

## Summary of DfE Document: “The Reading Framework” (115 pages, released July 2021)



NB: Though the framework has been abridged below, all of the text below has been copied and pasted directly from the original DfE document to avoid changing the emphasis and meaning by rephrasing as far as possible.

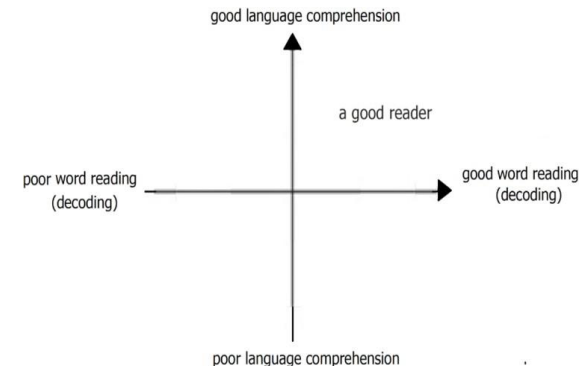
### Section 1: The Importance of Reading and a Conceptual Model

- To the individual, reading matters emotionally, culturally and educationally; because of the economic impacts within society, it matters to everyone.
- Children expand their language and vocabulary when they listen to or join in with a story or rhymes in a well-scripted children’s television programme, but an adult talking about it with them adds benefits. However, talk about books brings particular advantages... book-related talk introduces children to language that they might not hear in ordinary conversation.
- Making sure that children become engaged with reading from the beginning is one of the most important ways to make a difference to their life chances, whatever their socio-economic background. For this to happen, however, children need to learn to read as fluently as possible and be motivated to continue reading.
- Children who are good at reading do more of it: they learn more, about all sorts of things, and their expanded vocabulary, gained from their reading, increases their ease of access to more reading. Conversely, those for whom reading is difficult fall behind, not just in their reading but in all subjects and a vicious circle develops.

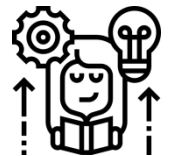


### The Simple View of Reading:

- Comprehension does not refer to reading itself but, rather, to the way in which we make sense of words.
- Children need both good language comprehension and good word reading to become good readers.



- Word reading and language comprehension require different sorts of teaching.
- When children start learning to read, the number of words they can decode accurately is too limited to broaden their vocabulary. Their understanding of language should therefore be developed through their listening and speaking, while they are taught to decode through phonics.
- However, when they can read most words ‘at a glance’ and can decode unfamiliar words easily, they are free to think about the meaning of what they read. They can then begin to develop their understanding of language through their reading.
- But before children can write independently, they need to be able to say (aloud or just to themselves) what they want to write. A wide spoken language gives them more that they can write about and more words for what they want to say. Their expressive and receptive language develops through talk and listening.
- In learning phonics, children learn to spell familiar words accurately and how to form letters. When they can do this, and can spell any word in a way that is at least phonically plausible, they can begin to write down what they want to say.



## Section 2: Language Comprehension

### Developing Talk:

- A language-rich environment is one in which adults talk with children throughout the day. The more children take part in conversations, the more they will understand once they can read and the more vocabulary and ideas they will have to draw on when they can write.
- These back and forth interactions involve the adult in:
  - thinking out loud, modelling new language for children
  - paying close attention to what the children say
  - rephrasing and extending what the children say
  - validating the children's attempts at using new vocabulary and grammar by rephrasing what children say if necessary
  - asking closed and open questions
  - answering the children's questions
  - explaining why things happen
  - deliberately connecting current and past events (Do you remember when...)
  - providing models of accurate grammar
  - extending children's vocabulary and explaining new words
  - connecting one idea or action to another
  - helping children to articulate ideas in well-formed sentences.
- To develop and extend children's language takes careful, deliberate planning in each area of learning, with opportunities built in for plenty of repetition:
  - What do we want children to know and think about?
  - What vocabulary is associated with this knowledge and thinking?
  - How can we engage the children in back and forth talk that supports their knowledge and thinking?
  - What photos could we take that would reinforce the vocabulary and language after an activity or visit?
  - Which books could be read aloud and shared before and afterwards?
  - Which songs might introduce or reinforce the vocabulary?
- More generally, sharing and discussing pictures in non-fiction books offers opportunities to broaden children's experiences beyond the immediate and the local.



