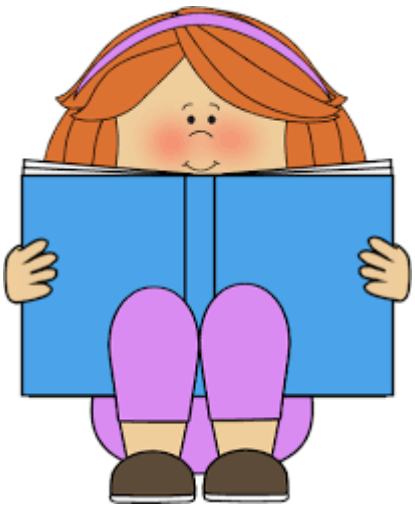
Activities to Develop Higher-order Reading Skills



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The purpose of this booklet is to introduce you to a range of activities you can use in the classroom to develop your pupils' reading skills. It is not an exhaustive list but it will hopefully provide you with many starting points.

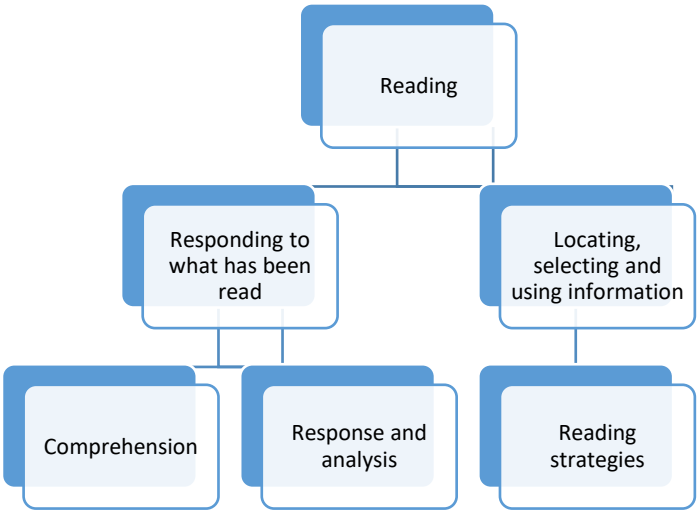
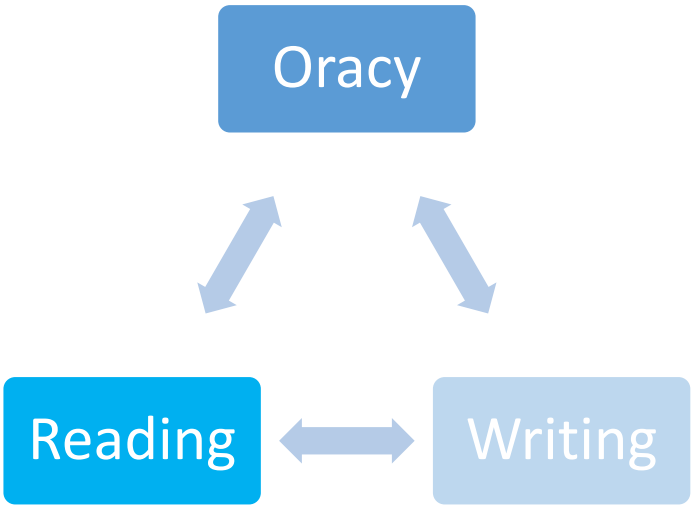


Figure: The structure of the curriculum for reading.

Remember the very close link there is between the 3 aspects of the curriculum. Often an activity that you use to develop reading can be a forerunner for an oracy or writing activity.



Predicting

This helps the readers to activate prior knowledge about a topic, so they begin to join what they know with the new material in the text.
Predictions are based upon clues in the text such as pictures, illustrations, subtitles and plot. Clues may also come from prior knowledge about the author, text form or content.
Readers can be encouraged to make personal predictions before and during reading. These should be justified with reference to the text wherever possible. 'During' reading, effective readers adjust and refine earlier predictions as new information is gleaned and new connections are made.
Pupils can also use predicting to identify unknown words either before or after decoding. Pupils need to determine whether the word makes sense in this context.

Split Images

Learners work in pairs and take it in turns to describe illustrations in a text. Ideally, texts should be short, unfamiliar and have a strong, progressive plot. The illustrations need to provide enough information for learners to make informed predictions.

- Learners take in turns to view a page with an illustration and describe it for his or her partner. The partner is not allowed to look. The pupil describing the illustration should begin to make predictions about the illustrations.
- The second pupil then views the next illustration and describes it building upon his/her partner's storyline and prediction.
- This continues until the text is completed.
- Provide time for pupils to read the text. Encourage them to reflect upon their predictions.

Personal Predictions

Completing this activity enables learners to build some expectations of the text and activate their background knowledge before reading.

- Learners read the title, author and cover page to make and record an initial prediction about the text.
- Provide them with a selection of key words from the text and ask them to sort the key words into categories (e.g. characters, setting, events).
- Using these words, pupils make a second prediction about the text.
- Pupils share their predictions with a partner/small group, to compare and substantiate thoughts and ideas with others.
- Pupils read the text.
- Pupils reflect upon similarities and differences between predictions made and the actual text.

Check the Text

This works best when completed as a small group or partner activity. It helps learners to use pictures, photographs, diagrams or illustrations to make predictions about the text. The teacher covers the text so that pupils can only see the diagram, pictures or photographs.

- Pupil examine and discuss any diagrams, illustrations or photographs in a text.
- Pupils create text that matches the diagrams, illustrations or photographs.
- Pupils compare their version with the actual text.

The Iron Man

Objective: understand how the different characters affect the plot

Read to the end of chapter 2. Did you think the characters would do what they did in the book? Compare what you thought they would do with what they did. I have started the task for you.

Character	What you thought he would do	What he did do
Hogarth		
The Iron Man		
Hogarth's dad		

Crystal Ball

This activity encourages the reader to draw on explicit and implicit information from a text. Once the whole text has been read, pupils consider the future of a main character.

- After reading a text, organise pupils into small groups. Each group is allocated a character from the text.
- Pupils generate important information about their character's likes, dislikes, interests or personality that were stated explicitly or implied in the text.
- Pupils now work to create a 'future' for the character (e.g. where they are, what they are doing, who they are with). Predictions should stem from information in the text and **pupils must be able to explain their predictions with reference to the text.**

Think Sheet

Pupils are provided with a series of headings or questions in order for them to make and record predictions about what information may be in a text. This activates background knowledge and gives pupils a purpose for reading. They will absorb information better and engage with the text, because they are comparing their ideas with the text.

- Using a prepared sheet of headings or questions, pupils work with a partner to consider, discuss and record what the answers might be, before reading the text.
- Pupils then study the text and record the relevant information for each question from the text in the 'What the text says' section.
- Pupils compare their predictions with the text.

Anticipation

This consists of a series of statements about a topic. The statements may reflect common misconceptions or consist of accurate information. Prior to reading pupils use their existing knowledge to categorise statements as either true or false. Pupils then read the text to confirm or reject their predictions. This activity encourages pupils to substantiate their findings by referring to the text and using their own words to explain concepts.

- Provide pupils with statements from a text that are either true or false. List these in the order in which they appear in the text.
- Before reading pupils mark the statements predicting whether they are true or false. Pupils discuss these and substantiate their point of view by drawing upon their prior knowledge (Pupils could be asked to record these).
- Pupils read the text to confirm or reject their predictions. Pupils record whether the statement is true or false. Pupils provide references in their chart to show where the information was found (e.g. Page 1, paragraph 2).

Class Prediction

- From the book on which the class is working, select a significant piece of text, several paragraphs long.
- Transcribe the text, one paragraph per slide.
- Project the first slide and read it aloud: the reading may be done by the teacher, or by a pupil who is a competent reader, or it may be a class in unison reading.
- Children are then invited to comment on the text: on things that interest them, puzzle them, on things in the text which they suspect will be important and which ought to be remembered. They are invited to try to identify the type of text and to work within their knowledge of its particular conventions. They are also invited to speculate on what the writer will present in the next paragraph. Thus the children are required to explore both the matter and the manner of the text: to read like a writer and to discuss like a critic.

The suggestions which the children offer are accepted and referred back to the text to test their validity and they are, if justified, accepted, or, if they are demonstrably a clear mis-reading, they are rejected.

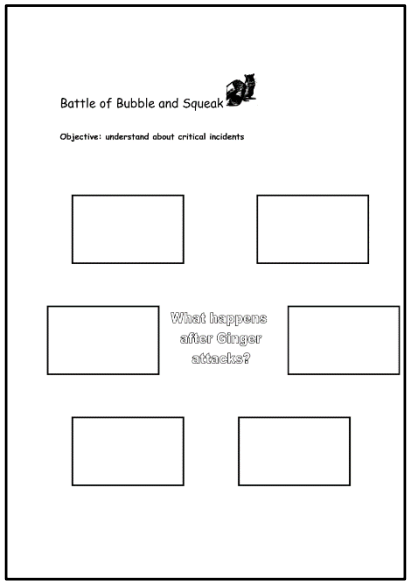
Sometimes, there is insufficient evidence to make a decision and the suggestion is put on hold until the appropriate evidence appears. The atmosphere while this activity is being pursued must be such that participants are able both to speculate and to change their minds in the light of the discussion without feeling threatened.
The role of the teacher during this part of the activity is to intervene as little as is possible without allowing the discussion to stop. S/he must be carefully to avoid giving anything away in the interventions that s/he makes and must ensure that any questions s/he asks to promote discussion are open-ended ones. The more the children discuss and argue and justify their contributions and the less teacher contributes the better.
When the possibilities of the first paragraph are deemed to be exhausted and the children have predicted the main ideas or substance of the succeeding one, the next paragraph is projected and used to check the discussion of the previous one. Then the process indicated in respect of the first one is repeated. This activity continues, paragraph by paragraph, until the extract is completed.
After the last paragraph has been projected and discusses, the teacher projects the whole extract again, paragraph by paragraph and the class re-reads it and, with the benefit of the hindsight acquired as a result of the activity of the previous stages of the procedure, identifies precisely the cues and cohesion ties which exist within it. Thus, not only do they become explicitly aware of the nature of text cohesion, but also they consolidate their understanding and their memorising of the extract as a whole.
The activity can be used to start a sequence of work, to focus attention on a critical incident or a significant section of text, which occurs in the context of a sequence of work. It is particularly effective in developing reading for meaning and in developing discussion skills. Research evidence indicates that material presented in this way is not only understood but also is remembered and used accurately in a variety of appropriate contexts.

