

Use prior knowledge to support understanding

Progression	
1	Think about what they know about events or topics prior to reading.
2	Link the events or topic from a text to their own experience and/ or information they know. Recognise how books are similar to others they have read or heard.
3	Link the events or topic from a text to their own experience and/ or information gathered. Begin to make links to similar books they have read.
4	Link what they've read in a text to what they know, their experience and that of others, and their experience of reading similar texts.
5	Use background knowledge or information about the topic or text type to establish expectations about a text. Compare what is read to what was expected.
6	Comment on what they have read and compare this to what they expected to read, e.g. in relation to events, ideas etc. Make comparisons between a text and others they have read

Using prior knowledge is an essential reading comprehension skill. The knowledge a reader brings to their reading is an essential check when retrieving information from a text, (is this sensible?) but even more important to the process of inferring from a text, where the reader needs to fill in the gaps (read between the lines) between what is written and what is implied. Prior knowledge is 'the wall against which you bounce the ball of what you read.' Bringing to mind what is already known about a topic or event, in the jargon 'activating prior knowledge', should be the starting point for all reading lessons.

- Begin reading by discussing what is already known about a topic or event
- Encourage children to make links between their reading and their own experience
- Consider what is known or might be expected from other, similar texts
- Use prior knowledge to inform predictions and speculations about a text, (but be prepared to modify these in the light of what you actually read)
- When reading non-fiction texts, discussing prior knowledge should lead easily into identifying questions that the group need answering. Use KWL grids to collect what is known.
- Expect children to discuss how their prior knowledge was useful, or not, as they read through the text

Check that books make sense to them

Progression	
1	Listen to their own reading, and that of others, and make a sense check at regular intervals.
2	Check that a text makes sense to them as they read, pausing when reading to check their understanding and, where necessary, re-reading to regain understanding.
3	Use contextual and grammatical knowledge, as well as background knowledge and understanding of word meanings, to make sense of what they have read. Put into their own words their understanding of what they have read.
4	Monitor their understanding of a text and take steps to retrieve the meaning if comprehension has been lost.
5	Develop an active attitude towards reading: seeking answers, anticipating events, empathising with characters and imagining events that are described.
6	Link parts of a text together in order to understand how details or specific sections support a main idea or point. Accept uncertainty about the ideas or events described in a text where an author is deliberately obscuring the meaning

Good comprehenders make a sense check at regular intervals. They expect a text to make sense and check their understanding throughout, stopping and taking action when they have lost comprehension. This is an important strategy to teach all children. We should be encouraging children to identify where they have lost the sense and to know what to do when they have done so.

- Model how to read texts in short sections (rarely longer than a page of A5 text) so that children learn to stop and check their understanding
- Use reciprocal reading techniques to identify elements in a short passage which they don't understand and take action to improve their understanding
- Slow reading down – building in a pause when reading with a group so that children have the opportunity to discuss a meaning which they are finding difficult to grasp.
- Model putting a text's meaning into your own words and expect readers to do the same
- Discuss 'fix it' strategies to deal with misunderstandings – asking questions, clarifying word meanings etc.
- Underline how important it is to understand and not simply 'read through' aspects of a text which you are unsure about

Make predictions

Progression	
1	Make predictions based on clues such as pictures, illustrations, titles.
2	Use immediate clues and what they have read already to make predictions about what is going to happen or what they will find out.
3	Update and modify predictions about the events, characters or ideas in a text on a regular basis throughout their reading.
4	Make predictions about a text based on prior knowledge of the topic, event or type of text. Modify predictions as they read on.
5	Make regular and increasingly plausible predictions as they read, modifying their ideas as they read the next part of the text.
6	Make plausible predictions and explain what they are basing them on. Discuss how and why they need to modify their predictions as they read on.

A prediction is always an inference – as it is speculating about text that has not yet been read. Making predictions is an important inference skill and one of the aspects that is to be assessed under the new 2016 arrangements.

- Use reciprocal reading approaches to emphasise predictions
- Stop regularly as you read a text to enable children to think about what they've just read and to make predictions. Give children the opportunity to modify their predictions in the light of events or new information
- Predictions are based on prior experience, knowledge of the type of text and what has been read immediately before. Encourage children to recognise and use all these potential sources of information.
- Emphasise the plausibility of predictions rather than expect them to be correct
- When reading non-fiction, make use of immediate clues (sub headings etc.) to support predictions
- Enable children to review their predictions – why their idea is no longer appropriate or current, why they are no longer interested in that aspect of the text etc. – so that they get used to reviewing their own reading and identifying where texts have changed direction
- Model the language of predictions
- Show children that good predictions are based on text clues, e.g. titles, opening sentences etc., and not just pulled from the reader's unconscious. They are 'grounded speculations'.

Ask questions to improve their understanding

Progression	
1	Ask questions about aspects of a text they don't understand.
2	Ask questions about a text to ensure they understand events or ideas in a text.
3	Ask questions to clarify the meaning of events or ideas introduced or explored in a text that they don't understand.
4	Ask questions to explore meanings and explanations of the events or ideas introduced or developed in a text.
5	Identify aspects of a text they are not clear about. Ask questions to clarify their understanding or research the topic to find out more.
6	Identify where they do not fully understand a text. Ask effective questions that will help them clarify their understanding of the text or the topic they are researching.

