

Teaching reading and viewing

Guide for Years 1–3

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The teaching focus

Early childhood classrooms are rich with instructional possibilities that can promote a love of reading. Effective reading instruction in Years 1–3 should balance and blend the teaching of strategies, interactions around literary and non-literary texts, and writing. From the earliest stages, the teaching of reading should focus on skilled reading — a combination of higher-order processes (comprehension) and lower-order processes (decoding). The teaching focus will change as texts are read and re-read over time.

A balanced reading program should include:

- explicit teaching about decoding and comprehension
- guided practice
- independent exploration and practice of what has been taught
- talking about texts.

In the early years, teaching reading involves developing students’:

- phonemic awareness (Prep and Year 1)
- print awareness (Prep)
- phonic knowledge
- fluency in decoding — accurate and automatic decoding
- vocabulary
- grammatical knowledge at word, sentence and text levels
- reading comprehension strategies
- textual knowledge (print, visual, multimodal, electronic).

Selecting texts

In **Years 1 and 2**, teachers should select instructional texts with topics related to the familiar worlds of home, community and school. Students’ knowledge of the world and language is systematically enriched by extensive involvement with literature. By the end of Year 3, students should have been explicitly taught to read and view simple narratives and informational texts.

It is important that English programs and other cross-curricula programs establish authentic purposes for reading texts and provide opportunities for accessing and developing children’s knowledge and interests. Decoding, comprehension and reflection skills are strengthened as students revisit familiar texts and discuss patterns of textual features.

Planning reading lessons

Effective decoding and comprehension strategies should be taught in context. After selecting an appropriate text for reading instruction, teachers should identify the demands of the text in terms of the concepts, text type, textual features and readability level before designing appropriate activities. When topics and texts are familiar, less time is required to build shared prior knowledge.

Teachers should plan a range of activities across the curriculum to:

- build prerequisite prior knowledge
- introduce unfamiliar vocabulary before introducing a new text
- explicitly teach decoding and comprehension strategies at all stages of the reading lesson
- demonstrate how words and images work together to construct meaning
- model thinking processes including:
 - predicting upcoming text content
 - seeking clarification when meaning is not clear
 - constructing mental images
 - inferring
 - summarising
 - repairing comprehension breakdowns (self-correction)
- enable students to operate in the four roles of the reader: code breaker, meaning maker, text user and text analyst.

Suggested teaching sequence

Teachers can ensure that students' reading experiences are successful by planning appropriate activities to be undertaken before, during and after reading. The following tables describe suggested teaching activities, explicit knowledge to be taught and examples of strategies that will help children to become strategic readers of non-literary texts.

Detailed descriptions of the strategies in italics will be provided in a companion document, *Teaching Reading and Viewing: Comprehension strategies and activities for Years 1–9*, available on the QSA website.

Before reading

| Activating, expanding and refining prior knowledge | Teaching activities | Teaching focus | Examples of strategies* |
|--|---|---|--|
| | <p>Part 1: Establishing a purpose for reading (e.g. pleasure, communication of information)</p> <p>Part 2: Activating, expanding, refining prior knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud and talk about familiar texts and topics • Provide meaningful experiences that engage students in exploring new topics, language and text types • Produce texts from shared experiences • Compile word banks of topic vocabulary and words that link ideas • Establish reading goals • Draw attention to ways in which words and images work together to build a context and construct meaning <p>Part 3: Making predictions about upcoming text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop prediction, sampling and confirmation skills using the book cover and illustrations of the new text to be read | <p>Purpose, text and audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual knowledge <p>Language knowledge (drawn from and taught in the context of the current text)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythm and flow of the language • Phonemic awareness • Sound–symbol relationships • Blending • Word parts • Word families • Sight words and topic vocabulary • Print awareness (e.g. directionality) • Features of images and print • Text type <p>Strategies for comprehending texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use contextual and textual knowledge in word recognition (grammar and meaning cues) and decoding (graphophonic cues)[†] | <p>Making meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Be a reading detective</i> • <i>Expert panel</i> • <i>Starting with brainstorming</i> • <i>Concept mapping</i> • <i>Oral cloze</i> • <i>Producing shared texts</i> • <i>Reading aloud</i> • <i>Shared reading</i> • <i>Talking places</i> • Decoding by analogy • Group recitation (rhymes, chants) • Synthetic phonic instruction • Vocabulary hunts • Word sorts/word games <p>Controlling the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Build bridges to meaning</i> • <i>KWL (group)</i> • <i>That reminds me</i> • <i>Top-level structuring</i> |

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† Cueing systems may be either graphophonic (knowledge of letters and letter patterns used to decode words), syntactic (knowledge of grammar in making meaning) or semantic (knowledge of the world — how the world makes sense).