Critical Incident

The critical incident technique is related to group prediction and involves similar aims and processes. Like group prediction, it can be used with both fiction and non-fiction texts and so it has cross curricular application. As with group prediction, the choice of extract for critical incident is very important. The text must be part of a whole and it must contain within itself textual indications that it needs a context before it is totally explicable. It must also contain enough evidence to enable children to speculate on possible contexts.
Obviously, the task of the children is to speculate, on the basis of the evidence available to them in the extract, on the events or causes which led up to the critical incident, on the events or effects, which followed the incident or on possible ways of solving any problems posed by the incident. In fact, the pupils are asked to provide the context for the incident.
The most usual use of this technique is as a starting point for a sequence of lessons on a topic. If this is the use to which the activity is put the pupils are able as further work develops to check their initial speculations against a gradually unfolding context and in the light of the increasing evidence, to refine or to revise their perceptions in a conscious way. Of course, they may also find that their initial perceptions are confirmed.

- Present the pupils with duplicated copies of the critical incident and ask them to work in groups to explore the text. Other possible ways of exploring the text would include group prediction before the children were given the text, or the teacher reading the text aloud to the children while they followed the reading. Whichever technique is chosen, a thorough exploration of the text must take place as a first stage.

- The pupils are asked to speculate on the context of the incident, preferable under headings such as events or causes leading up to the incident, events and results occurring after the incident and implications and significances of the incident. At this stage, the role of the teacher is to accept, and, if necessary, to refine the suggestions of the pupils and to record them in such a way that they may be kept so that, as further evidence appears during succeeding lessons, accurate initial speculations may be confirmed and inaccurate ones may be eliminated. At this stage of the activity, the teacher must avoid the temptation to supply evidence not contained in the text.
- In succeeding lessons, as further evidence becomes available, it is related to the record of the children's speculations. It is important to indicate when the pupils' thinking from the evidence available to them indicates logical or feasible solutions even if they are not actual ones.



Key Questioning

This activity involves reading, talking, listening, inquiring, producing a spider plan as a prelude to re-reading and continuing to explore the text. It is another form of prediction.

- It is assumed that the teacher and the class have reached a mid-point in a story / unit of work so that the pupils have an incomplete picture of the world of that text. Thus there will be pertinent questions which can be raised. The class as a whole is asked to brainstorm the list of questions to which answers are needed.
- At this stage, the class is organised into small groups and each group discusses the list of questions and decides on the one which, for that group, is the ID question. Different groups may choose different questions or, all the groups may choose the same one.
- This is the spider plan stage. Each group places its question in what would be the body of the spider. Pupils, still in groups, think around the chosen question in as relevantly speculative a manner as possible; they share their speculations and check them against their existing knowledge and against their sense of the probable and the logical. Agreed, relevant speculations are listed on the legs of the spider. Pattern is established between the question and the relevant speculations as the children rehearse, and, in doing so, revise their existing knowledge.
- The groups now share their spider plans and discuss them.
- The class moves on to the next stage of the text and compare and contrast their spider plans with their new knowledge.

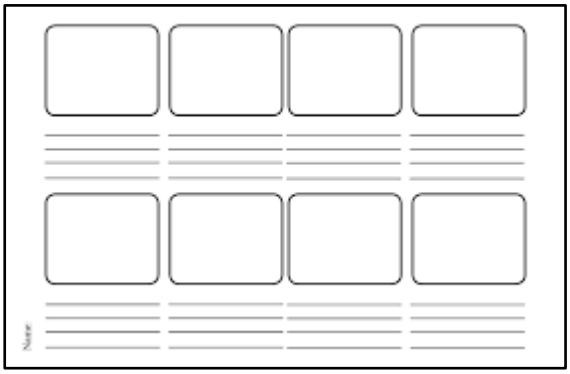
Sequencing

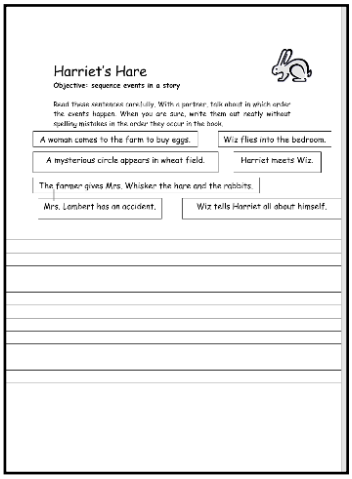
This is a group activity which involves collaborative reading and re-reading and focused or task related talking during which children's attention is directed to identifying the cues within a text which indicates the order in which the writer has arranged his/her material. Like a number of the other techniques discussed, sequencing reinforces and develops prediction, deduction, and close, critical and reflective reading. It is particularly good for helping to develop an awareness of text cohesion ties across both sentences and paragraphs: it also shows up the absence of such ties thus indicating poor craftsmanship on the part of the writer.

- Choose your text and slice it electronically, or in hard copy, into either: lines of print, sentences or paragraphs, depending on the age of the children and your learning objective. If you slice the text into lines of print, you are likely to be focusing on cohesion ties within the sentence. If you slice the text into sentences, you are likely to be concerned with cohesion ties across sentences but within a paragraph and sentence order within a paragraph. If you slice into paragraphs, you will be focusing on cohesion ties which cross paragraphs and consequently, your language focus will be on the order of the paragraphs within a group of paragraphs or in a chapter or in a story
- Jumble the sections together and present a group of children with the task of assembling the segments into an acceptable order.
- Give out unsliced copies of the text and ask the groups of pupils to compare their assembled texts with the author's version. Where the pupils' version differs from the original, they must be asked to justify their arrangement. If their arrangement can be justified, it must be accepted.

Like the other techniques discussed, group sequencing develops reading for meaning, aids the memorising of comprehended material, enhances awareness of text cohesion devices and promotes paragraph construction and paragraph order concepts. It also involves pupils in problem solving talk. Teacher discussion with the groups throughout and after the activity is important in helping to make the learning explicit.
Teachers should note that sometimes with texts taken from fields other than imaginative literature, or from text types other than those with a narrative structure, more than one order may make sense and therefore is acceptable. Consequently, teachers need to look carefully at the order suggested by the pupils for sometimes their sense of text cohesion is better than that of the author. Sometimes, the sequencing activity will demonstrate that the text cohesion of an extract is so weak that it is possible to arrange the segments of text in any order without there being any significant effect on meaning. This is frequently the case with texts which have been written for the less able reader and with the texts in structured reading schemes for initial and emergent readers. Such texts are not merely badly written: they are ineffective as learning material.

For younger children, illustrations can be sequenced, or children can draw pictures in sequence on a storyboard.





Harriet's Hare

Objective: sequence events in a story

Read these sentences carefully. With a partner, talk about in which order the events happen. When you are sure, write them out neatly without spelling mistakes in the order they occur in the book.

A woman comes to the farm to buy eggs.

Wiz flies into the bedroom.

A mysterious circle appears in wheat field.

Harriet meets Wiz.

The farmer gives Mrs. Whisker the hare and the rabbits.

Mrs. Lambert has an accident.

Wiz tells Harriet all about himself.

Comparing

As pupils start to make connections, they will also begin to make 'comparisons'. This involves pupils thinking more specifically about the **similarities** and **differences** between the connections they are making. When pupils make comparisons, they may begin asking questions,

e.g. How is this different to what I do?
How is this text the same as the other one I read?
How is this information different to what I think about this issue?

Venn Diagrams

Completing Venn Diagrams allows learners to focus on making comparisons between topics, text types, authors, characters, plot and facts.

e.g. Invite pupils to compare two characters. Pupils work in pairs to record things they remember about each character (character traits, actions, physical appearance). Pupils decide which things are common to both characters and transfer this information to the intersecting space on the Venn diagram.

Like or Unlike?

This activity encourages pupils to make connections and comparisons between what they know about their world and the way characters or people are represented in a text.

- Select a main character person from a text. Identify their role (e.g. Sarah is a teenage girl).
- Before reading the text, invite pupils to share what they know about real-life people who fulfil the same role.
- Record responses on a flip chart.
- Read the text.
- Discuss how the person or character has been presented in the text. Record. Draw pupils' attention to any differences or similarities between what they know and how the characters or people may have been presented in the text. Discuss 'stereotyping' if appropriate.
- Consider how the author could change the way the character or person was represented and how this would impact on the text

Just Like

This encourages readers to make connections and comparisons between a selected character and characters from other texts or people they know in real life.

