mark the test papers and then record the final scores on a class list or record sheet.

It is useful to have record or progress sheets for the different types of assessments you conduct. For example, have progress sheets for your Baseline Assessments and different progress sheets for your Formative Assessments. Record the results for Summative Assessments on a class list.

Below is an example of a rubric.

Rubric: Reading aloud							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
On task behaviour	Struggled to stay on task.	Got distracted at times.		Stayed mostly on task.		Stayed on task and was focused.	
Loudness (Volume)	Voice was very soft, could hardly hear the learner.	Voice was soft and some words could not be heard.		Could hear but voice got soft at times.		Voice was loud enough at all times.	
Clarity (How clear)	Learner mumbled and swallowed words they were not sure of.	Learner mumbled a bit. Not all the words were clearly pronounced.		Learner read clearly but the odd word was mispronounced.		Learner read very clearly and all words were pronounced properly.	
Fluency	Learner stopped all the time to decode words.	Learner stopped some of the time to decode a word.		Learner read fairly smoothly and had to stop only a few times to decode a word.		Learner did not have to stop to decode and read fluently.	
Expression	Learner read with no expression at all; totally monotone.	Learner read with little to no expression and in a sing-song voice.		Learner tried to read with expression, but at times read with no expression.		Learner's reading was full of expression.	
Body language	The book hid their face all the time. They moved a lot and fidgeted.	The book hid their face most of the time. They moved and fidgeted most of the time.		The book hid their face at times. They moved and fidgeted a little bit.		They held the book properly all the time. They stood still all of the time.	

Step 4: Analyse the results

- To use the assessment results in a purposeful way, you need to spend some time analysing the data.
- It is helpful to convert marks into percentages and to calculate a class average score or percentage for specific assessment items.
- Look at the record sheet on the next page. The teacher transferred the assessment results from the Grade 2 Baseline Assessment to this record sheet. A quick glance shows that 80% of the learners struggled to recognise the sound /p/. This suggests this needs to be re-taught.

Step 5: Plan your teaching / Decide on intervention strategies

- Use the findings from your analysis to inform your teaching.
- You may find that the assessment data requires that you re-teach a concept or certain content. The data might suggest that specific intervention strategies are needed for some but not all learners.
- Reading assessment data for Grades 2 and 3, should be used to group learners for group guided reading ability groups.

EFAL Grade 2 Baseline assessment record sheet									
	1. Letter sounding				2. Words	3. Story: Answers questions about a story			
Date:									
Questions/ test items	1. /s/	2. /b/	3. /m/	4. /p/	Record the number of words correctly read out of the number of words attempted.	1. red	2. spinach or tomatoes or beans	3. farmer	4. healthy
Names of learners:									
Ben	✓	✗	✓	✗	10/20 (50%)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Neo	✓	✓	✓	✓	21/24 (87%)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thandi	✓	✓	✓	✗	11/18 (61%)	✓	✓	✓	✗
Ndileka	✗	✗	✗	✗	0/10 (0%)	✗	✗	✗	✗
Mpumi	✓	✓	✗	✗	5/10 (20%)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Bonga	✓	✓	✗	✗	8/15 (53%)	✓	✓	✗	✗
Sizwe	✗	✓	✗	✗	3/12 (25%)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Lia	✓	✓	✓	✓	24/24 (100%)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tim	✗	✗	✗	✗	0/10 (0%)	✗	✗	✗	✗
Jerome	✓	✓	✓	✗	17/20 (85%)	✓	✓	✓	✗
Angel	✓	✓	✗	✗	11/18 (61%)	✓	✓	✗	✗
Mpho	✓	✓	✗	✗	10/17 (58%)	✓	✓	✓	✗
Buhle	✓	✓	✓	✓	20/20 (100%)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chris	✓	✓	✗	✗	5/10 (50%)	✓	✓	✗	✗
Pat	✓	✓	✓	✗	20/24 (83%)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total	**12**	**12**	**7**	**3**	**165/252**	**13**	**11**	**8**	**5**
Average	**80%**	**80%**	**47%**	**20%**	**65%**	**87%**	**73%**	**53%**	**33%**

Example of an assessment record sheet, based on the Grade 2 Baseline Assessment included in this booklet. Refer to page 51.

Baseline Assessment

A baseline is the starting point when you are recording data. If you want to see the effect of eating fruit on your sugar levels, you will first test the sugar in your blood before you start your experiment. That score is then your starting point, your baseline.

A Baseline Assessment can be done at the beginning of a year, grade, phase or even at the beginning of a unit of teaching. It shows you what a learner knows or can do at that specific point in time. Remember, as soon as they have learnt something and you assess what they have learnt, the baseline of what they know has moved.