During reading

| | Teaching activities | Teaching focus | Examples of strategies* |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| Retrieving information | <p>Part 1: Retrieving information (literal comprehension)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud a relevant section and “think aloud” the process of using the writer’s cues and prior knowledge in preparing to read, constructing meaning and making inferences • Pose and answer questions during the reading • Locate information, looking for key words • Use guided reading questions to explicitly teach procedures for using contextual and textual knowledge • Collaboratively build a concept map or story map, finding information in the text to guide the mapping • Discuss illustrations and font colour/size. Do they give new information or support information in the written language? • Teach active comprehension strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – developing fluency in decoding – associating ideas in text with what is already known – noting whether predictions about text content are being confirmed – revising prior knowledge if necessary – questioning the text – finding main ideas (literal comprehension) | <p>Purpose, text and audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose for reading • How ideas are organised in different texts and subject matter • Publishing formats (layout, font) <p>Language knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text structure • Sentence structure • Word structure • Vocabulary • Cohesion at whole-text level; relationships among ideas • Punctuation <p>Strategies for comprehending texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word recognition (using grammar and meaning cues) • Decoding (using graphophonic cues) • Predicting, confirming, correcting • Integrating information from different meaning systems using language, visual, gestural, spatial and audio features • Active reading strategies <p>Metacognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active comprehension strategies • Metacognitive awareness about reading and self as a reader • Terminology to talk about language and texts | <p>Making meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Concept mapping</i> • <i>Categorising and reviewing</i> • <i>Contextual definition</i> • <i>Mental imagery</i> • <i>Oral cloze</i> • <i>Reciprocal teaching</i> • <i>Shared reading of print and images</i> • <i>Story mapping</i> • <i>Top-level structuring</i> • <i>Turn on the meaning</i> • <i>USSR</i> • <i>Visualising</i> • <i>Weave ideas while reading</i> • Constructing a graphic outline <p>Controlling the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inquiry chart (group)</i> • <i>KWL</i> • <i>Round up your ideas</i> • <i>Say something</i> • <i>Semantic vocabulary map</i> |

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During reading

| | Teaching activities | Teaching focus | Examples of strategies* |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| Interpreting texts | <p>Part 2: Interpreting texts (inferential and critical comprehension)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use guided reading questions to explicitly teach procedures for using contextual and textual knowledge when inferring, judging and evaluating • Teach active comprehension strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – predicting from title, book cover – predicting from features of images/diagrams – confirming/correcting from initial consonants, illustrations – confirming/correcting from semantic and syntactic cues – finding main ideas – inferring – extracting and organising information – developing fluency in comprehension | <p>Purpose, text and audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural beliefs, values and practices • Relationships between people in communities • Reader–writer relationships • Purpose and text type • Symbolic codes (icons, signs, font colour and size, gesture, facial expression) <p>Language knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of textual features • Phonology • Vocabulary <p>Strategies for comprehending texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use contextual and textual knowledge to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – construct meaning – justify interpretations – identify underlying messages – access surface and deeper meanings – monitor and evaluate meaning <p>Metacognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active comprehension strategies | <p>Making meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Concept mapping</i> • <i>Mental imagery</i> • <i>Oral cloze</i> • <i>Reciprocal teaching</i> • <i>Shared reading (written/visual texts)</i> • <i>Story mapping</i> • <i>That reminds me</i> • <i>Top-level structuring</i> • <i>Visualising setting, characters, phenomena, processes</i> • <i>Weave ideas while reading</i> • Creating word sets (e.g. nouns, verbs) • Interpreting body language in images • Literary report cards • Literary passports • Questioning the text <p>Controlling the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Be a reading detective</i> • <i>Find the hidden meaning</i> • <i>Inking your thinking</i> • <i>KWL</i> • <i>Say something</i> • <i>Top-level structuring</i> • <i>Turn on the meaning</i> |

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After reading

| | Teaching activities | Teaching focus | Examples of strategies* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reflecting and creating personal knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate new knowledge by inviting children to use activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – retelling stories in another mode (e.g. draw a story map after reading or talk about the main idea) – capturing aspects of the reading through art and drama – reading widely around a topic (choose texts that have similar context or choose similar text types) – presenting and talking about completed work – reflecting about purposes for reading, the writer’s language choices, reading strategies and self as a reader • Teach active comprehension strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – organising new ideas in a form that can be retrieved from memory – analysing and evaluating the quality of text | <p>Purpose, text and audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of texts • Representation of people, places, ideas (e.g. positive/negative, happy/sad) • Ways readers are positioned by writers’ language choices • Symbolic codes (e.g. icons) <p>Language knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textual features of images <p>Metacognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metacognitive awareness about aspects of reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – what is liked and disliked, when and why – what is easy or difficult, when and why – what strategies were successful or unsuccessful, when and why • Active comprehension strategies | <p>Transforming meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Be a reading detective</i> • <i>Story mapping</i> • <i>That reminds me</i> • <i>Think books</i> • Exploring how, for example, families, mothers, fathers are represented in a range of picture books • Retelling favourite stories from another viewpoint • Roleplaying situations in stories read <p>Controlling the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KWL (group)</i> • <i>Top-level structuring</i> • <i>Turn on the meaning</i> • <i>Learning logs</i> |

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