- After reading a text, direct pupils to select a main character or person.
- Invite pupils to brainstorm all the character traits related to their chosen person or character. These character traits should be listed in the first column of a chart.
- Pupils then make comparisons between the characters and themselves, other characters in different texts or people they know. This involves pupil thinking more specifically about the similarities and differences between the characters and others.

Double Entry Journal

This is a useful activity to use with older pupils as it encourages them to consider the similarities and differences within and across texts.

- Having read a given text, pupils record key events from the text and note any connections they make. Similarities and differences can also be noted – e.g. This storyline reminds me of the previous book I read called ___, except the main character was ... whereas in this book ...

Double Entry Journal	
Text: Charlotte's Web	Author: E.B White
Idea from Text	Connection or Comparison
Fern lives on a farm. She has a pet pig.	Harriet lives on a farm. She has a pet hare (?!)

Connecting

Efficient readers make sense of text by making strong connections between their prior knowledge and new information presented in the text. Pupils need to be able to continue to use this strategy 'during' reading to continually make connections as they read, and not just at the 'before' reading stage.

Pupils may make...

TEXT-TO-SELF connections – where they think about their lives and connect their own personal experiences to the information in the text.

TEXT-TO-TEXT connections – which involve readers thinking about other texts written by the same author or with common themes, style, organization, structure, characters or content.

TEXT-TO-WORLD connections – which involve readers thinking about what they know about the world outside their personal experience, their family or their communities.

Connecting with the Text

This activity helps learners to make personal connections with a text while reading.

- Provide pupils with post-it notes to use while reading a text. They use these to signal any connections they make while reading the text. These connections may be related to personal experiences, other texts they have read, similar characters, things they have done, or something else they know about. It is useful for independent readers to do this whilst reading a longer novel, as part of their Reading Journal work.
- Provide time for pupils to complete a 'Connecting with the Text' chart which includes headings sentence openers such as, 'This story reminded me of a time when...', 'The story reminds me of the text...because...', 'The character of ...reminds me of ...because...', 'I think knowing something about...helped me to understand this text'.

Before and After Chart

The 'Before-and-After Chart' is a way of organising information elicited through initial discussion sessions and it supports learners to make connections to what they know about a topic before reading.

- In the 'Before' section of the chart, pupils write down any information they know about the selected topic (You may wish to provide 'headings' to guide them). This is recorded in the form of key words or phrases and placed onto the 'Before' column titled, 'What I/We Know About___'.
- After reading, provide time to record all the new information learnt and to identify any misconceptions/conflicting information for further investigation.
- Encourage pupils to consider any information they would still like to find out. This can be entered into a 'What I/We Still Want to Find Out' column and can provide motivation for further research.
- N.B. Alternatively, this chart could be completed over a period of time (i.e. during a half-term).

Think and Share

Pupils can use this approach to make comparisons between characters in a story, as well as to their own experiences.

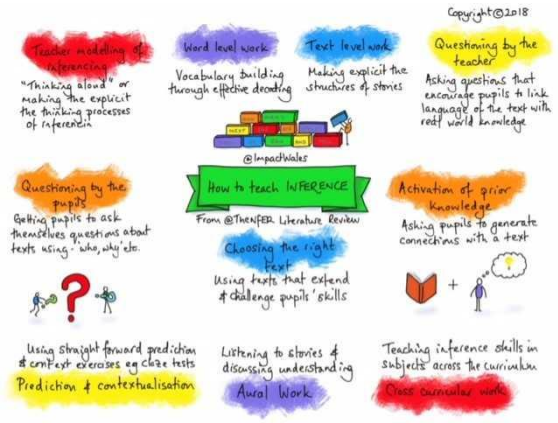
- Provide time for pupils to work in small groups to list the key events of a shared text. Each pupil in the group should list the events.
- Allocate a character to each pupil or pair within the small group.
- Direct pupils to reflect upon each event and consider what their character was feeling and thinking during each event. These feelings and thoughts can be recorded in the second column.
- N.B. An alternative approach would be to allocate a particular character to small groups. Each small group then considers certain events from their characters' perspective. A 'jigsaw' process can then be used to share and compare information across groups.

What's in a Text?

This helps learners to make connections to other texts and to draw upon their knowledge of the organisation and structure of particular text forms. It works best with pupils in older pupils during Guided Reading sessions.

- Provide small groups with a common text.
- Provide a list of questions about the selected text form to stimulate discussion and activate prior knowledge - e.g. Questions about 'fables'...
  - What other texts have you read that were fables?
  - What do you know about fables?
  - What sort of words or phrases do you expect to find in a fable?
  - How do fables usually begin?
  - How do fables usually end?
  - What types of characters are usually found in a fable?
  - Use what you already know about fables, the cover, title and illustrations to make predictions about this text.
- Pupils answer the questions and then read the text provided.
- Pupils then discuss the text-to-text connections made during reading, such as how the selected text form was similar or different from other texts.

Inferring



Efficient readers take information from a text and add their own ideas to make 'inferences'. They make predictions, draw conclusions and make judgements to create interpretations of a text. Making inferences allows pupils to move beyond the literal text, to make assumptions about what is not precisely stated in the text – i.e. to read 'between' the lines.

Efficient readers will infer the meaning of unknown words using contextual clues and pictures/diagrams.

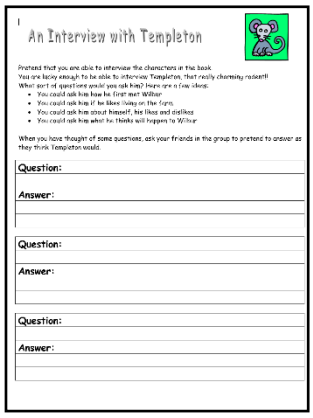
Character Self-Portrait

Pupils discuss inferences and opinions about characters and listen to the views of others. This is a useful activity for younger/SEN pupils.

- Construct a framework for pupils, consisting of appropriate sentence starters that relate to the text (Pupils will adopt the first-person character role when writing – i.e. I am..., I live..., I feel...)
- Jointly choose a character from the text with pupils.
- Pupils discuss the character and then complete the sentences.
- Pupils record their responses.
- When feeding back, pupils must refer to the text to support their responses for each completed sentence opener.

Interviews

Pupils role-play a question and answer session. One pupil takes on the role of a character or person while the other pupil asks the questions. This activity enables pupils to make inferences about a person or character's actions and behaviours.


An Interview with Templeton

Pretend that you are able to interview the characters in the book.
You are lucky enough to be able to interview Templeton, that really charming rascal!!
What sort of questions would you ask him? Here are a few ideas:

- You could ask him how he first met Wilbur
- You could ask him if he likes living on the farm
- You could ask him about himself, his likes and dislikes
- You could ask him what he thinks will happen to Wilbur

When you have thought of some questions, ask your friends in the group to pretend to answer as they think Templeton would.

Question:

Answer:

Question:

Answer:

Question:

Answer:

Rating Scales

This activity encourages readers to discuss and evaluate the qualities displayed in characters or people in texts, and to justify their assessments in small group or whole class discussions.

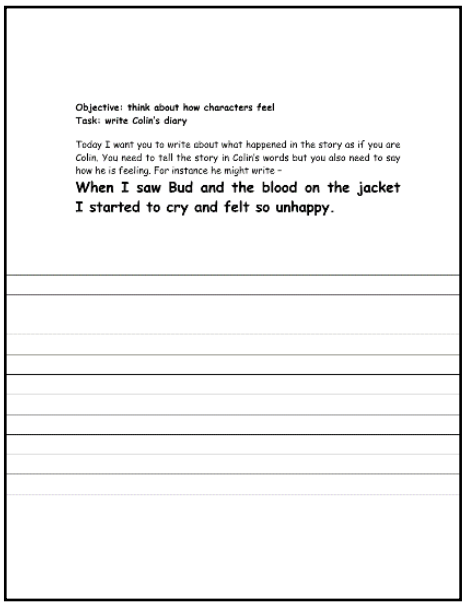
- In small groups, pupils select a main character or person to 'rate'.
- List a range of different traits (e.g. neat, bossy, friendly, helpful) and their opposites to create a class word bank.
- Provide time for pupils to discuss the selected character or person and their traits.
- Pupils then work individually to make inferences about the character or person and rate them on the scale.
- Encourage pupils to refer to the text to validate their ratings. Pupils record these justifications.
- Extension: Make ratings at different points in the text. Discuss why the rating changes at different points in the story. Alternatively, pupils could consider the rating from the perspective of another character in the text.

School Report

School Report is an activity where pupils prepare a traditional school report for a selected character or person. Pupils need to determine the 'appropriate' subject areas and make comments about the character or person based upon information obtained and inferred from the text.

What's My Point of View?

Pupils are asked to discuss events from a text from different points of view in order to stimulate them to make inferences, judgements and build a deeper understanding of actions and behaviour. In small groups, pupils discuss the key events and actions of characters from an allocated character's point of view. This can then be recorded individually in the form of a diary entry.



Objective: think about how characters feel
Task: write Colin's diary

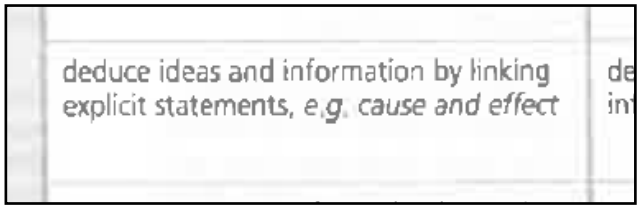
Today I want you to write about what happened in the story as if you are Colin. You need to tell the story in Colin's words but you also need to say how he is feeling. For instance he might write –

When I saw Bud and the blood on the jacket I started to cry and felt so unhappy.

