

Reading

Reading skills and progression

A continued focus on challenge and the development of higher-order reading skills will develop young people's ability to think critically and be more analytical and evaluative when engaging with texts. This will ensure effective progression to the senior phase. There is also a need to ensure that young people engage with texts of appropriate complexity and challenge, particularly when developing higher-order reading skills.

3-18 Literacy and English Review.

Reading comprises of a complex blend of skills and young people in secondary classrooms can be at various stages in their acquisition of these skills. In order to make continuous progress throughout their secondary years, young people need frequent experiences of appropriately challenging and complex texts and tasks and activities that develop the full range of reading skills.

A clear understanding of standards and expectations at each level in key reading skills will support teachers across subject areas to plan learning of appropriate challenge. It will also enable them to identify next steps for learners to ensure young people make continuous progress in these skills.

Progress and achievement within reading will be evidenced as children and young people achieve across these key themes:

- engaging with a broad range of increasingly complex texts, including Scottish and Scots texts
- developing and applying knowledge and understanding of language
- finding, using and organising information, including developing critical literacy skills
- use reading and listening strategies to understand, analyse and evaluate texts
- creating texts of increasing complexity using more sophisticated language.

The full professional learning paper and progression framework for literacy and English can be accessed on the National Improvement Hub.

Accessing texts through developing language across subject areas.

“Language is at the core of thinking. We reflect, communicate and develop our ideas through language.”

Building the Curriculum 1, 2006

What do we mean by language?

- Vocabulary
- Punctuation
- Sentence structure
- Grammar
- Tone
- Structure

A solid understanding of the structures and features of English language supports the development of literacy by giving children and young people the tools and vocabulary needed to understand texts and express themselves fluently.

3-18 Literacy and English Review, 2015

As learners progress in their reading, they develop their knowledge about language and are able to read texts with increased fluency and understanding. A sound knowledge of different features of language also enable young people to read critically for example, analyse and evaluate texts, work out what trust they should place in the information and identify when and how people are aiming to persuade or influence them. Learners require support in all subject areas in order to develop these reading skills and this can be done in a variety of ways.

Activities and approaches to develop reading across curricular areas.

Choice of text

It is essential that we use well-chosen texts which offer reading opportunities at the appropriate level. If learners have to use dictionaries for a large number of words, they will not enjoy the reading experience. It will also prevent them from developing skills such as using context clues to determine the meaning of new words.

As well as choosing texts which are at an appropriate level, we should also aim to choose texts which learners will find interesting and enjoyable. When choosing texts we should take in to account:

- Language – Is the level of challenge appropriate?
- Layout – Is the language easy to read and is broken up into manageable sections?
- Pictures or diagrams – does the text include visual representations to support understanding?

Developing Vocabulary

In each subject area, staff have the responsibility to develop vocabulary. In some cases, this vocabulary might be subject-specific language but as teaching and learning takes place we should be reinforcing any new subject specialist language. This can be achieved through modelling our own language and discussing new and unfamiliar vocabulary as it arises.

Activities and approaches which support young people to increase their understanding of new vocabulary.

The Vocabulary Steps

- Choose the words which are the most demanding in any topic.
- Consider how these words will be introduced. How do you remember their meaning? How did you learn them? Share this with learners.
- Make a list of these words and ensure that they are highlighted when they appear on any worksheet or they are used in class. Get young people to do the same in their own work.
- When young people use these words, use praise and always help them to correct if the words are used in the wrong context or are spelt incorrectly.
- Check use of this vocabulary regularly and re-visit even when a topic has ended. Reinforce understanding through active vocabulary games

Making Memorable Connections

Learners often respond well to memorable phrases which help them to remember specific words. Mnemonics are a good way of making subject specific vocabulary memorable. Often unusual or witty expressions help learners to remember words which might otherwise be challenging.

- Here is a phrase to help you remember the order of the earth's atmospheres -
The Strong Man's Triceps Explode.
This stands for: Troposphere, Stratosphere, Mesosphere, Thermosphere, Exosphere.
- Here is another to help remember the order of the planets-
My Very Eager Mother Just Served Us Nachos
This stands for: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune

To increase challenge learners should make up their own mnemonics.

