

Language Tree

These tips are offered to help guide your teaching by providing:

- additional information to help teach a particular idea
- pedagogical suggestions with teaching methods that could be applied to lessons.

We hope you will find them useful as you prepare and deliver your lessons.

Phonics

Rhyming words

- Many poems are examples of predictable, patterned text. Pupils can use the rhyming pattern to help them predict words as they read. They are often able to read words in this way that would prove more difficult without such a context. Giving pupils a chance to read simple poems during independent reading time can enhance their reading progress.
- A word wall, with groups of word families (e.g. '-all', with *wall*, *tall*, *small*, *hall*, *fall*...) will help pupils begin to create rhymes, while also supporting their reading development. You can find examples at:
<http://literacyconnections.com/Phonograms.html>

Reading

Reading passages often allow opportunities to discuss cultural practices and reinforce good morals.

Guided reading

A group of 4–6 pupils (of similar reading developmental level) sit with the teacher to read aloud and discuss a story. The teacher may do a mini-lesson on a strategy or skill the group needs, and will keep notes of pupil progress. Other pupil groups do written tasks, read independently or read with a volunteer during this time.

Reading rules

Teach pupils to wait before assisting when their partner reads. Remind them that sometimes we need to read on before we figure out a part that gives us trouble. Reading on is a strategy of a good reader.

Reading strategies

- 'Breaking up' a word, or 'chunking' is an effective reading strategy where the reader looks for a familiar part of a word within a longer word (blends, digraphs, endings and smaller words). 'Fan-tas-tic' is an example of a word easily decoded with this important strategy.

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- Content area reading in information texts can prove more challenging for some readers (particularly pupils whose first language is not English). Teach pupils to read slowly, noticing facts about the topic, and to look carefully at the pictures or charts to help their understanding.

Comprehension

Predicting

Reading strategies

- Prediction is an essential skill for all readers. It is particularly important for early readers to take the time to draw clues from the picture, and form some idea of what the story might be about. Pupils should be encouraged to guess what might happen in the story, both at the beginning, and partway through.
- Looking at the cover illustration of a book, and the title, provides pupils with an opportunity to predict what the book will be about. Deciding if a book is fact or fiction is an important part of that essential prediction.

Diagram reading

Interjecting the strategy of prediction into diagram reading allows the visual learner to demonstrate his or her unique competencies.

Re-telling stories: reading strategy

A key component of reading comprehension is the ability to retell a story in one's own words. To encourage a pupil to mine all he or she remembers, the teacher will ask several times, *Anything else?* This friendly prompt is more effective than asking about specific details in the story, as it keeps attention focussed on meaning.

Context clues: reading strategy

- When pupils connect the story content with their own lives, they are more likely to engage in the text – to relate what they are reading to their own understanding and experiences. This engagement builds essential skill in reading comprehension.
- Continually build the understanding in pupils that what they read should make sense to them. If it does not, it is a clue to go back and read again. Tell pupils that adults do this all the time, and they should too.

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Open-ended questions

- Open-ended questions, that allow more than one correct answer. Encourage pupils to become involved in a story and its meaning, without the pressure of providing a prescribed response.
- Open-ended comprehension questions with picture-based stories are particularly helpful for reluctant readers.

Re-reading the question and answer is a key part of completing written comprehension questions, and requires practice.

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Sentences

Focus on the importance of sentences making sense as complete thoughts.

Verbs

Pupils can easily learn to identify verbs in sentences if they are taught to first locate who the sentence is about (the subject), and then ask themselves: *What did X do?*

Questions

Give pupils the hint that questions usually start with a question word (*Who, What, Where, etc.*) or a verb (*Are, Do, etc.*) and they always need a reply.

Compound words

Connect 'compound words' with the reading strategy they already know, to look for parts of words inside new words.

Writing

Journal writing

Integrate journal writing into the Science class, by keeping a record of a seed germinating, or another activity which includes changes over time.

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Writing projects

- Keep a Writing Box with pictures from greeting cards, bits of lace, yarn, wrapping paper, sheets of stickers or other stationery items. Pupils can bring items from home to add to the box, and they can then use items in the box for writing projects.
- Teach pupils to edit their own work, just as they are learning to peer edit. Ask *Does it make sense? Is there a capital letter and punctuation?*

General

Reward is a positive motivator, and can be as simple as a favoured activity, such as leading a queue.

Some pupils remember best when they sing the information.

Pupils who are shy to speak in a group need opportunities that are comfortable for them to do so. The topic of animals is a familiar one, and helpful for this purpose. Sitting in a circle can allow pupils the chance to build courage, knowing in advance when their turn will come.

Put the name of each pupil on one end of a lolly stick or strip of card. Place all in a tin, and pull one out when calling on pupils. After a name has been drawn, turn it over in the tin until all names have been drawn. Group or table names can also be used.

Pupils in some Caribbean regions do not use the 'th' sound in their informal speech, substituting 'd' or 't' instead. In school, pupils learn to code switch to the Standard English form. They should not be made to feel their home speech is deficient, as they learn the form expected at school.