Developing Dialogue

Pupils work in pairs to create the dialogue of two characters or people at a particular time. Pupils are encouraged to make their own interpretations of a text and to consider that others may have different interpretations. Pupils discuss the characters or people and what they would be saying. They then create and practise their improvised dialogue and present to an audience. Pupils can then discuss how and why the dialogues varied, referring to the text to support their ideas.

Deduction & Inference


deduce ideas and information by linking explicit statements, *e.g. cause and effect*

- A deduction is where you take several statements or facts and say, "You said you went to medical school, work in a hospital, and you saw a person you referred to as a 'patient'. I deduce that you are a doctor." It is an educated guess that is probably correct.
- An inference is less concrete. "You said you were a doctor, from that I infer that you are intelligent, care about people, and work in a hospital. "
-

Think of a deduction as taking a lot of information, and distilling it down to one fact, an inference is the opposite, take one fact, and extrapolate it out into several inferences.

Deduction = Fact X + Fact Y + Fact Z = A

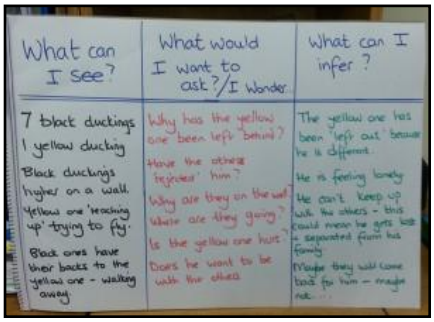
Inference = A (therefore I assume) Fact X, Fact Y, and Fact Z.

-

https://www.reddit.com/r/explainlikeimfive/comments/26svdo/eli5_the_difference_between_a_deduction_and_an/ - Accessed 4.10.18

<u>Daily Picture</u>

For children to become more 'thoughtful' readers they need regular practice in how to deduce and infer information; to become better at looking for 'clues' and reaching conclusions that can be justified.
Using pictures on a regular basis can be a great way to support the development of these skills, which in turn, can be applied to other reading experiences across the curriculum.
Source some suitable photographs and display them on the whiteboard each morning. The pictures you choose will depend on the ages of your children of course.
A grid like the one below can help – so you can model your thoughts with children before asking them to work independently.
It is the difference between what we can SEE and what we then might **deduce and infer** that children need to be taught and have opportunities to practise.
Encourage them to observe and notice the obvious details – then pose the 'I wonder' questions - before going on to infer things that can be justified by reasons. This way they can 'feel' the differences between the literal and making inferences.



<u>Gallery Walk</u>

Another way is to have a series of pictures that you have 'hidden' around the room. They could be numbered so they have to visit them in order. Give children a clipboard and as they walk around the pictures - maybe ask them to:

- record two or three things they can see
- think of something that has just happened before the picture was taken
- predict what happens next
- write a speech bubble for any people or characters in the picture
- write or draw two or three things they deduce / infer from the picture

A further extension might be to make connections between the pictures – What do they have in common? Is there a theme that you would apply to all of the pictures?

This can be the start of a P4C (Philosophy for Children) session where further 'juicy' questions can be formulated and discussed. A photo could be 'voted' for to take into the deeper discussion session(s) http://www.thinkingchild.org.uk/a-picture-a-day-developing-inference-and-deduction/

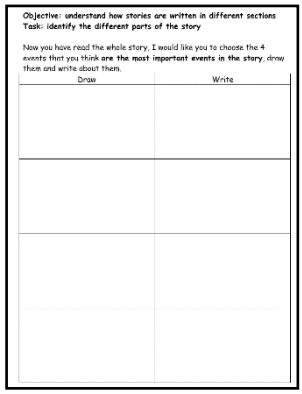
- Accessed 4.10.18

Synthesizing

When comprehending text, efficient readers use 'synthesizing' to bring together information that may come from a variety of sources. Synthesizing involves readers piecing information together – like pieces of a jigsaw.

As pupils read and use synthesizing, they stop at selected places in a text and think about what has been read. This encourages them to keep track of what is happening in the text.

Plot Profile


Objective: understand how stories are written in different sections
Task: identify the different parts of the story

Now you have read the whole story, I would like you to choose the 4 events that you think are the most important events in the story, draw them and write about them.

Draw	Write

This provides a framework for learners to determine the main events of a story. They can synthesise the information and rate the 'excitement'/'interest' level at each event. It helps pupils to understand story structure, particularly the build-up and climax of the narrative, particularly if carried out for a number of different texts where the profiles can be compared.

- After reading and re-reading a text, pupils discuss and list the main events in order.
- In small groups, pupils consider each event and determine its level of excitement. The excitement level can then be plotted onto a graph to create a profile of the plot.

Synthesis Journal

This provided a framework for pupils to use when synthesising information about a topic collected from various sources (possibly representing a range of perspectives). This will need to be modelled many times before pupils can independently create their own journal. This is a very useful tool for homework research tasks to teach pupils how to avoid 'copying' chunks of text downloaded from the internet!

- Pupils select their own topic.
- Pupils gather information from a variety of sources (e.g. texts, a DVD, the internet, their classmates etc.).
- Pupils record key information from each source onto a Synthesis Journal framework.
- Pupils review key information from each source and create a synthesis of the ideas presented. Pupils consider any different perspectives presented.

Synthesis Journal			
	Source 1: Reference Book	Source 2: Website	Source 3: Visit
Information			

In-basket

In-basket takes its name from the in-tray or in-basket of the office. Its purpose is to give pupils the experience of sorting and sifting, which of course, involves discriminating between the relevant and irrelevant and, if appropriate, prioritising for action. The emphasis is on group reading and talking. Often, the in-basket activity is a prelude to sequencing. However, it can be used in other contexts. English teachers at both primary and secondary phases have found it a useful technique for enabling pupils to sort our references and quotations relating to different characters in a novel or play as a preparation for writing a character sketch At a more sophisticated level, it can be used to cause children to differentiate among a variety of different kinds of writing.

- Make a selection of a variety of kinds of texts which should include all the material relevant to the ultimate purpose as well as irrelevant items.
- Organise the children into groups and give each group an envelope containing a complete set of the miscellaneous materials and ask them to sort them out. Make clear to the children what they are intended to end up with: 'collect together and organise into a sensible arrangement all the material to do with electricity' or 'find and put into the right order all the instructions for making a spice rack'.

Creating Images

Efficient readers use all their sense to continually create images as they read text. The images that individuals create are based on their prior knowledge. Sensory images help readers to draw conclusions, make predictions, interpret information, remember details and support overall comprehension.

Pupils need to be given the opportunity to share their images (through talk, drawing, drama etc.).

Picture This

This is a comprehension strategy of creating images. After listening to a text, but not viewing any illustrations, pupils are invited to create a visual representation of a part of the text.

Sensory Chart

Sensory charts can be created on an individual basis, but work best when created with a partner.

- Provide time for pairs to read a self-selected section of a text.
- At the end of reading, encourage pupils to work together to record, pictorially or using key words, what they text so far 'looks like', 'feels like' or 'sounds like'.
- Encourage pupils to share and compare their images.

Post Your Senses

Provide pupils with post-it notes to be used during reading. Invite pupils to place stick-on notes on the text in places where they think of a strong image (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, emotional etc.).
Pupils make brief notes about each image. Pupils share their images with others and discuss how the images helped them to understand the text.

Changing Images

- Select a text to read aloud to pupils. Do not share any illustrations with them.
- Stop at a selected place in the text. On the format (shown below) invite pupils to sketch or write about their mental image in Box 1 ('My first image').
- Organise learners into pairs to discuss and share their mental images.
- Continue reading aloud to another selected point in the text.
- Allow enough time for learners to add to or re-create their images.
- Invite learners to reconsider their images at the end of the text, in order to help them understand that mental images evolve and change as more and more information is gathered from a text and new interpretations are developed. Images also change as a result of sharing other readers.

Changing Images	
My first image	My image after talking with my partner
My image after hearing more of the text	My image at the end of the text

Open Mind Portrait

Pupils are invited to create a portrait of a character and to then record key words to describe the character's thoughts and feelings.

- After reading a text, direct pupils to fold a large blank sheet of paper in half.
- On one half of the sheet, ask pupils to select and then draw a portrait of a character from their text.
- Pupils then trace the outline of the portrait onto the other half of the sheet. No facial details should be included in this second drawing.
- Invite pupils to record words or pictures onto the portrait that describes the feelings and thoughts of their chosen character.
- Provide time for pupils to share their portraits and descriptive words with each other, explaining reasons for their choices.

Information Images

This encourages pupils to practise creating images when reading informational texts as well as literary texts.