### Guidance for Managing Talk in Pairs:

Ask a question.	Ask questions about <u>what</u> happened before asking questions about <u>why</u> .
Ask children to talk with their partners.	Listen carefully to identify which pairs might give feedback later and to pinpoint misconceptions.
Take feedback from one or two pairs.	Ask one partner to feed back to the group. Choose a different partner each time.
Repeat what children say and/or rephrase their response.	Make sure that all children know what was said. Take the opportunity to model correct grammar (see below).
Extend children's ideas.	Think aloud as you extend the idea, so the discussion moves forward.
Ask the children to repeat some sentences chorally.	As you extend the sentence, gradually add more detail and ask them to repeat the sentence at each step in unison.
Ask children, sometimes, to build on the ideas of others.	Repeat the child's idea and ask partners to turn to each other again to discuss the idea.
Model accurate grammar, particularly irregular past tenses and plurals.	Avoid correcting children in a way that makes them feel they have said something wrong. Model a correct response rather than asking them to repeat the correction.

### Noisy Environments

- When children are learning to read and write, a noisy environment makes it difficult for them to hear what the teacher and other children are saying, particularly for those who have hearing difficulties or impairments, those with speech, language and communication needs and those who find it difficult to pay attention.
- If these children cannot hear clearly, their chances of responding are immediately limited. Calm classrooms give them the best chance to interact and make progress in reading and writing.



### Storytimes:

- There are important cognitive consequences of the story format. Our minds treat stories differently than other types of material. People find stories interesting, easy to understand, and easy to remember.
- Literature is probably the most powerful medium through which children have a chance to inhabit the lives of those who are like them. All children need to imagine themselves as the main protagonist in a story.
- Children also need to learn about the lives of those whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own.
- Teachers need to choose those that will engage all of them emotionally.

#### Does the book:

- elicit a strong response – curiosity, anger, excitement, laughter, empathy?
- have a strong narrative that will sustain multiple readings?
- extend children's vocabulary?
- have illustrations which are engaging and reflect children from all backgrounds and cultures?
- help children connect with who they are?
- help children to understand the lives of people whose experiences and perspectives may be different from their own?
  
- Through listening to repeated readings, and talking about what they have heard, the children have multiple exposures to vocabulary and the language of stories. Continued talk about words, as well as opportunities to use them, helps children to absorb the language
- Reading aloud requires preparation. How to emphasise particular words, phrases and sentences needs planning so that the children understand the story as a whole.
- The first reading should be left to weave its own magic, with no questions, no explanations and no requests for the children to predict what might happen.
- On the second reading, asides, voices and actions can explain the meanings of new words in context.
- Dramatising the story can be motivating, once the children know it well, and it can hold their interest and focus.
- Asking all the children to adopt the same role at the same time is an opportunity for everyone to participate.



### Book Corners:

- The books themselves are the most important aspect of any book corner.
- It should be the words of the stories and not the props that transport children to different worlds.
- Time might therefore be better spent on selecting, displaying and promoting the books in the book corner than on decorating it.
- The more choice that is presented, the less children are likely to engage.
- Ideally, every book corner should be a mini library, a place for children to browse the best books and revisit the ones that the teacher has read to them.



### Poetry and Rhymes:

- Through enjoying rhymes, poems and songs, and reciting poems or parts of longer poems together as a class, teachers can build children's strong emotional connection to language.
- Poetry in language-rich classrooms builds shared memories for all children.
- The predictability of rhymes in poems and songs also helps children to memorise and re-use newly acquired words and phrases.
- Learning poetry and songs using 'call and response' allows children to join in gradually. Each repetition strengthens vocabulary, embedding new words.
- Teachers should identify a core set of poems for each year group, including rhyming poems, poems where alliteration is a strong feature, word games, traditional songs and rhymes, nonsense rhymes, and poems that are particularly rhythmical.
- Those chosen should be able to withstand a lot of repetition, elicit a strong response and extend children's vocabulary in different areas of learning.



### Section 3: Word Reading and Spelling

- To teach word reading and spelling successfully, teachers need to understand the principles underpinning the teaching of word reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding).
- This should include understanding how the alphabetic code of English represents the sounds (phonemes) of the language with single letters and groups of letters (graphemes).

#### Reading:

- To decode (read) words children are taught to look at graphemes in written words from left to right and to say each corresponding phoneme in turn. Then they blend the phonemes to say the whole word.
- To support children to blend phonemes into words, it helps if teachers pronounce the sounds as purely and clearly as possible.
- Children should not be asked to learn lists of high frequency words. They can read most of these in the usual way, by saying the sounds and blending them, when they have learnt the GPCs in the words.