Linking Vocabulary

- (i) In most subjects there are groups of words which link together in certain areas or topics. Word webs can be created and put on the wall to create vocabulary hubs in classrooms.
- (ii) Across subjects, words can be used in different ways and a whole school approach might be to find groups of words which are used in different subject areas and create corridor displays which indicate how the word is used in each subject.
- (iii) Understanding prefixes and suffixes can help learners to access more difficult words. Supporting literacy across learning could involve subjects considering the prefixes and suffixes in the language and creating a word web which identifies how they are used in different subject areas.

Reflective Questions

**How do staff in each subject area introduce more challenging vocabulary?
Are learners offered opportunities to explore new vocabulary across all
subject areas?**

**How can a whole school approach help to support learners in developing and
consolidating vocabulary in all subject areas?**

Engaging with texts to understand new knowledge and concepts.

Learners will build their knowledge and understanding in curricular areas through engagement with a range of different types of text such as web pages, textbooks, reference books, blogs, journal articles, reviews and film clips. Staff should signpost opportunities for learners to apply reading strategies such as prediction, skimming a text to identify the main ideas and scanning for key words and ideas.

Texts offered to young people should be of an appropriate level of complexity and challenge. When selecting texts to meet the needs of all learners, staff should consider the stages that learners go through as they learn to read.

Reflective questions

Are learners expected to read a wide range of appropriately challenging texts across all curricular areas?

How can you build up a bank of relevant and varied texts of different levels of challenge to enhance the subject content (e.g. newspaper articles, reference books, web pages)?

Use reading and listening strategies to understand, analyse and evaluate texts. Questioning

As learners progress with their reading they will develop the skills of analysis and evaluation which will allow them to access deeper learning from the texts that they read across subject areas. Challenge is built into reading activities when learners are given the opportunity to ask and answer higher-order questions, enabling them to:

- analyse and evaluate new information
- synthesise ideas and apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts, with increasing independence
- develop critical literacy skills, including the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion
- recognise persuasive language and evaluate the reliability and relevance of sources.

Before, during and after reading strategies

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Preview the text – consider title, layout, topic...	Highlight or underline key words or ideas.	Summarise content in note form or by drawing pictures. Discuss the text with a partner or a group. Work together to identify the most important ideas.
Activate prior knowledge – What do you already know about this	Make connections with your prior knowledge – does the text	Compare the text with another text, considering content and

topic? What do you already know about this type of text?	confirm or refute what you thought you already knew?	form.
Make predictions – what do you expect from the text?	Stop reading and review your predictions. Make more predictions or change your initial ideas.	Does the text end in the way you expected?
Try to identify the purpose of the text. Who is the audience?	Consider whether your thoughts on purpose and audience are supported by what you are reading.	Evaluate how well the text fulfils its purpose and meets the needs of its audience.
Ask questions – do you have any questions you would like the text to answer?	Try to answer the questions you asked before reading. Ask more questions.	Create your own version of the text.

Activities and approaches that support young people to engage with texts and develop skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation

Teaching reading in any subject area involves making explicit the strategies that confident readers apply in order to access a text.

Teachers will support young people to develop reading strategies when learners encounter new and unfamiliar texts. Different strategies can be applied before, during and after reading.

Five, five, one

All group members read the whole text. Through discussion they distil the main ideas from the text and present them in no more than five sentences. Further discussion will enable them to distil the ideas to the five single words that best represent those main ideas. Finally they will reduce the five words down to one word

summing up the text as a whole. This task allows young people to support each other to apply the following skills.

- Selecting appropriate reading strategies to read confidently with understanding (e.g skimming for main ideas)
- Finding and selecting key information
- Understanding main concerns, concepts and or arguments
- Summarising in their own words

Challenge is built in to the task as learners are asked to evaluate and prioritise the main ideas of the text.

Jigsaw

Each group member is assigned responsibility for reading and becoming an 'expert' on a section of a text and teaching its content to the rest of the group. They will have the opportunity to discuss their section with other 'experts' from other groups in the class. This task encourages young people to develop skills such as:

- Selecting appropriate reading strategies to read confidently with understanding
- finding and selecting key information
- understanding main concerns, concepts and or arguments
- summarising in their own words.

The original group will gain an understanding of the text as a whole when all group members come back together to teach the group their assigned sections.

