

EEF launches updated version of the Improving Literacy in KS2 Guidance Report

February 2022



The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published this ‘second phase’ Guidance Report in November 2021, including additional examples, explanations and resources to support implementation of the 7 original core recommendations. You can access the report and associated resources here: [Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2 | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/improving-literacy-in-key-stage-2)

As with most recent EEF Guidance Reports, this report offers seven practical, evidence-based recommendations that are relevant to all pupils, and particularly to those struggling with their literacy. They are based on a review of the ‘best available international research’ and also recent consultation with experts in the field.

The 7 recommendations are, as usual, available in Summary Poster form.

Sections are colour coded for ease of reference	1 Develop pupils' language capabilities	2 Support pupils to develop fluent reading capabilities	3 Teach reading comprehension strategies through modeling and supported practice	4 Teach writing composition strategies through modeling and supported practice	5 Develop pupils' transcription and sentence construction skills through extensive practice	6 Target teaching and support by accurately assessing pupil needs	7 Use high quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful speaking and listening activities support pupils' language development. Purposeful activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborative learning activities where pupils can share their thought processes; reading books aloud and discussing them, including use of structured questioning; and pupils articulating their ideas verbally before writing. Promote high quality dialogue in the classroom, between the teacher and the pupils and between pupils, to support pupils to develop their thinking and use of language. Extend pupils' vocabulary by explicitly teaching new words, providing repeated exposure to new words, and providing opportunities for pupils to use new words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent reading supports comprehension because pupils' cognitive resources can be redirected from focusing on word recognition to comprehending the text. Develop pupils' fluency through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> guided oral reading instruction—teachers model fluent reading, then pupils read the same text aloud with appropriate feedback; and repeated reading—pupils re-read a short and meaningful passage a set number of times or until they reach a suitable level of fluency. Prioritise understanding pupils' current capabilities and teaching accordingly. Most pupils benefit from an emphasis on reading fluency in Key Stage 2 but some may continue to need support with foundational reading capabilities such as decoding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach specific strategies that pupils can apply to monitor and overcome barriers to comprehension. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prediction (based on text content and context); questioning; clarifying; and summarising; and activating prior knowledge. Model and scaffold these strategies; then support pupils to increasingly use reading comprehension strategies independently, with less and less prompting from the teacher. Texts should be carefully selected to support the teaching of these strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing can be thought of as a process made up of five components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> planning; drafting; revising; editing; and publishing. Effective writers use a number of strategies to support each component of the writing process. For example, planning can be improved through the strategy of goal-setting. Describe and model how, when, and why pupils should use each strategy; support pupils to practice with feedback; then gradually reduce support as pupils increasingly use the strategies independently. Give pupils a reason to write—and someone to write for—can support effective writing and provide opportunities to teach pupils how to adapt their writing for different audiences and purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent writing supports composition because pupils' cognitive resources are freed from focusing on handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction and can be redirected towards writing composition. Extensive practice, supported by effective feedback, is required to develop fluent transcription skills. Monitor pupils' handwriting to ensure accurate letter formation habits, providing effective feedback to promote efficient and fluent handwriting. Consider the types of spelling error pupils are making to identify appropriate strategies for improving pupils' spelling. Explicitly teach spellings and provide pupils with extensive opportunities to practice them. Pupils should also practise sentence combining and other sentence construction techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use high quality assessment and diagnose to target and adapt teaching to pupils' needs. Rapid provision of support is important, but it is critical to ensure it is the right support. Integrate formative assessment into classroom teaching strategies to help ensure that teaching is appropriately targeted and that pupil needs are identified. Diagnostic assessment can be used to inform professional judgement about the best next steps; it also makes teaching more efficient by ensuring that effort is not wasted on rehearsing skills or content that a pupil already knows well. A range of diagnostic assessments are available and staff should be trained to use and interpret these effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools should focus first on developing core classroom teaching strategies that improve the literacy capabilities of the whole class. With this in place, the need for additional support should decrease. Nevertheless, it is likely that a small number of pupils will require additional support. There is a strong and consistent body of evidence demonstrating the benefit of structured interventions for pupils who are struggling with their literacy. The first step should be to accurately diagnose capabilities and difficulties in order to match pupils to appropriate, evidence-informed interventions that target specific areas of difficulty.

This poster, and the Guidance Report itself, are of course useful for staff training and discussion, but the additional resources can help these discussions reach a greater depth.

Firstly, there is a range of '[Literacy Vignettes](#)' drawn directly from the guidance report which describe scenarios and dilemmas related to literacy provision, similar to those that occur in many primary schools across the country.

Ms Chowdhury is working to support her Year 5 class to expand their vocabulary. She delivers three 15-minute vocabulary sessions per week. The focus of the sessions is the introduction of a new word, with dictionary work to support understanding. In each lesson, the children are asked to look up the 'word of the day' in the dictionary and then write the word in a sentence.

The children are enjoying these vocabulary activities but Ms Chowdhury is disappointed that they are not retaining and using the vocabulary she has introduced them to. She considers whether this work is worth continuing and, if so, what she can do to improve the retention and use of new vocabulary in the children's expressive language (their use of language in speaking or writing).



Questions for discussion

The vignettes include prompt questions for school leaders and teachers. These aim to encourage reflection on the scenarios presented and on readers' own existing practices. around supporting the development of their pupils' literacy skills.