A Baseline Assessment can also help you identify any strengths or weaknesses a learner may have.

Without a Baseline Assessment, you have no starting point at which to gauge if the learner has improved or not.

Once you know where your learners are at, you can plan your teaching. You can plan:

- where to start with your teaching
- what to focus on
- what you can leave out
- how fast or slow you can go.

Practical difficulties around assessment in Grade 1

Assessing learners in the Foundation Phase is a challenge as each learner enters school with a unique set of skills and no assumptions should be made about what a Grade 1 learner should know. Each learner develops at their own pace: physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively.

Grade 1 learners learn together, as a class unit, through lots of teacher-led communication, modelling, physical activities, play and group interaction. It is therefore difficult to manage one-on-one time in order to do individual assessment.

It is also difficult to assess young learners because their language and communication skills are still developing. This means that they can't always explain their thinking or what they understand. They can't write yet and so can't complete written tasks. Therefore, you need a system of assessment that is:
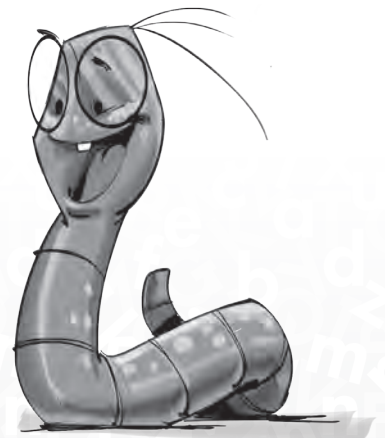
- child-centred
- age appropriate
- developmentally appropriate
- inclusive
- flexible
- made up of different types of assessment
- constant to keep up with development
- evidence-based (not just what you think).

Baseline Assessment suggestions for Grades 1 to 3

On the pages that follow will find examples of Baseline Assessments that can be used at the beginning of Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3.

You will need to conduct these assessments with each learner individually. Set a time limit for each part of the assessment. We recommend you allocate 1 minute for each of the categories in the Baseline Assessments provided on pages 50 to 52. If a learner does not respond correctly to test items (for example, the first 10 letter sounds, the first 5 sight words or the first 7 words in the oral reading passage), apply an 'early stop' rule to avoid frustrating learners who lack the reading skills to respond.

Each Baseline Assessment is designed so that you can record the results for each learner. You will then need to transfer the results for each category onto a class list.

Below is an example of a Baseline Assessment that can be used at the beginning of Grade 1

Name: _____

went to Gr R | Y | N |

Date of birth: _____

Age: _____ Year: _____ Month: _____

Recent eye test: | Y | N |

Recent ear test: | Y | N |

Comments:

1. Colours			
green	☐	black	☐
purple	☐	white	☐
blue	☐	red	☐
yellow	☐	brown	☐
pink	☐	orange	☐

2. Shapes

○	☐	△	▭
☐	☐	☐	☐
⬭	◇	♡	☆
☐	☐	☐	☐

can count up to	3. Number recognition									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Letter recognition/Letter sounds															
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z						
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐						

5. Writing skills			
Can draw according to an instruction. ☐	Can scribble and some scribbles look like letters. ☐	Can trace letters and shapes. ☐	Can write their name. ☐

Below is an example of a Baseline Assessment that can be used at the beginning of Grade 2

Name: _____	Date of birth: _____
Grade 2 school/class: _____	Age: _____ - Year: _____ Month: _____
Eye test: Ear test:	Comments:

1. Letter sounding: Ask learners to listen to a word and then to tell you the first sound they hear
[*Begins to identify initial sounds in words*]

Words	✓	✗	Answers
1. sit			/s/
2. ball			/b/
3. mat			/m/
4. pin			/p/

2. Words: Ask learners to read the sight words below
[*Word recognition: Recognises 20 to 30 familiar words in FAL*]

Words	✓ or ✗	Words	✓ or ✗	Words	✓ or ✗	Words	✓ or ✗
not		then		fun		boy	
she		we		can		her	
were		put		book		see	
me		him		to		is	
it		see		in		and	
a		from		you		he	

3. Story: Read the story to your learners and ask the questions that follow
[*Answers simple oral questions about a story*]

Sam likes to help his mother in the vegetable garden. He helps to water the plants.
He uses his red watering can. Sam waters the spinach, cabbage and green beans.
Sam wants to be a farmer. He wants to grow lots of healthy vegetables.