The challenge can be increased in this type of activity if each group member is given a different text on a similar topic. When they come back together to teach the content of their text to the rest of the group, young people can develop advanced literacy skills by:

- identifying similarities and differences between the texts
- evaluating the effectiveness of the different texts
- synthesising key ideas from the summaries of each text.

Convergent and divergent thinking

As in 'Jigsaw', the first part of this task gives each group member responsibility for reading and understanding a section of a given text in order to convey the main ideas to the rest of the group. Again, this will give young people the opportunity to develop skills such as:

- selecting appropriate reading strategies to read confidently with understanding
- finding and selecting key information
- understanding main concerns, concepts and or arguments
- summarising in their own words.

Challenge is built in to the second part of the task when learners work together to distil the text down to its main ideas in a small number of bullet points. When these have been recorded, they can then engage in divergent thinking as they discuss and ask each other questions in order to address each of the bullet points. Here, learners will employ their advanced literacy skills by

- asking and answering a range of questions, particularly evaluative questions
- supporting their viewpoint with evidence from the text.

Questioning

Questions support learners to engage with texts and help to deepen their understanding of subject content. As learners develop their advanced literacy skills, they will be able to answer a range of literal, inferential and evaluative questions as well as create questions themselves.

<p>Frogs are very different when they are born. They are called tadpoles and they are more like fish with gills and a long tail. They have to contend with many dangers before they grow into frogs and have little protection. They do not have legs until they are about 6-9 weeks old. Gradually, the tadpoles' gills shrink and disappear to be replaced by lungs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are frogs like when they are born? Literal • Do tadpoles breathe air? Inferential • Is it surprising that tadpoles survive? Inferential • Would you like to see a frog grow through the different stages? Evaluative
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Reading activities can be guided by questions generated by staff. Open questions help the readers to engage with the text and offer support in understanding main ideas, concepts and arguments.

Learners become more actively engaged with texts when generating their own questions. Staff can support this by modelling different question types explicitly for example, through effective use of Bloom's Question Fans.

Challenge can be increased through questions which aim to develop analysis and evaluation skills. As learners develop these advanced literacy skills they are able to comment on content, form and language.

Developing questions to support reading

Questions to engage readers with texts and develop their understanding.	Questions to support analysis and evaluation of texts and develop advanced literacy skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the text in....?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main idea of...? • Can you summarise....? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What inference/conclusions can you make • Give arguments for and against...?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence does the writer give for...? • What reasons? • Why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose one of the writer's arguments and explain why you think it is the most persuasive. • How does the writer...?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you distinguish between the important information and the irrelevant information?

Reflective Questions

1. Are staff confident in their use of questioning and ensuring that they offer a variety of question types?

2. Are learners given regular opportunities to develop their own questions and supported in the creation of different types of questions?

Comparing and Contrasting Texts

Reading activities that involve identifying the similarities and differences between texts equip young people to evaluate the relevance, reliability and credibility of the texts that they encounter across subjects. In the early stages learners should be supported through teacher modelling and peer learning opportunities. As learners grow in confidence they will be able to apply these skills through independent research tasks.

Comparing and Contrasting Texts - Activities

What to look for when deciding on a text	<i>Unlikely to be relevant, reliable or credible</i>	<i>Might be relevant, reliable or credible</i>	<i>Likely to be relevant, reliable or credible</i>
What kind of text is it?	An unfamiliar website.	A text which has been published commercially	Official websites from organisations, academic writing.
Who has written the text and what can you find out about them?	No name attached to the writing.	Author has done some research on the topic.	A specialist or expert in the subject area.
Is the text up to date?	No date attached	Yes but date is more than ---- ago	Yes- the piece has been written recently or updated recently.
Has the text been mentioned elsewhere?	Yes – the comments were not always positive.	Yes – the general response is good from a range of people.	Yes – other people in the field have reaffirmed the text.
Has the author mentioned any sources they have used?	No	Yes – the names of some texts which are related to the topic	Yes – the text includes quotations from other texts which help develop ideas.
Is the author coming from an objective standpoint?	No –it is clear they have a strong opinion.	Yes – but there is evidence that they might be trying to take a particular standpoint e.g. a	Yes – there is no evidence that the author has a particular point to make

		digital text with a commercial sponsor.	
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Credibility and reliability of texts.