#### Spelling:

- To encode (spell) words, children are taught to identify the phonemes in spoken words first. This is also referred to as 'segmenting' spoken words. Then they write the graphemes that represent the phonemes.
- Children learn to read more quickly than they learn to spell correctly. This is why their progress in reading must not be held back by whether or not they can spell accurately.
- The national curriculum also says that reading and spelling should be taught alongside one another, 'so that pupils understand that they can read back words they have spelt.'



### Phonics Teaching: Systematic Synthetic Programmes (SSP)

- It is important not to confuse children by mixing material from different programmes or across different classrooms – hence the phrase 'fidelity to the programme'.
- High-quality class or group teaching is an efficient and effective way of ensuring good progress for the majority of children. This should not undermine, however, the value of one-to-one or small-group support for the few children who need extra help to keep up.
- Teachers should:
  - be clear about objectives for any session and make sure that the children understand them (e.g. 'By the end of this week you will all be able to read these sounds; today we are learning the first one.')
  - expect all children to participate throughout phonics sessions, for example by using 'call and response'
  - make the most of the time for teaching and use activities that maximise the number of words children read and spell
  - make sure that children practise using the knowledge they have been taught in previous lessons until they can use it automatically, thus freeing up their capacity to learn new knowledge
  - support the children to connect the new knowledge with their previous learning
  - demonstrate new learning in bite-sized chunks
  - ensure children are given opportunities to apply what they have learnt
  - praise the children, being specific about what they have done well
  - use assessment to determine next steps clearly, including identifying children who might need immediate extra support.



### For Reading, children should:

- revise GPCs taught in earlier sessions
- be taught new GPCs
- practise reading words containing those GPCs
- be taught how to read common exception words
- practise reading 'decodable' phrases, sentences and books that match the GPCs and exception words they already know.



### For Writing (spelling and handwriting), children should:

- practise segmenting spoken words into their individual sounds
- choose which letter or letters to represent each sound
- practise a correct pencil grip
- be taught the correct start and exit points for each letter, which should not include 'lead-in' strokes from the line (see below)
- respond to dictation from the teacher, practising writing words in sentences that include only the GPCs and exception words they have learnt.
- Dictation is a vital part of a phonics session. Writing simple dictated sentences that include words taught so far gives children opportunities to practise and apply their spelling, without their having to think about what they want to say.

### Writing Composition:

- Before they can write independently in a way that can be read by others, children need to know:
  - what they want to say
  - how to identify sounds in words
  - at least one way to spell each of the sounds of English
  - how to form letters
- At first, teachers should support children to compose sentences out loud, without requiring them to write. As their spelling develops, they can begin to write sentences using the GPCs they have been taught so far, spelling some words in a phonically plausible way, even if sometimes incorrectly, for example: 'me and my frens went in a caiai and had caix'.
- As children's knowledge of the alphabetic code increases, teachers should encourage correct spelling.
- Expecting children to write at length early on results in cognitive overload and might damage their motivation to write.



### Resources:

- Well-organised teaching spaces allow children to focus on what they are learning. Resources for children to refer to should be in a place where they can find or see them easily.
- Highly decorated walls in primary schools undermine children's ability to concentrate and absorb teachers' instructions.
- Letter cards, friezes and posters showing GPCs should match the phonic programme the school has chosen.



### Decodable Texts:

- 'Decodable' books and other texts make children feel successful from the very beginning.
- 'Decodable' books and texts that children read should run alongside or a little behind the teaching of the GPCs, so that they always feel a sense of achievement when they are asked to read such books.
- So that beginner readers read books at the right level of difficulty, teachers should make sure their organisation of the books matches exactly the order in which GPCs are introduced in the programme.



### Activities that can Hinder Learning:

- If children do not practise reading and writing enough, they fail to make sufficient progress. Activities must be high quality, practical, efficient and focused on the main goal – reading and spelling using phonics.
- Activities such as painting, colouring, playing in sand and water are valuable for developing language, knowledge, play, fine motor skills, and creativity. Using them as vehicles for practising phonics not only takes away the integrity of the activities but also does not provide sufficient practice in word reading.

Poor classroom routines can also get in the way of learning, especially when:

- routines and activities change frequently and time is lost in explanations
- children are seated where they cannot see the teacher's face or resources
- children are not shown how to use the classroom's posters and charts for support when they are reading and spelling
- displays are overly elaborate, and posters and charts other than from the school's selected phonics programme are used to decorate the classroom.

