

Strategies to Develop Reading Skills

To determine the correct reading level:

When reading to an adult, pupils should be reading at an accuracy level of 90-95% (instructional level). This will allow the pupil to practise their reading strategies without causing them to become frustrated because the text is too difficult. When reading independently, pupils should read texts at an accuracy level of between 95-100% (recreational level), allowing them to read fluently, thus increasing their confidence.

The **PM Benchmark Kit** can be used, if you do not have this, an easy/quick way to check reading accuracy is to use a 100-square blank grid to record reading accuracy. Then count the errors and subtract from one hundred to give a per cent accuracy rate. For a child reading a book with fewer than one hundred words use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{numbers of words read correctly}}{\text{number of words in the passage}} \times 100$$

This can be used periodically to ensure that the pupil is choosing books at the correct level. An analysis of the reading errors will inform the teaching programme.



Ensure that the pupil is introduced to any unfamiliar vocabulary in the reading book by 'warming up the text.'

To warm up the text:

- Look at the front cover; ask "What could the book be about?"
- Ask "Have you seen anything like this before?" (Relate to the pupil's own experiences – you may have to model with your own experiences).
- Look at the back of the book. Read the "blurb" if appropriate.
- Mention the title page – title, author & illustrator.
- Look at the pictures, talking about what is happening.
- Scan the text as you are discussing with the pupil and try to bring any unknown words from the text into your discussion.
- Point out and show the pupil any unfamiliar names or unusual words.
- Encourage the pupil to predict what they think might happen on the next page or at the end of the story.



First reading of the text:

- Allow the pupil time to work out unknown words. Try not to jump in too quickly to help.
 - Use prompts such as:
 - "Look at the pictures to help you."
 - "Try missing out on that word and read to the end of the sentence, then go back and get your mouth ready with the first sound of the unknown word."
 - For a phonically regular word – "try sounding it out."



- Try not to correct the pupil immediately if they make an error. Wait, giving them time to self-correct. Encourage them to read to the end of the sentence and then you could say:
 - “Does that make sense?”
 - “Does that sound right?”
 - “Try that again and think about the story”
 - “Try that again and make it make sense.”
- If the pupil makes an error, you could try some of the following approaches:
 - Point to the sentence where the error was made and say “When you read this sentence you said.... Does that make sense?” (Read the sentence exactly as they did), they may be able to spot their error. If not, ask them to try that again and then help them by reading the correct word just ahead of them.
 - If the error is a word that begins with the same sound as the one the pupil substituted (e.g., stay for stop) say, “That was a really good try, it does begin with the same sound, but does it make sense?”
 - Say “If that word is, what sound would you expect to see at the beginning/end? What sounds can you see in that word?”

One or two prompts could be put on a **personalised bookmark** for the pupil, to ensure that all who work with the pupil use the same approach.

VERY IMPORTANT!

Always reinforce a pupil’s good strategies with specific praise:

“I like the way you”

“You’re right! How did you know that.....?”

“Good! You found a way to check that tricky word.”



Retelling:

After reading, ask the pupil to retell what happened in the story. If only reading part of the book, retell what has happened so far.

Extension activities:

- Cut up sentences from the text. Pupil to re-order and re-read. Extend this activity by turning over a word in the sentence, pupil to work out this word by using the context of the sentence.
- Mind map the sequence of events of the story.
- Pupils to construct their sentences about the book using their mind map.
- Short, focussed comprehension activities, requiring yes/no answers or missing word sentences.

These activities can also be used for non-fiction reading material relating to the curriculum.