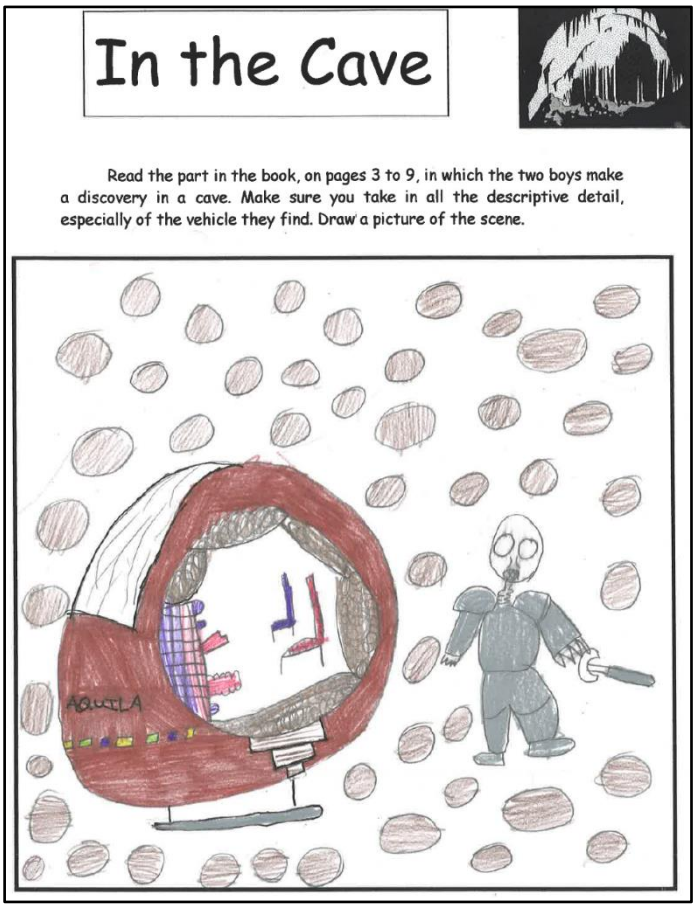
- After reading a section of an informational text, invite pupils to work in small groups to create images that represent the key information.
- Provide pupils with large sheets of paper to create the images so posters can be displayed.
- Encourage pupils to represent the information as two different images.
- Provide time for small groups to share and explain their images with the whole class.

Graphic modelling

This is a good way of checking children's understanding of detailed text. This activity is also a good precursor to descriptive writing.

- Choose a text which is characterised by the marked use of circumstantial detail of an acutely visual kind. Good descriptive writing of a place, or a person, or an object, or a happening is the kind of material required.

- Organise the children into small groups and set them one of the activities which will cause them to explore the text in some detail- cloze procedure with the deletions chosen to highlight the visual qualities of the text is a good choice: text marking or group sequencing are also appropriate at this stage.
- The children are at this stage asked to work as individuals and to draw what they have just read. This should not be interpreted as 'read a passage, draw a picture'. The drawing must model the written text very closely and it must re-create it in another medium. This is really another form of comprehension since without a good understanding of the language, the aesthetic qualities and the organisational features of an original, the pupils are not able to recreate the text in another medium.
- The group then discusses the drawings, referring back to the original text to check on each individuals' comprehension.



In the Cave

Read the part in the book, on pages 3 to 9, in which the two boys make a discovery in a cave. Make sure you take in all the descriptive detail, especially of the vehicle they find. Draw a picture of the scene.

Excerpt from Charlotte's Web

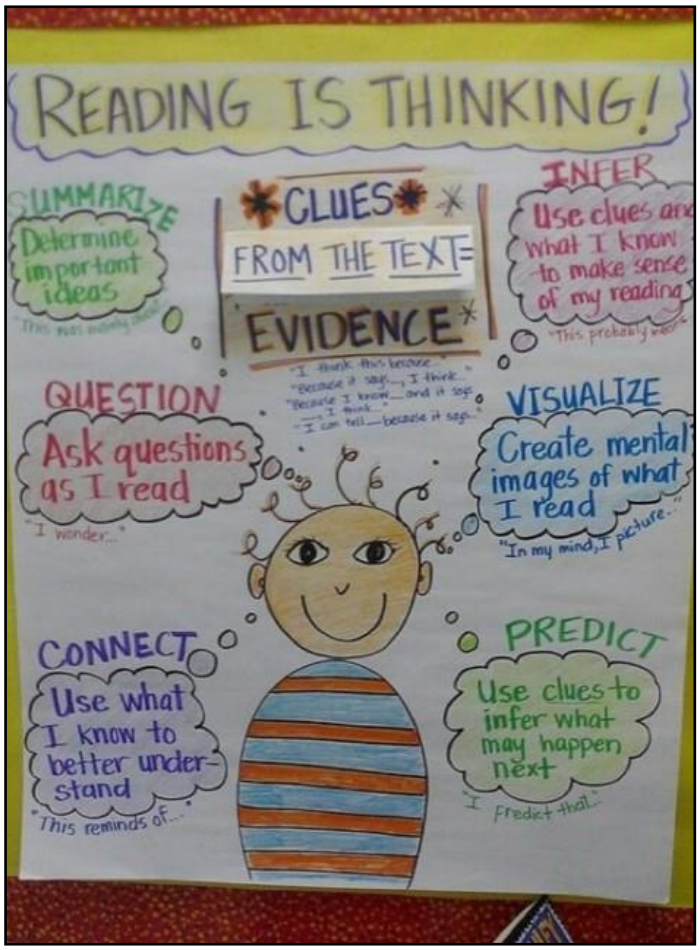
The barn was very large. It was very old. It smelled of hay and it smelled of manure. It smelled of the perspiration of tired horses and the wonderful sweet breath of patient cows. It often had a sort of peaceful smell as though nothing bad could happen ever again in the world. It smelled of grain and of harness dressing and of axle grease and of rubber boots and of new rope. And whenever the cat was given a fish head to eat, the barn would smell of fish. But mostly it smelled of hay, for there was always hay in the great loft up overhead. And there was always hay being pitched down to the cows and the horses and the sheep.

The barn was pleasantly warm in winter when the animals spent most of their time indoors, and it was pleasantly cool in summer when the big doors stood wide open to the breeze. The barn had stalls on the main floor for the work horses, tieups on the main floor for the cows, a sheepfold down below for the sheep, a pigpen down below for Wilbur, and it was full of all sorts of things that you find in barns: ladders, grindstones, pitch forks, monkey wrenches, scythes, lawn mowers, snow shovels, ax handles, milk pails, water buckets, empty grain sacks, and rusty rat traps. It was the kind of barn that swallows like to build their nests in. It was the kind of barn that children like to play in. And the whole thing was owned by Fern's uncle, Mr. Homer L. Zuckerman.

Self-questioning

Efficient readers continually think of questions 'before', 'during' and 'after' reading to assist them to comprehend text. Often these questions are formed spontaneously and naturally, with one question leading to the next. Questions may relate to the content, style, structure, important messages, events, actions, inferences, predictions, author's purpose, or may be an attempt to clarify meaning.

Pupils' own questions provide a framework for 'active' reading, engaging them in the text as they go in search of answers. Pupils need to be aware that answers to all questions may not always be in the text.



<u>Clouds of Wonder</u>

It is important that pupils be actively thinking during the process of reading. Pupils can be encouraged to think about characters, events, settings, actions, problems or solutions presented in a text and to generate personal questions that evolve as they read.

- Pairs read a section of a text together (e.g. one page, two paragraphs).
- Encourage pupils to reflect on this section and generate 'I wonder...' questions.
- Pupils record their questions on their individual 'Clouds of Wonder' sheet.
- Pupils share and discuss their 'I wonder...' questions.

Stop-and-Think Cards

Effective readers constantly ask themselves questions as a way of monitoring their comprehension.

- Provide time for pupils to identify random places in a text to 'stop and think'.
- Have pupils mark each place with a 'Stop and Think' card.
- Pupils the read the text, stopping to reflect on questions listed on the 'Stop and Think' card.

Stop-and-Think Card

Do I understand what that was about?

Were there any parts I did not understand?

Could I explain what I have just read to someone else?

What might the next part be about?

Are there any questions I need to have answered?

BDA Questions

Before, During and After Reading sheets encourage pupils to practise generating questions before, during and after reading. Generating questions helps pupils to set a clear purpose for their reading, predict information and make connections to what they already know.

- Organise pupils to work with a partner to generate questions before reading a text. Headings and subheadings are a useful aid for generating questions. Questions can be recorded in the 'Before Reading' column. Answers can be recorded when found.
- At the end of reading, partners work together to generate any further questions they have about the topic. These questions can be used as discussion starters for further small group sharing sessions or individual research.

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
What are the most dangerous spiders? How do spiders make webs?		

Skimming

Skimming involves glancing quickly through material to gain a general impression or overview of the content.
This involves the reader passing over much of the detail to get the general gist of what the text contains. Skimming is often used before reading to:

- quickly assess whether the text is going to meet the purpose for reading/researching
- determine what is to be read
- review text organization
- active prior knowledge

Leaflets and pamphlets are good for developing 'skimming' skills.

Picture Flick

This replicates what many efficient readers do before they read a text that contains illustrations. Prior to independent reading, pupils (i) look at the front cover and the title of the text; (ii) skim through the text, browsing at the illustrations; (iii) predict the story.

Graphic Overlays

Graphic Overlays provide pupils with an opportunity to build their knowledge of text organisation. It is sometimes difficult for readers to follow texts that include pictures, diagrams, tables, graphs, text and photographs. Some informational texts are organised into columns or print is place alongside unrelated graphics. This can hinder comprehension.

- Provide pupils with transparent overlays.
- Pupils place the transparent sheeting over the page/s of the text.
- Pupils then create a visual representation of the layout or organisation of the page. Boxes are drawn to represent chunks of text, diagrams, headings, labels or photographs.
- Direct pupils to label each box, describing what it represents (e.g. text, subheading, photograph, caption).
- Pupils then explain the 'purpose' of each section of the text (e.g. The subheading describes what a particular section is about. This section is about...).

Sneak Preview

Pupils can skim to identify particular features such as the contents page, cover, back cover blurb, end pages, information about the author, illustrations and chapter headings.

- Pupils explore the organisation and contents of their text prior to reading.
- Pupils then jot down notes on the 'Sneak Preview' sheet.
- Pupils then read the text, using the information gathered through skimming and reflect on what information was most useful to assist comprehension.