### Children with SEN and Disabilities:

- These children have to navigate the same written language, unlock the same alphabetic code, learn the same skills, and learn and remember the same body of knowledge as their peers. It is a critical skill in helping them prepare for life.
- Teachers should:
  - provide the skills and knowledge they need to read and spell, by direct instruction, progressing with carefully structured, small, cumulative steps
  - use instructional routines that become familiar
  - provide materials that limit distraction; are clear, linear and easy to follow; are age-neutral or age-appropriate and can be adapted further
  - provide opportunities for work on vocabulary, fluency and comprehension
  - provide multiple opportunities for overlearning (recall, retrieval, practice and application at the level of word, sentence and text).
- Teaching should:
  - be at a suitable pace for the child because progression through a programme will be much slower than for their typically developing peers
  - be daily, well-paced, well-planned lessons that are engaging and motivating
  - take full account of the child's individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and understanding, and profile of needs.

### Developing Fluency:

- Fluent decoding allows us to understand what we read. Because the reader has gained accuracy and automaticity in word reading, the brain's resources are available to focus on lifting the meaning from the page.
- As children gain fluency, their motivation increases: they start to enjoy reading more and are willing to do more of it.
- Accuracy as well as speed influences fluency; it is not just about the speed at which a child reads.
- Equally, accuracy on its own is not useful, unless they can read at a sufficient rate to support comprehension. Both accuracy and speed are essential.
- However, practising to gain automaticity in decoding needs to focus on accuracy: they can read only at the speed they can decode.



### Assessment:

- Close and regular assessment of children as they learn to read is vital if teaching is to match their capacity to learn and if difficulties are to be identified when they first arise, and overcome.
- What is important is that teachers are clear about 'what they are drawing from their data and how that informs their curriculum and teaching'.
- Pseudo-words ['alien' words] have been described as 'the purest measure' of decoding ability. Because they have no meaning, they allow for specific assessment of how well children can use their knowledge of GPCs and their blending skill, independently of any knowledge of the word, and how well they might work out unfamiliar words in their reading.
- While children are learning to read, most of their attention and working memory are directed to decoding words... They are also unlikely to be reading at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on the meaning of what is written. It is therefore neither necessary nor desirable to assess their reading comprehension using summative assessments before they are reading fluently.
- This is why, when children are learning to read, they should listen to and talk about books that include words beyond those they can read for themselves. When they can read, they are then more likely to have sufficient vocabulary and other knowledge to understand the books they can read for themselves.



## Section 4: Children at Risk of Reading Failure

- Teachers should aim for all children to keep up with the school's chosen phonics programme.
- To enable children to keep up, they should be given extra practice if needed.
- The extra practice should:
  - take place in a quiet place, at a regular time every day so that the children become familiar with the routine
  - be a school priority, with maximum efforts made to avoid cancellation
  - be provided by a well-trained adult: teacher or teaching assistant
  - be consistent with the school's phonics programme
  - include activities to secure the phonic knowledge children have not grasped
- The emphasis should be on:
  - consolidating the work the children have already met in their main class or group phonics session, with bite-sized steps so all of them can achieve success every day
  - revising grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)
  - practising oral blending of spoken sounds to pronounce words
  - reading words by saying the sounds and blending them.



## Building a Team of Expert Teachers:








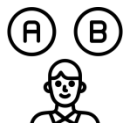
- Effective professional development is likely to be sustained over time, involve expert support, coaching and opportunities for collaboration.
- Carefully constructed practice of teaching routines, sustained and developed, can help to make sure that all teachers become excellent teachers of reading, spelling and writing.
- Practising together as a staff needs regular sessions. It builds consistency and accountability: everyone teaches reading in the same way.
- Practice should focus on the activities that will make the biggest difference to the children who are making the slowest progress.










## Older Pupils Who Need to Catch Up:

- Pupils who cannot read well enough do not have full access to the curriculum.
- Those who fail to learn to read early on often start to dislike reading. They read and do not accumulate the background knowledge and vocabulary that their peers do. The word-rich get richer, while the word-poor get poorer.
- School leaders and special educational needs co-ordinators must take responsibility for making sure all these pupils make rapid progress.
- If pupils' reading is below what is expected for their age, it is important to determine whether they have difficulty with decoding, language comprehension or both, since different kinds of teaching are needed for each.
- The school should use the phonics assessments in its chosen programme to identify these pupils' phonic knowledge and skill and identify gaps exactly.
- To continue to develop these pupils' language and vocabulary, and encourage a love of reading, teachers should make sure that they listen to and discuss the same texts that their peers read in their English lessons.