Secondly, there is a description of the [Readers' Theatre](#) technique which could act as stimulus point for discussion about how a school might approach the explicit teaching of reading in KS2, alongside a review of the impact of existing practices.

IMPROVING LITERACY IN KEY STAGE 2
Reader's Theatre

The Wise Multi-Academy Trust uses Reader's Theatre to support pupils to develop their reading fluency. Reader's Theatre is a widely used teaching strategy that exemplifies how guided oral reading instruction and repeated reading of texts can be used to support pupils to develop reading fluency.¹ The Trust have developed their own guide to support the use of Reader's Theatre in the classroom.

The Wise Multi-Academy Trust is a family of schools in the North East of England.

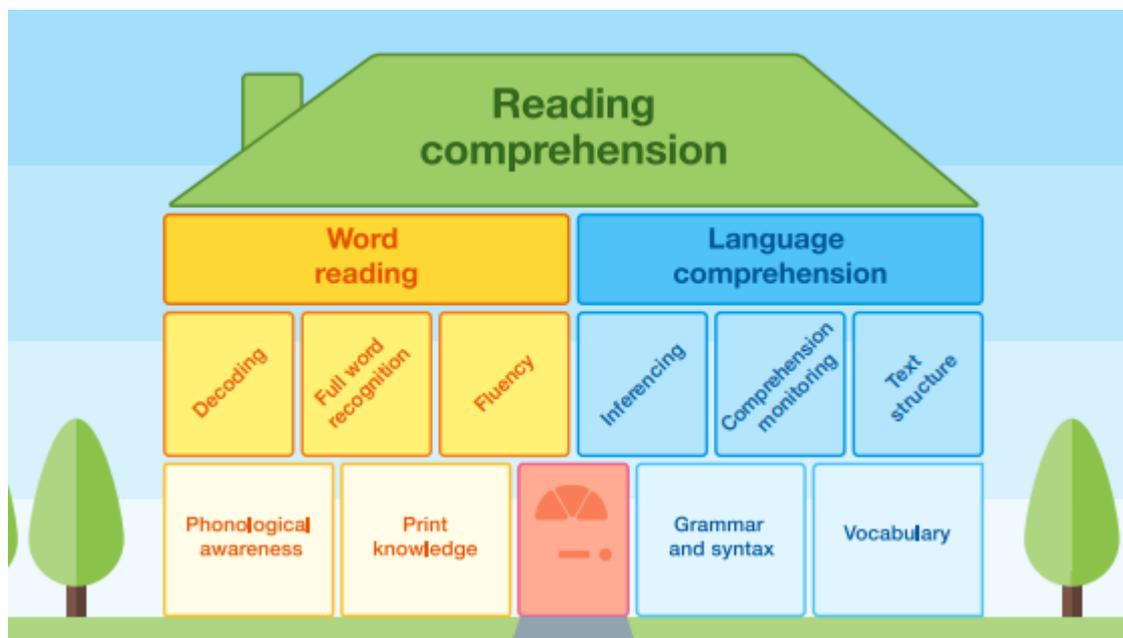



Step 1: Adult as model	Step 2: Echo reading	Step 3: Text allocation
The adult reads the selected passage of the class text aloud as an 'expert model' of fluency whilst pupils follow the text with their own copy. This may be repeated multiple times as necessary.	Children echo back the section read by the adult, emulating their intonation, tone, speed, volume, expression, movement, use of punctuation, etc.	Children work in pairs or triads. Each group may: 1. all have the exact same short section of text; 2. a larger section might be split into short parts, so that each group has a different piece.
Step 4: Repeated choral reading	Step 5: Close reading	Step 6: Text marking
In their groups, children read their section aloud, echoing the initial reading by the adult.	In their paragraphs, children make a close reading of their section of text and think about meaning, audience, and purpose. This requires children to look closely at the writer's use of language and consider characteristics, etc.	Each child has a copy of the text to annotate in order to inform their performance. This is discussed and agreed as a group. Prompts are provided to direct their reading.
Step 7: Practise	Step 8: Perform	Step 9: Reflect
Time is provided for groups to rehearse their reading. They may decide to change or add to their performance slightly as a result of their rehearsal.	Each group performs their rehearsed piece. (Adult may record so that children can appreciate their own performance).	Children evaluate their own and/or others' performance and give feedback. They may use a reading fluency rubric or the prompts as success criteria to support articulation of evaluation.

1. Young, C. and Reesall, T. (2016) 'Readers Theatre Effects on Word Recognition Automaticity and Reading Fluency', *Journal of Research in Reading*, 41, pp. 475-486.
Garratt, T. D., and O'Connor, D. (2010) 'Readers' Theatre: "Read on, it's not dead again!", *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 42(5), pp. 9-15.
Young, C. Steiner, F. and Reesall, T. (2017) 'Readers Theatre Plus Comprehension and Word Study', *The Reading Teacher*, 70(5), pp. 391-395.

This resource supports the 'Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2 – Second Edition' guidance report.

The third resource is the [Reading Comprehension House](#). Adapted from Hogan, T., Bridges, M., Justice, L., and Cain, K. (2011) 'Increasing Higher Level Language Skills to Improve Reading Comprehension', this single page visual demonstrates the links between fully developed reading comprehension, and the 'building blocks' which underpin it.



You can download the Guidance Report, the summary poster and the linked resources at the link below:

[Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2 | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)