Scanning

Scanning involves glancing through the text to locate specific details such as names, dates, places etc.
e.g. A reader might scan a contents page or index to find the page number for a specific topic.
Pupils use titles, sub-headings, diagrams and captions to make 'scanning' more efficient.

- Pupils need to be able to differentiate between the skill of 'skimming' and that of 'scanning'.

Hunt the Text Challenge

This is a quiz which provides pupils with the opportunity to scan text to locate specific information.

- Prepare a variety of challenge cards containing questions based on a selected text. Ensure that the challenges encourage pupils to scan the text to locate specific information such as page numbers, particular details, a certain illustration or table, a statistic, a specific heading or subheading, a chapter title or an answer to a question.
- Randomly draw cards, read aloud and challenge the pupils to locate the information.

Beat the Buzzer Quiz

- After reading a text, direct pupils to work in pairs to create quiz questions for other pupils using the text.
- Provide time for questions to be recorded onto cards. Collect cards.
- Organise pupils into two teams.
- Select a question and read it to the whole class. Challenge the teams to provide the answer as well as a specific reference to a page and paragraph in the text that substantiates their answer.
- A point can be scored for the fastest team that responds to each question.

Retrieval Charts

These charts enable pupils to make comparisons.

- Create headings for the Retrieval Chart based upon the type of information to be gathered.
- Introduce these headings to the pupils.
- Allow pupils time to read the text(s).
- Provide time for pupils to scan the text(s) so they can identify relevant information.
- Allocate time for pupils to record the information they have found onto the Retrieval Chart.
- Discuss with pupils the similarities and differences in the categories.

Bird	Size	Colours	Fact
Blackbird	medium	black	
Magpie	bigger than average	black white blue	
Thrush	medium	brown off-white	

Interesting Words Chart

This activity is used to clarify new or unknown vocabulary, particularly in informational texts.
Pupils skim for context clues, use what they already know and reference materials, such as dictionaries to work out word meanings before, during and/or after reading.

- Pupils skim the text. They highlight any new vocabulary or words where the meaning is unknown or unclear.
- Pupils share any new words.
- Enter suggested words onto the Interesting Words Chart and include a page and/or paragraph reference.
- Have pupils read the text looking for contextual clues that might suggest a meaning for the word. If contextual clues are found, have pupils complete the 'Help Given in the Text' column. If no contextual clues are found but the pupils can infer the meaning, they can write this in the 'Your Explanation' column.
- If the meaning is still not determined, direct pupils to a glossary, dictionary or any other reference source. The correct meaning is then recorded in the final column.
- As words often have several meanings, pupils need to be sure they have selected the correct meaning for the text. To confirm their understanding of the word, have pupils re-read the section of text, using the meaning they have sourced, to make sure that the text makes sense.
- Have pupils re-read the text in its entirety.

WORD	PAGE and/or PARAGRAPH	ANY HELP GIVEN IN THE TEXT	YOUR EXPLANATION	MEANING FROM ANOTHER SOURCE
mortality	22 Paragraph 3	Yes – bracket explanation	Deaths	
cholera	24 Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4	Text says, 'Cholera and malaria are diseases...'	Disease affecting intestines	

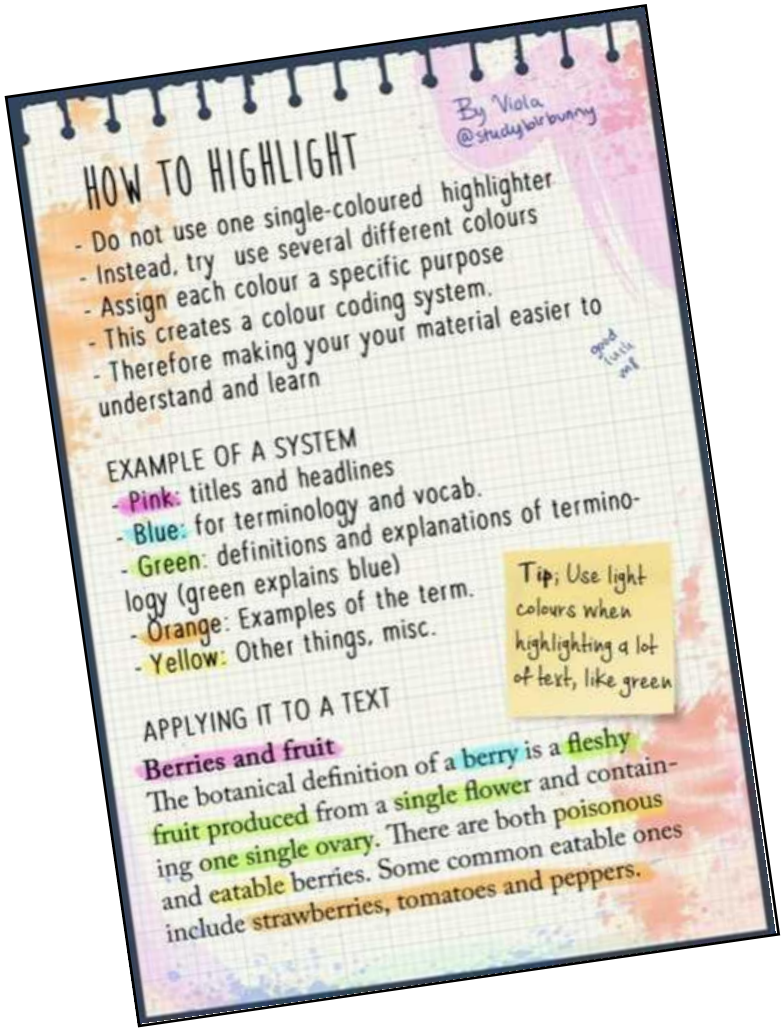
Text marking

Text marking may be either an individual or a group activity and it is very much what its name indicates. Like all directed activities related to text it involves reading for specific purposes. There are two main variants of the technique. In the first variant, the pupils formulate their own questions and mark the significant parts of the text prior to recording the information in their own words.

In the second variant, which is probably the more usual one, the teacher initiates the text marking by asking the pupils to high-light particular features, marking each different feature in a different way. This can be done by using a variety of coloured pens plus a variety of different symbols e.g.: underlining, bracketing, using asterisks and so on. When pupils are being initiated into the technique, it will be helpful if the teacher works through the activity with them.

This is a very flexible activity because you can use it with younger pupils to reinforce basic knowledge about language, but it can also be used for cross-curricular work, and with older children. The following are some of the instructions which might be given to the pupils:

"Underline the adjectives in this paragraph." "Underline in red the five causes of the uprising and number them" "Underline in blue the things that this experiment should enable you to find out and, after completing the experiment, check your own results against the things you have underlined in the text".



Determining Importance

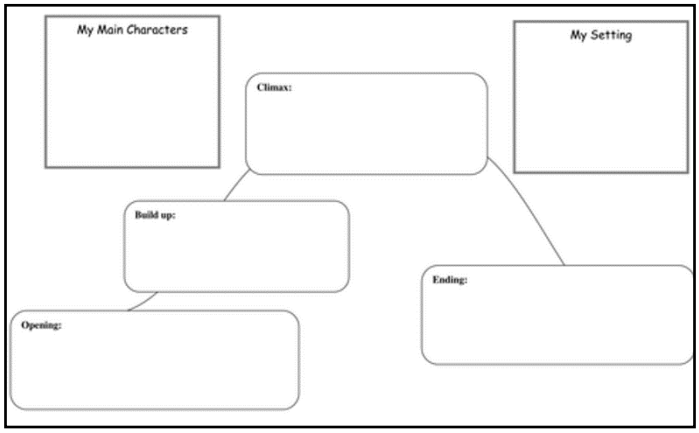
Good readers constantly ask themselves what is most important in this phrase, sentence, paragraph, chapter or whole text. Learners benefit from understanding how to determine the important information, particularly in informational and website texts. Factors such as 'purpose' for reading, knowledge of topic, prior experiences and understanding of text organization will help readers to identify important information in a text.

Pupils can begin to identify important ideas from short pieces of text. Key words, phrases and sentences can then be identified. It is sometimes useful to begin with informational texts and highlight organizational features that will help pupils to decipher important information from les important information.

What's Your Story?

This activity promotes pupils' awareness of how knowing the organisation of a narrative text aids comprehension. It also helps pupils to make connections between different parts of a narrative.

- Provide pupils with time to read the selected text.
- Direct pupils to work in small groups to locate and record key information under each category on the framework.
- Pupils share and compare information recorded.



Famous Five-Key Word Search

Involving pupils in Key Word Searches is an effective way of helping to extract important information from texts. The success of strategies such as summarising and paraphrasing depends on pupils' ability to select appropriate key words. The process of selecting key words will need to be modelled many times starting with single sentences and moving into more complex and lengthy examples. Once pupils have worked in this context, the framework can be used independently.

- Pupils read the selected passage and identify possible key words during reading. These may be recorded on post-it notes.
- At the conclusion of reading, direct the pupils to re-read the possible key words and select the 'famous five' key words.
- Pupils record their famous fives onto the given format.
- Pupils share their key words in small groups.
- Pupils use the key words as a stimulus to create their own sentences about the text.

Very Important Points (VIPs)

VIPs is a simple activity that encourages pupils to identify important information in a text. Pupils create a fringe of post-it note strips that are used to mark identified sections of a text that contain very important points. The use of the post-it note strips allows pupils some flexibility in their final choice of VIPs.