Questions	✓ or ✗	Answers
1. What colour is Sam's watering can?		red
2. Name one vegetable in Sam's garden.		Any 1 of the following: Spinach, cabbage, beans
3. What does Sam want to be when he grows up?		A farmer
4. Are vegetables a healthy or unhealthy food?		healthy

Below is an example of a Baseline Assessment that can be used at the beginning of Grade 3

Name: _____	Date of birth: _____
Grade 3 school/class: _____	Age: _____ - Year: _____ Month: _____
Eye test: Ear test:	Comments:

1. Letter sounding: Show learners the letters and ask them to tell you the sound for each letter. Show learners the words and ask them to tell you the beginning or end sound.

[*Identifies letter-sound relationships of single letters. Recognises consonant diagraphs "sh" and "ch".*]

a	e	t	b
d	w	r	j
chop	**sh**ip	ri**ch**	fi**sh**

2. Words: Ask learners to read the sight words below

[*Word recognition: Recognises 50 to 60 familiar words in FAL*]

Words	✓ or ✗	Words	✓ or ✗	Words	✓ or ✗	Words	✓ or ✗
read		where		things		very	
came		open		write		took	
happy		sleep		draw		with	

3. Story: Ask learners to read the story and answer the questions.

[*Reads fluently a passage of between 60 and 70 words and answers questions about the text.*]

Story	Words
Ann visits the farm.	4
She helps her grandfather feed the animals.	7
They give food to the pigs. Ann likes the baby pigs.	11
They give seeds to the hens. Ann likes the yellow chicks.	11
They give hay to the cows. Ann likes the brown cow.	11
After feeding the animals, grandfather makes tea.	7
Grandmother brings some cake.	4
They all drink tea and eat cake. This is the best part of the day.	15
Total words	**70**

Comprehension questions. Ask learners the following comprehension questions:

Questions	✓ or ✗	Answers
1. How does Ann help her grandfather?		She helps him feed the animals.
2. What food do the hens eat?		Seeds
3. What colour cow does Ann like?		The brown cow.
4. Who made the tea?		Grandfather

How can you use the baseline assessment data to inform teaching?

Use your baseline assessment data to determine individual reading strengths, weaknesses and needs of the learners in your class.

Look at the data to see who is below and who is above the class average and national benchmarks.

Focus on learners who are below and ask yourself the following questions:
- What am I going to do to make sure the low performers are not below next time?
- How can I respond to the individual needs of these specific learners?
- What are appropriate teaching and learning intervention strategies to address the needs of the low-performers?
- How can I adapt appropriate strategies to my own classroom context?

Reteaching content

When many learners in a class perform poorly in a baseline assessment, it is wise to reteach the content assessed to the whole class.

Your re-teaching can be adapted in 2 ways:
1. **Change the focus**: use the assessment data to find out which aspect of literacy to focus on and target this in your teaching. For example, should you focus on the sound level (phonics), word level or reading and comprehension?
2. **Change the strategy**: review your teaching strategy and consider using a different strategy to teach the same content. For example:
    - Do you need to do more explicit teaching and modelling?
    - Do you need to make the activities more engaging and fun?
    - Do you need to build in more scaffolding?

Catch up programmes

If the assessment results show that there are small groups of learners who have similar needs, you need to decide on an intervention strategy that is most likely to raise achievement or optimise literacy instruction. Intervention implies approaches that are not part of the regular school reading instruction programme.

Research shows that structured interventions work best in one-to-one and small group instruction. There is also little evidence that learners who are performing poorly need different instruction from the learners who have 'got it'. Rather they need more intensive support and practice. This means offering remedial classes after school hours or arranging structured time during school.

> ### Tips for implementing "catch up" programmes or remedial classes
> - Find the right mix of instructional materials and intervention strategies that meets the needs of the learners in your remedial groups.
> - Plan time to work with these groups out of classroom time. This could be during break times or after school.
> - Make sure that the timing of remedial lessons does not mean these learners miss out on important classroom teaching work.
> - You could plan with Teaching Assistants to deliver your 'catch up' programmes. Ensure the Teaching Assistant understands the intervention strategies you have selected and delivers these as intended.
> - Regularly review the progress of learners in your remedial groups to ensure the support provided is helping them to progress. If the support is working they should soon be 'up to speed'.

Intervention strategies

The goal of intervention strategies is to raise the achievement of low-performing learners. Some quality intervention strategies to improve literacy outcomes for all learners are listed below.

I. Provide support to develop phonological and phonemic awareness

Provide practice in the skills listed in the table below.