In real life we ask questions because we want to know something or to clear up confusion- asking questions is a basic strategy for understanding. As such we should be making sure that children ask more questions in order to clear up any confusions they have about the text they are reading. Good readers ask questions of a text and continue to think through something they don't fully understand, until they reach a satisfactory explanation for what they've read. It is therefore vital that we provide opportunities for children to ask their own questions, rather than always responding to the teacher's predetermined questions. Children asking questions should be a part of every guided reading session that is focusing on comprehension.

It is often difficult to admit that you don't fully understand something so creating the conditions where it is permissible to ask for something to be explained is important. Children may need to be encouraged to ask questions. Teachers may also need to model the different kinds of questions, those which explore meanings, as well as those that retrieve details directly from the text.

Skim, scan and read closely

Progression	
1	Skim read to gain an overview of a page/ text by focusing on significant parts –names, captions, titles. Scan the text to locate specific information – using titles, labels.
2	Speculate about the meaning of the section or page by skim reading title, contents page, illustrations, headings and sub headings. Scan pages to find specific information, using key words or phrases and headings. Read sections of text more carefully, e.g. to answer a specific question.
3	Skim opening sentences of each paragraph to get an overview of a page or section of text. Scan contents, indexes and pages to locate specific information accurately. Identify sections of a text that they need to read carefully in order to find specific information or answer a question.
4	Skim read a text to get an overview of it, scan for key words, phrases and headings. Decide which sections of text to read more carefully to fulfil a particular purpose, e.g. to summarise a text.
5	Locate information accurately through skimming to gain an overall sense of the text. Scan a text to gain specific information. Use the skills of skimming and scanning to identify sections of text to read more carefully and re-read/ read on as appropriate.
6	Evaluate the value of a text for an identified purpose, drawing on information acquired by skimming and scanning Read carefully sections of texts to research information and to answer questions

Use strategies to locate or infer the meaning of unfamiliar words

Progression	
1	Speculate about the possible meanings of unfamiliar words met in reading. Check whether the suggested meanings make sense in the context of the text.
2	Learn how to find the meaning of an unfamiliar word where this is explained in preceding or subsequent sentences or in a glossary. Check whether a suggested meaning of an unfamiliar word makes sense in the context of the passage.
3	Practise re-reading a sentence and reading on in order to locate or infer the meaning of unfamiliar words. Discuss unfamiliar words and their possible meaning to clarify their understanding of a sentence or passage.
4	Identify unfamiliar vocabulary in a text and adopt appropriate strategies to locate or infer the meaning. (E.g. re-reading surrounding sentences and/ or paragraphs to identify an explanation or develop a sensible inference, by identifying root words and derivatives, using the context and syntax, or using aids such as glossaries or dictionaries.) Identify where unfamiliar words are not explained in the text and where a dictionary needs to be used to understand them.
5	Identify when they do not understand the vocabulary used in a text and need to clarify the meaning. Give increasingly precise explanations of word meanings that fit with the context of the text they are reading. Check the plausibility and accuracy of their explanation or inference of the word meaning.
6	Check the plausibility and accuracy of their explanation of or inference about a word meaning. Identify when they do not understand the vocabulary used in a text and apply appropriate strategies (re – reading, reading on, using the context, knowledge of syntax or word roots) to clarify the meaning

These objectives are repeated in the vocabulary strand.

- Teach children to use the context to speculate about the meaning of the unknown word and to check the plausibility of their guess
- Show children how to use the information included in the text to understand the meaning of an unfamiliar word, e.g. by re-reading a sentence or reading on to where a word is reused or explained
- Demonstrate how to make use of a glossary to explain technical vocabulary
- Recognise where a word is not explained by its context and that using a dictionary is the best course of action
- Ensure new words learnt through reading are used frequently in class in order that they enter children's working vocabulary
- Find ways to focus upon and celebrate new words – word walls, words of the week, competitions to re-use particular words etc.

Annotate text

Progression	
1	Mark significant incidents in a story or information in a non-fiction text.
2	Make simple notes on a text, e.g. underlining key words or phrases, adding headings etc.
3	Mark a text to identify unfamiliar words and ideas to be clarified or explored in discussion and subsequent re-reading Read and identify the main points or gist of the text, e.g. underlining or highlighting key words or phrases, listing key points, or marking important information.
4	Mark texts to identify vocabulary and ideas which they need to clarify. Mark a text by highlighting or adding headings, underlining or noting words or sentences, and adding notes where helpful.
5	Annotate a text to identify key information or identify elements they don't understand or want to revisit or explore further. Note key points of what has been read, using simple abbreviations, diagrams or other simple marking system. Use these as the basis of follow up and discussion if appropriate.
6	Identify and mark aspects of a text which are unclear in order to discuss or revisit on a second reading. As they read, identify, mark and annotate extracts which they think are significant to understanding characters, events or ideas or an author's point of view or use of language, adding a commentary where this is helpful

This element is repeated in the 'express, record and present understanding' strand