- Allocate a certain number of strips.
- Give pupils time to read the text and place strips on what they consider to be VIPs. These should be places in the text that are significant to the overall meaning of the text.
- Pupils share and compare their VIPs.

Summarizing & Paragraphs

These are closely linked to the strategy of 'determining importance'. They are part of the process of identifying, recording and writing the key ideas, main points or most important information from a text into your own words.

Summarizing is the ability to reduce a larger piece of text so the focus is on the most important elements in the text. The re-stating or re-writing of text into other words is referred to as 'paraphrasing'. The key words and phrases in a text are used when summarizing or paraphrasing to capture the main focus of the text

Oral Summaries

Oral Summaries is an activity that helps pupils to monitor their own comprehension and to substantiate their ideas through summarising.

- Pupils work in small groups using the same text.
- Pupils read a specified section of the text silently or aloud.
- Invite small groups to collaboratively summarise what has happened so far in the text.
- Direct pupils to read the next specified section, stopping to repeat the process of creating a group summary.

Reciprocal Retells

- After reading a text, direct pupils to work in small groups to brainstorm main events.
- Invite each pupil in the small group to select one of the main events.
- Using the framework provided, pupils work individually to elicit and list the main details about their selected event.
- Pupil A (Event 1) begins the retell and then passes it on to Pupil B (Event 2) to continue. This process continues for each main event.

Main Idea Sort

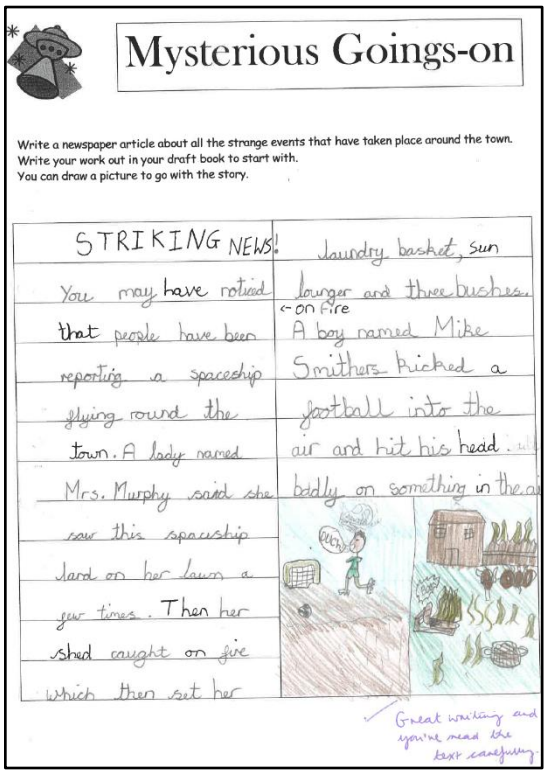
- Identify key words, phrases and headings that are necessary for understanding the concepts of the topic in a selected text.
- Record key words and phrases randomly on a grid.
- Have pupils read the text.
- After reading, pupils can cut up the grid into small cards.
- Pupils arrange words, phrases and headings to show their relationship, thereby forming an outline of the text.
- Pupils work in pairs, using the key words and phrases to create a summary of the text.

Newspaper Report

Creating Newspaper Reports from texts provides an opportunity for pupils to summarise and paraphrase the main ideas into a new form. A grasp of the organisation, purpose, structure and features of a newspaper report is a pre-requisite for the completion of this activity.

- Provide time for pupils to read a text and discuss the main events.
- Direct pupils to work together to re-create an important event as if it was being reported in the newspaper. The following features can be included:

  - headline
  - date and place
  - lead sentence to encourage the reader to read on
  - details such as who, what, why, how and when
  - conclusion



Mysterious Goings-on

Write a newspaper article about all the strange events that have taken place around the town.
Write your work out in your draft book to start with.
You can draw a picture to go with the story.

STRIKING NEWS!
You may have noticed that people have been reporting a spaceship flying round the town. A lady named Mrs. Murphy said she saw this spaceship land on her lawn a few times. Then her shed caught on fire which then set her laundry basket, sun lounger and three bushes on fire. A boy named Mike Smithers kicked a football into the air and hit his head badly on something in the air

Great writing and you've read the text carefully

66 Words

This is a framework that can be used to record the key events or themes of a text. Pupils are challenged to read a text and create a summary in sixty-six words or less. By providing pupils with a grid with sixty-six rectangles, the focus is on succinct text, rather than counting an exact number of words. Pupils can undertake this individually or in pairs. Pupils should discuss what was included, what was left out and why.

Developing awareness of text features and more

Cloze procedure

Cloze procedure is an extremely useful and versatile technique. It is also a most effective teaching technique which develops focused talk; it develops pupils' competence in reading with understanding; it develops pupils' competence in reading with understanding; it develops pupils' competence in reading with an awareness of features of style so that they learn to read like a writer; it helps pupils to understand and remember the content of the material which they have explored by means of this activity; it gives children experience in problem solving from evidence and it ensures that the pupils, and not the teacher, do the work.

1. The class is organised into small groups with one member of each group functioning as group secretary. The group secretary is the only person who does any writing and s/he writes only what the group has agreed.
2. Each group is given an extract of continuous text of some contextual significance from which words have been deleted according to one of the following principles:

- Numerical i.e., every tenth, ninth, or whatever word. This is known as 'random deletion', and while it is the easiest type to prepare, it is the least useful, as a teaching/learning activity, of the various modes. It is however, extremely useful in assessment of reading comprehension and in matching pupils to reading materials which are within their comprehension range.
- Grammatical i.e., particular parts of speech are chosen for deletion in order to focus pupils' attention on the grammar system of a language. This mode of deletion is one of the types known as 'specific' and it is a very useful type of cloze exercise
- Semantic i.e., deletions are chosen to point out the meaning of words.
- Deletions might be chosen to focus on subject-specific vocabulary.
- Deletions might be chosen in order to point up the aesthetic features of a text and show how a writer has created his/her effects.

3. Children, working in small groups, attempt to solve the problems posed by the deletions. In order to do so, they will need to engage in group reading, in re-reading and in talking in order to identify the various cues and references which will enable them to complete the text.

4. When the groups have completed the problem-solving stage of the activity, the group secretaries call out the group solutions with the reasons for them and the teacher interacts with the class, accepting, refining, modifying, suggesting possible alternatives where appropriate and rejecting with reasons those proffered solutions which are demonstrably incorrect. It must be stressed that in most instances, the discussions range around 'appropriateness' rather than correctness. The author's word is not always the most appropriate one in a context, nor is it always the only one. It must also be stressed that this is a group activity and not an individual one: learning takes place through the reading, re-reading and talking as the children explore the text for cues. The only writing, it must be re-iterated, is done by the group secretaries and it consists of single words. The discussion with the teacher is an essential part of the activity.

Reading for information

SO3R and Group SQ3R

SQ3R or Group SQ3R are the initials given to an indispensable study procedure which has an across the curriculum application. It can be either an individual or a group activity.
In the literature, the initials are interpreted variously as Survey, Question, Read, Review and Record; Survey, Question, Read, Review and Recite' and Survey, Question. Read, Recite and Review! In this discussion, Survey, Question, Read, Review, and Record is preferred.

- Choose a fairly lengthy text such as a whole chapter. It is also important to choose a text which has a significant content.
- Survey: this involves a skim reading of the whole text in which a general impression of the text is gained and features such as headings and sub-headings are noted and tentative conclusions are reached about the content and purpose of the text.
- Question: the group, or the individual, decides on the questions to which they require answers and make a list of them.
- Read: this is the first, careful, reflective reading and it is done with the questions in mind. Consequently, it really is reading for a purpose and it is an interrogation of the text. Often, this stage is accompanied by a marking of the text to highlight those points which the individual or the group has decided are important to their purposes.
- Review: this part of the procedure involves checking that all the 'Questions' have been answered by the text and re-reading for any points missed.
- Record: this is the verbal or written recording in the group's or the individual's own words of the main or the relevant points of the text. This is the note-making stage of the activity and is best done from memory and not with one eye on the text.

A simpler version can be used. This version involves the children working through a sequence of steps in the form of self-addressed questions.

1. What do I want to find out?
2. Is what I want to find out in this book?
3. Have I found out what I wanted to know?
4. Have I found it all out?

It is at this stage also associated with teaching the children the anatomy and the use of the non-fiction book. Both the anatomy and the function of a nonfiction text are very different from those of the story text and children need to be made aware of these facts. Firstly, and most significantly, one has to read a story from beginning to end - it is after all, events in chronological order: one does not have to read an information book in that way but one does need to know how to go about finding which bit one needs to read. Consequently, knowing one's way around the anatomy of the text book or the reference book or the background reading book is important and should be taught in the primary phase and from time to time, revised in a variety of subjects, at the secondary stage. Special attention needs to be paid to the use of particularised kinds of book such as atlases and dictionaries.
In order to cope with nonfiction texts, children need to be taught in the context in which they are going to use these books, the following aspects of a text and their purposes.

a. The significance of the title: does it indicate that the text is a general one, suitable for an initiate to the topic, or does it indicate that the text is concerned with an aspect of the topic and that it presumes some previous knowledge on the part of the reader?

b. The use of the table of contents and the significance of the chapter headings listed in it: do they indicate that the text contains the information which the reader requires at that moment?

c. The importance of an introduction of preface in providing the reader with a cognitive map of the text: any good preface or introduction should set out quite explicitly the aims, scope and methodology of the writer and being made aware of these features greatly facilitates the reader's ability to predict or anticipate and therefore to learn.

d. The importance and function of the abstracts or encapsulations which follow the individual chapter heading and which precede the text of the chapter: these are another valuable device
which helps the reader not only to predict the content of the chapter in terms of structure and general ideas but which also helps him/her to formulate the question which s/he wants and expects the text of the chapter to answer for him/her: the abstract helps the reader to read reflectively and that means that the reader is reading for meaning and that s/he is learning.

e. The value of sub-headings within a chapter: these are valuable as sign posts to help the reader keep on the main thematic route of the text indicated in the abstract; they are also helpful in supporting the reader during the skimming stages of reading for learning when s/he is rereading in order to check on precise points or stages in an argument or demonstration.

f. The importance of key words within a paragraph: the location of these is an important skimming skill and requires of the reader the ability to change from the normal left to right orientation of the English writing system to a top to the bottom of the page orientation: pupils need to be made aware of this change of direction for specific purposes.

g. The importance and function of an index: the ability to use an index is dependent on knowing and being able to use alphabetic order: pupils need to be taught alphabetic order and to have frequent practice in using it in relation both to indexes and to directories. The ability to use an index is crucial to the application of the skimming skills which are such an important study skill.