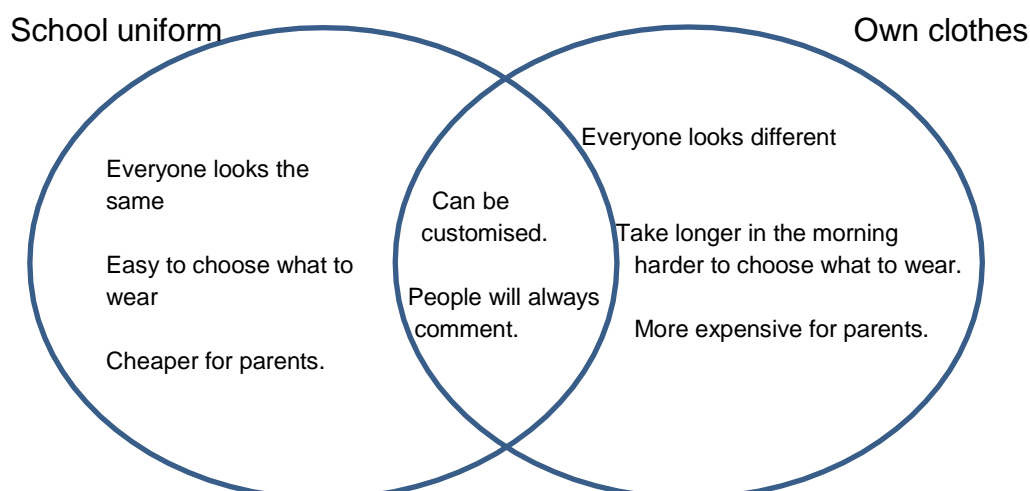
Learners should be encouraged to question texts and consider their relevance, reliability and credibility. Offering prompts to learners as they read in groups, pairs or independently helps support learners when deciding which texts are suitable for purpose. Challenge is increased as learners begin to access a variety of sources; they develop advanced literacy skills through comparing and contrasting different types of text.

Useful discussion points:

- I think that the text is aimed at...
- On the other hand, the other source is aimed at...
- The text uses more informal language such as slang...
- The text uses more formal/technical language such as...
- The text is laid out in a way which...
- I think that the language is effective because...

Venn Diagrams

Creating a Venn diagram can help learners to see clearly the differences and the similarities between two texts. Working in groups to create the Venn diagram helps learners as they discuss the similarities and differences between texts.



Reflective Questions

Do staff ensure that they are offering the opportunity for learners to discuss the texts that they are using?

Do learners have opportunities to choose texts for themselves and to justify their choices?

What opportunities are there across subject areas to develop learners skills in evaluating relevance, reliability and credibility of non-digital and digital texts?

Research and notemaking

Independent research tasks allow learners to extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding in curricular areas. Staff in all subjects should support the research process by modelling and signposting the range of skills needed before, during and after a research task. The advanced literacy skills involved in this process should be experienced and consolidated across all curricular areas. For example, the skill of selecting texts by assessing their relevance, reliability and credibility and the skill of notemaking, using own words, to extract information, develop thinking and link ideas from different texts.

Before, during and after research

Before	Write research questions to clarify what information is required
	Consider range of sources of information – library, internet (newspapers, blogs, websites for specialist organisations, <i>more than wikipedia!</i>)
	Locate information
	Select sources to help find relevant information
During	Skim read texts to evaluate their relevance
	Use signposts in a text to evaluate how it meets needs e.g. pictures, captions, headings, topic sentences
	Scan for keywords to locate the most relevant information
	Identify and select key ideas from a text

	Follow a writer's argument and understand their point of view
	Make judgments about the reliability and credibility of a text
	Recognise bias or persuasion
	Make notes using own words
	Summarise the most relevant and interesting information
	Sort information linking similar ideas from different sources to organise thinking
After	Use notes to create new texts to communicate what has been learned e.g a presentation, a report, a discursive essay
	Know when it is appropriate to quote from sources and when points should be put into own words
	Acknowledge sources

Reflective Questions

How do staff plan for consistent teaching and consolidation of research skills across subject areas?

How do staff support learners to locate information from digital and non-digital sources?

How do staff support learners to assess the relevance, reliability and credibility of texts?

How do staff support learners to apply reading strategies to texts that they have selected for themselves?

How do staff support learners to make meaningful notes that will help them to create their own text at the end of the research process?