

Guided reading and AlphaKids



In guided reading, teachers support children's learning through questioning, modelling, coaching and explicit teaching. Guided reading takes place in small groups where children read texts at a similar level of text difficulty. Teachers make decisions about the membership of guided reading groups based on their observation of children's reading behaviours.

Group membership is flexible and dynamic, and some classrooms will have several guided reading groups at a similar level. In multi-age classrooms there may be guided reading groups at the emergent, early, transitional and extending phases.



A procedure for guided reading

This procedure can be modified to respond to different groups.

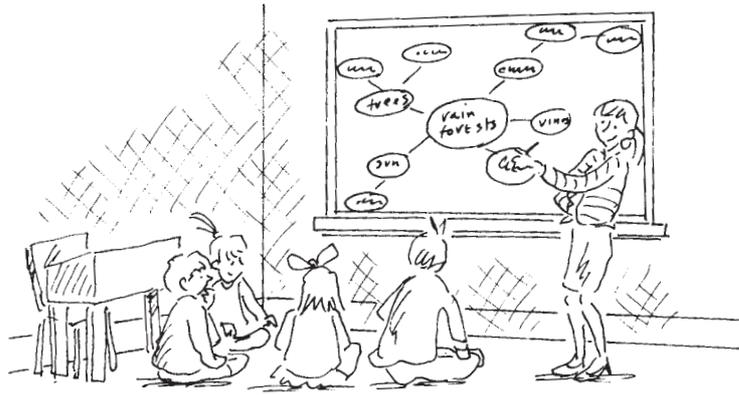
1 SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE TEXT

Select a text that is related to the children's interests and reading behaviours. It is important to read the text through before the session, noting any features of structure, vocabulary or syntax that could challenge or be unfamiliar to the readers, and which could provide a teaching focus. (See pages 8-11 for a list of key features at each text level and Appendix 2 for a summary of code-breaking features.)

2 GETTING READY FOR READING

Connect the book to the children's prior social and cultural experiences, or provide a simple experience to enable children to develop ideas related to those in the book. For example, to get ready for the book *Our Video Game*, talk about the video games that children like to play.

Some teachers find that listing questions about the text, or building semantic webs or maps helps children to get ready for reading.



3 TALKING THROUGH THE BOOK

This involves providing enough support to enable readers to use the reading strategies they know to draw on information sources in the book. Different genres require different ways of reading. To introduce the book, teachers may:

- summarise the story line
- talk through each page telling the story from the illustrations
- ask questions that cue the readers to the sentence structure

For example, in preparation for the book *Measuring Up* the teacher could ask questions to draw attention to the sentence structure:

Teacher: Who is the tallest student in this class?

Child 1: Jake is the tallest.

Child 2: Zac is the tallest.

4 READING THE BOOK

Children read the book individually. The teacher observes the child's reading behaviours and may select an additional teaching focus based on these observations.

Prompts can be used to encourage children to integrate visual, phonological, syntactic and semantic cues. These prompts are designed to help the reader solve problems and include:

What do you expect to read?

Does that make sense?

Well done. You made it. That makes sense.

What would sound right here?

Make your mouth ready to say the words.

Check the illustration.

What is the same about this word ... and another [unknown word]?

Which page will you read first?

Which way will you go?

As you read, match the words with what you say.

Check the beginning of the word.

It could be _____ but look at the first letter.

The teacher moves from child to child, hearing small sections of the text read aloud. This allows some assessment of progress to be made. The teacher may note a child who is having particular difficulty with the text and set aside time later to take a record of reading behaviour with that child.

5 TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

The selected teaching focus provides additional support after children have read the book. It is useful to select only one or two main teaching points for each guided reading session. Teachers should ensure that in time, the teaching opportunities selected allow children to develop all four reading roles: meaning maker, code breaker, text user and text critic.

The teaching focus will depend on the children's reading behaviours and the text being read. For example, it may be important to discuss new written language conventions such as question mark. Sometimes attention may be placed on noticing the visual similarities and differences in high-frequency words like *with* and *which*. In some texts, phonemic awareness is a teaching focus, for example discussing the /sh/ in *fish*. In other texts making analogies between the known word *fish*, and unknown words *dish*, *wish* and *swish* may be opportune.

6 FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEXT

During the discussion after reading the text, the teacher can pose questions to explore different readings of the book. For example as meaning maker, the teacher may ask questions to explore the literal, inferential and critical understanding of the text.



7 LITERACY LEARNING CENTRES

Literacy learning centres allow children to practise, consolidate and extend the reading behaviours they have been introduced to in the guided reading sessions. Providing activities that are closely related to the book allows children to engage with the same book for a number of sessions. More information about using literacy learning centres is provided on the following pages.