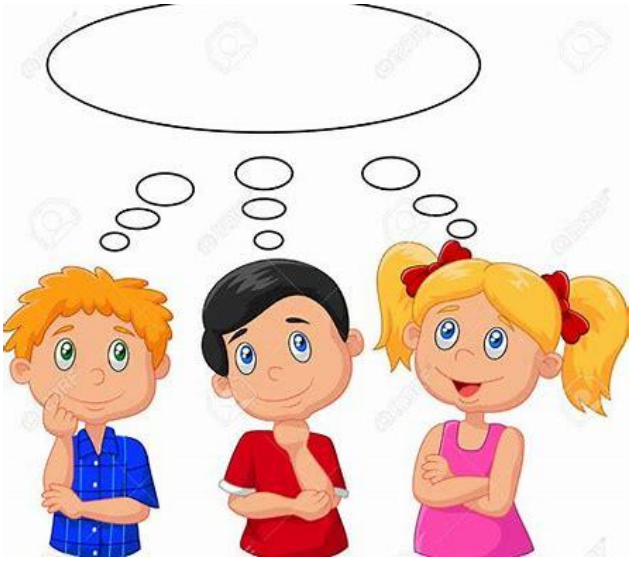
h. The usefulness of glossaries: these subject specific lists of words have at least three valuable study skill uses: firstly, they provide appropriate, in context, spelling and vocabulary lists as an introduction to reading a text (one would focus on the etymological and morphological aspects of the vocabulary and then ask the pupils to write the words down from memory, using a spelling fan) secondly, they form a convenient reference point enabling the reader to check on meaning as s/he is reading the text and thirdly, they are a useful aide memoire to the contents of the text. It should of course be noted that competence and confidence with alphabetic order is essential for the skilled use of glossaries.

Reading for the big idea

You may want to begin to encourage your pupils to think of the “big idea” that underlie the books they read. You can start doing this with even very simple picture books!

Love
Freedom
Rights
Hate
Truth
Identity

Family
Friendship
Right
Wrong
Responsibility



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Appendix 1

The Barrett Taxonomy

Literal comprehension focuses on the ideas and information that are explicitly stated. A simple task in literal comprehension may be the recognition or recall of a single fact or incident. A more complex task might be the recognition or recall of a series of facts or the sequencing of incidents.			
Literal Comprehension	Recognition	Details	What's this? Who? What? Where? Why?
		Main Idea	What happened when or during ____? Find out what ___ is going to do
		Sequence	What did ___ do first/next/last?
		Comparison	Find/tell me the differences between ___ and ___ Are ___ and ___ the same? Find similes; find metaphors
		Cause and Effect	Find out the reasons for ___? What caused ___?
		Character Traits	Find/tell me the words and phrases which describe the characters
	Recall	Details	Write/tell me a list of all the details you can remember
		Main Idea	What happened to___?
		Sequence	Tell in correct order Look at the illustrations and retell the story
		Comparison	How was this ___ different from the others? In what ways were ___ and ___ similar/different?
		Cause and Effect	Why was ___ so determined to ___? What was the purpose of ___?

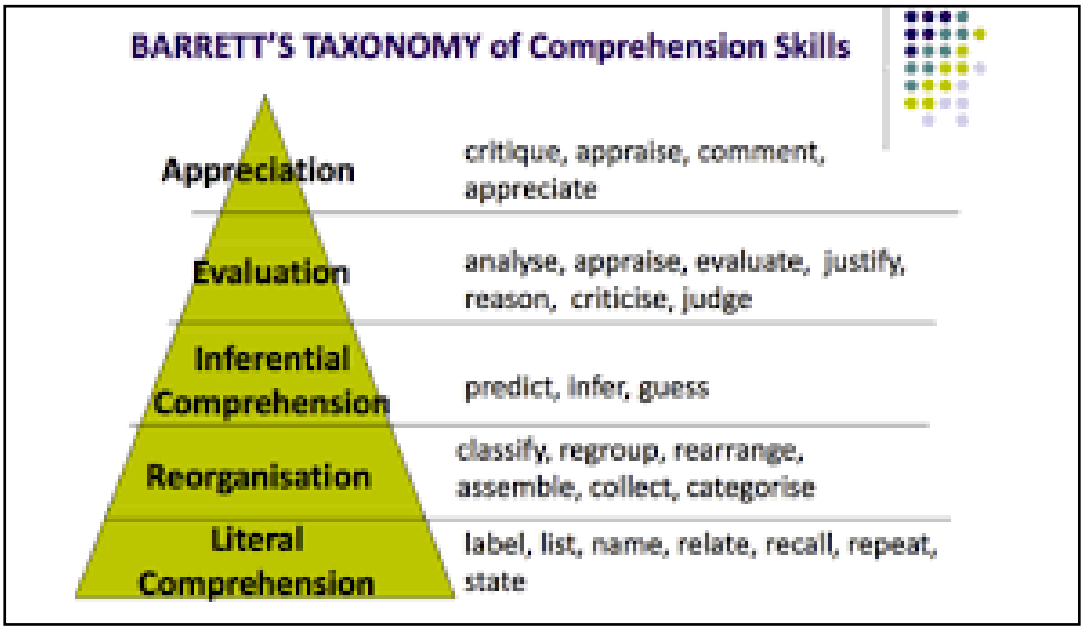
Reorganisation requires the student to analyse, synthesis, and/or organise ideas or information explicitly stated in the selection. The student may utilise the statements of the author verbatim or may paraphrase or translate the author's statements.		
Reorganisation	Classifying	Which of the following are ___? Which of the following ___ does not belong?
	Outlining	Divide the story into ___ parts
	Summarising	What has happened up to this point? Tell the story in your own words
	Synthesising	How long did the entire ___ last? How many times did ___ take place? On what day did ___ happen?

The student demonstrates inferential comprehension when he or she uses ideas and information explicitly stated, his or her intuition, and his or her personal experience as a basis for conjecture and hypotheses. Prior knowledge, regardless of where his knowledge came from, in an integral part of inference.		
INFERENTIAL	Supporting Details	Did he realise ___? Do you think ___?
	Main Ideas	What is the main idea of this ___? Discuss the significance of ___?

INFERENTIAL	Sequence	What will happen next? What happened between ___ and ___? Please these ___ in logical order
	Comparisons	How does ___ resemble ___? Compare ___ with ___ Are ___ and ___ related?
	Cause and Effect	What was it necessary to ___? How did ___ know ___? What is the result of ___?
	Character Traits	What did ___ prove about their attitudes toward ___? What does ___ tell us about her? What kind of person is ___?
	Outcomes	Do you think ___ will ___? What do you think will happen?
	Figurative Language	What is meant by the phrase ___?

Evaluation deals with judgement and focuses on qualities of accuracy, acceptability, desirability, worth or probability of occurrence. Evaluative thinking may be demonstrated by asking the students to make the following judgements.		
EVALUATION	Judgements of Reality or Fantasy	Is ___ imaginary? How many unreal things can you find? Did ___ really happen? Is ___ fact or fiction? Is ___ possible?
	Judgements of Fact or Opinion	Do you think ___ had anything to do with ___? Which ___ seem to be correct?
	Judgements of Adequacy and Validity	Did ___ ever actually ___? Is ___ really ___?
	Judgements of Appropriateness	What part of the story best describes the main character?
	Judgements of Worth, Desirability and Acceptability	Do you like this character? How do you feel about this character? Why was it wrong for ___ to ___?

Appreciation calls for students to be emotionally and aesthetically sensitive to the work and to have a reaction to the work of is psychological and artistic elements. Appreciation includes both the knowledge of the emotional response to literary techniques, forms, styles and structures.		
APPRECIATION	Emotional Response to the Content	Are you surprised? Why do you like or dislike this selection?
	Identification with Characters or Incidents	What words will describe the feelings of ___? What would you do if you were ___?
	Reactions to the Author's Use of Language	Why is ___ a good term? How did the author express the idea of ___?
	Imagery	Dramatise the story. Read/say the part the way the character might have talked. How does ___ make you feel?



Appendix 2

Activities to Develop Thinking Skills

Here are some starting points to help you think of activities to engage children in stories and enable them to develop their language and thinking skills.

The language of learning	The language of thinking
Ask questions Read Research Write Record Listen Think Share idea Discuss Observe	Sequence Classify Predict Evaluate Make decisions Give opinions Make links Ask questions Look for patterns Compare Review Model