Skill	Example of teaching/learning activity to develop this skill
Sound discrimination	Choose a series of environmental sounds or letters and ask the learner to tell you the odd one out. For example, make or say the following sounds (the odd one out is shown in italics): • clap, clap, *click*, clap • /b/, /b/, /b/, */d/* Guide learners to identify words that begin or end with the same sound: • pig, *wig*, pin, pot (*/p/ is the beginning sound*) • bat, lot, *mud*, ant (*/t/ is the end sound*)
Recognition of rhyming words	Ask learners to listen to a set of two words and show a "thumbs up" if they rhyme or a "thumbs down" if they do not rhyme: • mat, cat (👍) • ball, bat (👎)
Producing rhyming words	Say or write the following words and ask learners to give or make words that rhyme (nonsense words are acceptable): • can: (*man, fan, ran*) • hen: (*men, ten, Ken*)
Syllable segmentation	Ask learners to break words into parts (syllables) using claps. For example, say the word "reading". Then show how to break it into 2 parts by clapping: read (clap) -ing (clap). Ask learners to repeat new vocabulary words and then break them apart by clapping the syllables in the word: One syllable words (1 clap): *blue, car, spoon* Two syllable words (2 claps): *reading, table, apple* Three syllable words (3 claps): *banana, strawberry, grandfather*
Syllable blending	Ask learners to put parts (syllables) of a word together, using hand movements. Make a first with the left hand and say the first part of the word, for example 'spi'. Then make a fist with the right hand and say the second part of the word, for example 'der'. Move your fists together and say the whole word: spider.
Onset and rime	Give learners lots of practice in building up and breaking down words beginning with a single consonant into onset and rime: • bat = b-at • pin = p-in • red = r-ed
Blending and segmenting simple, single phonemes	Give learners lots of practice in building up (blending) and breaking down (segmenting) words with single phonemes: • Blend "bat": b-a-t = bat • Segment "bat": b-at = bat

## 2. Provide support to develop word recognition skills

Use the examples in the table below to support your learners to recognise and pronounce words (word recognition) and understand the meaning of works in a sentence (comprehension).

Example of teaching/learning activities to develop word recognition skills	
Learning sight words using flashcards	Give learners lots of practice in recognising and reading sight words: • Prepare five flashcards with high frequency sight words from a story you will read. • Show a flashcard to the learner and check they understand the meaning of the word. • Move your finger from left to right under the word and say the word slowly. • Ask the learner to repeat the word. • Use the word in a simple sentence. • Once you have shown all the flashcards, shuffle the pack and repeat the process observing which words the learner can repeat or not. • Ask the learner to use each word in a sentence.
Recognising sight words in a text	• When a learner is reading to you, frame known high frequency sight words by placing your left thumb at the beginning of the word and your right thumb at the end of the word and then ask the learner to read the word. • Get learners to match sight word flashcards with words in a text or story. Ask them to say the word and then use the word in a sentence.
Play word card games 	Word cards are a fun and effective way to reinforce new sight words, new vocabulary words as well as spelling and phonic words. Word cards can be used in activities with individual or small groups of learners: • In a small group, place word cards face down. Learners take turns to turn the cards over and read the word. They can then use the word in a sentence. • In small groups learners can use word cards to play games such as Snap (where learners divide the cards equally and then take turns to lay them in one pile. When a word matches the top word on the pile the first learner to shout out "Snap" retrieves all the cards in the pile. The winner is the learner with the most cards at the end of the game). • Word cards can be sent home so that learners can practise their reading and phonics words. • Word cards can be used to create sentences for learners to read.

3. Provide support to learners at their reading level

Use the baseline assessment results to create same ability reading groups in Grade 2 and 3. This ensures you are using the Group Guided Reading methodology at the right level for each learner in your class. You may find that some of your ability groups need support in phonics and others in word recognition. In this case refer to the activity suggestions in the above tables. Learners who master reading individual words can move up to join a group reading a simple graded reader. For below-average ability groups, use readers that are graded at level 1 or the lowest level in your graded reading scheme.