- Consider establishing a colour coding and/ or mark scheme to be used consistently throughout the school, e.g.
 - Readers circle words they are unfamiliar with the meaning
 - They underline information which will answer a literal retrieval question/ use green to mark information which helps them answer 'right there' questions
- They use a wavy line to mark information which might help answer an inferential question / use red to identify these questions as 'think about' questions
 - Identify 'find out more' questions for future research or follow up
 - Use orange to highlight significant moments where characters speak to each other
- Make simple summaries or marginal notes every 2 or 3 paragraphs

Visualise their understanding of what they read

Progression	
1	Visualise what they have been reading, e.g. through drawing or acting out.
2	Use illustrations and simple formats such as flow charts or diagrams to re-present and explain a process or a series of events.
3	Re-present information gathered from a text as a picture or graphic, labelling it with material from the text.
4	Visualise the information they have read about, e.g. by mapping, illustrating, representing information graphically, and acting out.
5	Re-present information from a text graphically. Comment on the illustrations and graphic representations they encounter in texts, linking their comments back to the text itself.
6	Re-present information from a text graphically. Comment on the illustrations and graphic representations they encounter in texts, linking their comments back to the text itself.

Visualising has been identified as important element in understanding what we read (see Pressley, 2000) and is used to support understanding as part of inference training. It is far more valuable than simply copying pictures from a text. Using illustration to reflect information in a text is also a helpful way of encouraging retrieval of detail.

- Talk to children about 'picturing' scenes and events in their minds as they read
- Encourage children to compare their idea about a character or event with the illustrations in a text
- Use information in a text as the basis for a drawing, illustration, diagram or graphic. Add labels, using direct quotation or paraphrasing from the text
- Use a graphic to re-interpret the information contained in a text
- Act out and freeze frame scenes from a text.
- Follow up children's illustrations by asking them to locate evidence in the text to explain and justify what they have done
- Use illustration/ graphic visualisation to support retrieval (e.g. map making) and inference (an emotions map)

Summarise understanding

Progression	
1	(There is no Year 1 objective in this strand)
2	Retell a story giving the main events. Retell some important information they've found out from a text. Draw together information from across a number of sentences to sum up what is known about a character, event or idea.
3	Retell main points of a story in sequence. Identify a few key points from across a non-fiction passage.
4	Summarise a sentence or paragraphs by identifying the most important elements. Make brief summaries at regular intervals when reading, picking up clues and hints as well as what is directly stated.
5	Make regular, brief summaries of what they've read, identifying the key points. Summarise a complete short text or substantial section of a text. Summarise what is known about a character, event or topic, explain any inferences and opinions by reference to the text.
6	Make regular, brief summaries of what they've read, linking their summary to previous predictions about the text. Update their ideas about the text in the light of what they've just read. Summarise 'evidence' from across a text to explain events or ideas. Summarise their current understanding about a text at regular intervals.

Summaries enable readers to put their understanding into their own words (in itself a useful metaphor for comprehension) and begin to distinguish between key and less important information. The move from recounting in detail to summarising is a developed skill and one that takes practice.

- Use reciprocal reading as a main vehicle for developing this skill
- Summaries do not need to be of large sections of text, little and often is best
- Use children's over-detailed recounts as the starting point for making briefer oral summaries
- Highlight the value of paragraph topic sentences to summaries
- Set constraints ('Can you summarise this section in 3 sentences?') as an aid to making effective summaries
- Get children to explain why a particular piece of information is 'key' to understanding
- Challenge incomplete summaries – when children leave out important information

Adapt reading strategies for different purposes or according to the text type

Progression	
1	Listen to their own reading, and that of others, and make a sense check at regular intervals, re-reading where necessary to regain understanding.
2	Stop and think about what they have read. Put what they've read or heard into their own words.
3	Identify where they don't understand what they've read, stop reading and take steps to fix the problem.
4	Adapt reading strategies to the different sorts of text read, including IT texts, and different purposes for reading. Take steps to re-establish understanding when comprehension is lost.
5	Apply the range of reading strategies to different reading tasks or circumstances, e.g. skimming a text to gain an overview, slow careful reading and re-reading to grapple with the meaning of a poem, presentation skills in order to perform it
6	Make sensible decisions in order to read most effectively for a specific purpose, e.g. knowing when it is useful to gain an overview of a text and how best to do it, or identify which part of the text needs to be read more carefully to find particular information

The focus here is on children learning to apply the appropriate reading strategies to their purpose.

- Teach readers to adapt their reading strategies for their purpose, e.g. reading for pleasure, independent reading, reading to find out, reading to answer comprehension questions
- Model different reading strategies, e.g. in order to show children how to overcome a difficulty in the text, or to decide whether a non-fiction text is appropriate for their purpose
- Identify the strategies they are going to use prior to reading – linked to the purpose of the reading, e.g. skim reading the contents and index of an information book and scanning for key words to check whether a text will be useful for their research, reading the blurb and first chapter of a novel to see whether you wish to read the whole text
- Discuss the strategies they plan to use when reading in order to encourage self-aware reading
- Discuss the most efficient approach to use for a particular task