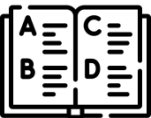

## Appendix: Supporting Children's Thinking

<b>Give time</b>	Make sure you have given the child enough time to respond. Wait for at least six seconds.	
<b>Delay</b>	Make sure the child has waited until you have finished your request.	
<b>Focus attention</b>	Make sure the child is looking towards you and listening to your request.	
<b>Repeat</b>	Repeat the request again, after sufficient waiting time.	
<b>Simplify</b>	Break your request down into parts or make it simpler. e.g. instead of 'Before we go for lunch, we need to wash our hands' say 'First we'll wash our hands. Then we'll go to lunch.' The sequence is clearer.	
<b>Use questions to clarify</b>	Check the child understands by asking questions at a simple level first.	
<b>Focus on the feature</b>	Help the child focus on the feature they need to look at to be able to understand your question. e.g. if asking how two items are alike, draw attention to relevant similarities, such as colour.	
<b>Forced alternatives</b>	Give the child two choices. e.g. 'What is he doing? Is he running or jumping?'	

<b>Gesture</b>	Use gesture to help the child understand or to cue in to the correct answer.	
<b>Rephrase</b>	Repeat the request in a different way. Don't do this too quickly, as they may still be processing the first request. e.g. (1) 'Please could you pick up the litter from under your table?' (2) 'There is litter under the table. Please pick it up.'	
<b>Sentence completion</b>	When asking questions that need a defined answer, model the response by beginning it, prompting the child to repeat how you start. e.g. What colour is it? ... It is ... Child: It is ... blue.	
<b>Demonstration</b>	Show the answer without talking and then ask again, while demonstrating. e.g. 'What will happen if we put water in this broken cup?'	
<b>Experience the concept</b>	Help the child to experience the answer. e.g. How does it feel? 'Let's touch it to see how it feels.'	
<b>Relate known to unknown</b>	Help the child to relate the request to previous experiences. e.g. 'Let's touch the spaghetti. The spaghetti feels hard. How will it feel after it is cooked? Remember when we cooked the potatoes? How did they feel after they were cooked?'	
<b>Model thinking and comprehension monitoring</b>	'That's a hard question. I need to think about that.' 'I've forgotten what you said. Can you say it again, please?'	



## Appendix: For Adults Preparing to Read a Story

<p><b>Seating</b></p> 	<p>The teacher should sit on a low chair, so that all children can see the book easily.</p> <p>Make sure that everyone is comfortable.</p>
<p><b>Voices</b></p>   	<p>Choose the best voice for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrator: a neutral voice that won't detract from the characters' or give away what the narrator is thinking</li> <li>• Main characters: high- or low-pitched? quick or slow?</li> </ul> <p>Not everyone can imitate accents successfully, but real life offers a multitude of voices to draw on.</p> <p>Remember, the voices have to be maintained – if there are too many, it can be difficult for the children to identify them.</p>
<p><b>Pauses</b></p> 	<p>Decide on the best places to pause to convey shock, concern or, sometimes, just to tease. Pausing builds anticipation.</p>
<p><b>Word meanings</b></p> 	<p>Wait until the second reading to explain words.</p> <p>Tell the children the meaning of unfamiliar words – don't ask: if they don't know, the question is pointless and encourages only guessing, and will distract others from the story.</p> <p>Use short asides to explain a word to avoid disrupting the flow.</p>
<p><b>Asides</b></p> 	<p>Use asides to show reactions to particular events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'I can't believe he did that!'</li> <li>• 'Oh, my goodness. He's not happy.'</li> </ul>

### Memorable words and phrases



Colour your voice to give words meaning: whooped, wailed or to convey an action: sprouted, quivered, squirmed.

Emphasise memorable words and phrases. These will feed into children's vocabulary texts and increase their comprehension.

Use phrases from the story later in different contexts.

e.g. when they recognise: 'Is there room on the broom for a dog like me?', they can enjoy being asked, 'Is there room at the table for a teacher like me?'

### Illustrations



Decide which pictures to show – and when.

If you have decided to show a picture, give the children enough time to look at it.

### Other Appendices:

The full document also includes the following appendices:

- An alphabetic code chart
- How to pronounce phonemes
- An extended glossary of many of the terms used in the English curriculum.
- Audit templates for different aspects of this framework

You can find the whole document at:

[The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)