Good readers can recognise and pronounce words as well as understand the meaning of the words. They may however struggle with reading fluency. Reading fluency involves appropriate reading pace and reading with expression and smoothness. Repeated readings of the same text is an evidence based strategy that increases reading fluency and comprehension.
Some ways to implement this strategy are listed in the box on the next page.
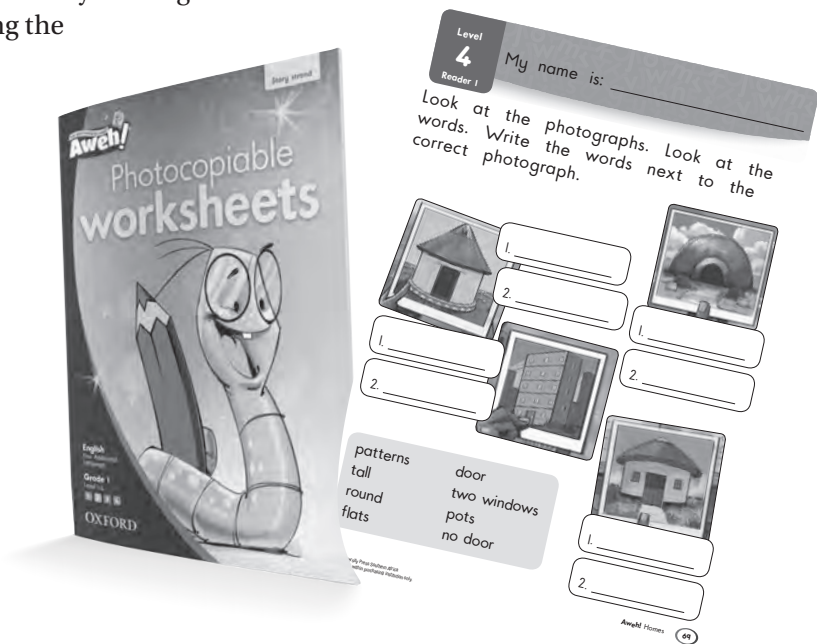
Strategies to increase reading fluency and comprehension

1. Ensure all learners can see and follow the text in a Big Book when you do Shared Reading with the class.
2. Model fluent reading to the class as much as possible. You can also group stronger, more fluent readers with weaker readers during Paired Reading. The stronger reader can provide effective modelling of fluent reading to the weaker learner.
3. Offer repeated opportunities to learners to read the same text or story. This can be done in Group Guided Reading, Paired Reading and Individual Reading. Allow learners to take the reader home and encourage them to read to their family members or care givers.
4. Invite individual learners to read to you. Give them lots of praise and specific feedback as well as tips on how they can improve or prompts to help them to find a way to do this themselves.
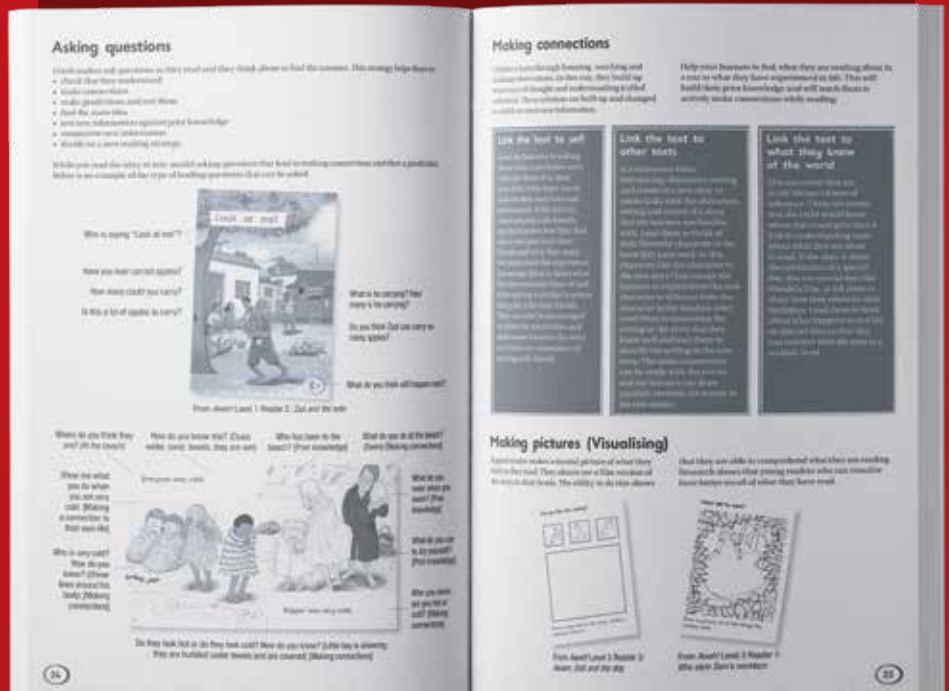
Examples of specific feedback to support reading fluency

"I loved the way you read to me. I could hear you very well and you are becoming a fast reader! Remember, when we see a full stop at the end of a sentence, it means we can take a breath. We call that a pause. Can you try doing that next time?"

"Well done! You read all the words correctly. Can you tell me in your own words what you read?"

"That is a tricky word to read. Remember when you had this problem before? What did you do to fix it?"

"I liked the way your voice got quiet when you read the part about the puppies sleeping. I would like to you to read this to your Mom when you get home."

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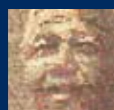
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