

A menu of approaches to use in whole class reading – From

Below is a (far-from-complete) list of approaches to use in whole-class reading for developing pupils' comprehension, for engaging them imaginatively and critically with texts and for creating opportunities to assess their progress.

Some of the activities here could take just a few seconds of a lesson; some are more extended. For most of them, the talk and the follow-up questioning which surround them are key.

Most will be carefully planned into a lesson or teaching sequence, in which whole class, individual and small group/pair talk are intertwined; some will be spontaneous or responsive, inserted in where appropriate.

Of course, the planning of *activities* will come second to thinking about learning. What do you want to teach pupils? What do they need to practise? What do they need to be more confident doing? What can the text itself be teaching them – about language, about ideas, about the world, or about how texts work? What activities will help the text to do this?

Pre-reading

- ◆ Pre-teach selected Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary
- ◆ Pre-teach cultural/historical/geographical context
- ◆ Use illustrations or other images to talk about context, or about themes, characters and settings
- ◆ Make predictions from (closely-read) fragments or from the title
- ◆ Discuss questions or statements about related topics/themes/issues/feelings/dilemmas...
- ◆ Talk about pupils' feelings about reading today
- ◆ Drama around a theme or topic
- ◆ Close eyes and imagine
- ◆ Research...
- ◆ Share personal anecdotes about...
- ◆ Brainstorm a topic or idea
- ◆ Making a semantic map around a topic
- ◆ Lighting, music, sound-effects...

Releasing text slowly

- ◆ One paragraph or stanza at a time
- ◆ Randomly uncover words, phrases or lines
- ◆ Move a 'spotlight' over the text

Reconstructive activities

- ◆ Cloze (identify or guess missing words)
- ◆ Sequencing lines/chunks
- ◆ Working from an alphabetised text (to decipher, and to make sentences out of)
- ◆ Treat fragments as clues to piece together

While reading

- ◆ Read aloud to pupils, modelling comprehension
- ◆ Pupils read silently
- ◆ Pupils read in small groups



- ◆ Discuss questions
- ◆ Check understanding
- ◆ Explain, clarify and work with vocabulary
- ◆ Reinforce recently-learned words or ideas
- ◆ Get pupils to ask questions
- ◆ Display relevant images and key words
- ◆ Make predictions

Discussing questions about the text – including VIPERS

- ◆ About related experiences
- ◆ About context and background
- ◆ About connections to other texts
- ◆ About connections within the text
- ◆ About what we need to know or find out
- ◆ About meanings
- ◆ About what's important or symbolic and why
- ◆ About structures and patterns
- ◆ About characters and their personalities, motivations and development
- ◆ About the effect of words and how they are being used
- ◆ About possibilities and theories
- ◆ About impressions, reactions and feelings
- ◆ About what the writer might be trying to do
- ◆ About opinions, preferences and evaluative thoughts
- ◆ About new or changed ideas
- ◆ About what we've already read or found out

Recording immediate responses

- ◆ Write in a reading journal
- ◆ Write down immediate thoughts and reactions
- ◆ 'Tell-me grids'
- ◆ Annotate with questions, feelings, thoughts
- ◆ Formulate questions about the text using question stems
- ◆ Pick out favourite/most effective/most interesting word/phrase/line. Explain.

Structuring pair/group talk

- ◆ Same question for every pair / group
- ◆ Different question for each pair / group
- ◆ Statements to agree/disagree with
- ◆ 'Tell-me' grids and talk
- ◆ Questioning each other in role
- ◆ Agree on three things to say about...
- ◆ Come up with one key point to make...
- ◆ Diamond nines / rank ideas / sort cards
- ◆ Preparing presentations
- ◆ True or false

Close analysis of language

- ◆ Questions about words' or details' effects
- ◆ Find a(nother) detail which...



- ◆ Find quotations to match ideas
- ◆ Find a word/phrase which makes ____ seem...
- ◆ Allocate small chunks of the text to pairs/groups, to answer questions on and to talk about to rest of the class
- ◆ Pick out favourite/most effective/most interesting word/phrase/line. Explain.
- ◆ Close eyes. What image stays most strongly from what just read? Why? Find it.
- ◆ Annotating or highlighting aspects of a text
- ◆ Label moments in a text with moods, emotions, characteristics...
- ◆ Find evidence of...
- ◆ 'Exploding' quotations

Imaginative responses

- ◆ Write from the point of view of a character
- ◆ Write an extra or missing bit
- ◆ Write a formal report of an incident
- ◆ Write news reports
- ◆ Write extra or missing chapters
- ◆ Write diaries, letters, tweets, texts...
- ◆ Re-write in a different form or genre

Visual responses

- ◆ Illustrate moments
- ◆ Match images to moments
- ◆ Create an interpretative collage from cut-up magazines or downloaded images
- ◆ Storyboard camera shots for a sequence

Distillation activities

- ◆ Invent a chapter titles or headlines
- ◆ Sum up ... in one word / three words / one sentence
- ◆ Distil dialogue down to a given number of lines, for a screenplay version
- ◆ Summarise for a small child

Reflective activities

- ◆ Reading journal: pupils keep a running account of their feelings, thoughts and responses
- ◆ Quizzes
- ◆ 'Role-on-the wall'
- ◆ Decision trees
- ◆ Debate comments / criticisms / provocative statements
- ◆ Make flow-charts, maps, graphs and diagrams of the story
- ◆ Make a book cover with a blurb
- ◆ Map links, connections and resonances with other texts or topic
- ◆ Close eyes. What image do you have of...? Why?
- ◆ Venn diagrams to compare characters / texts / chapters
- ◆ Make Top Trump cards

Filmic approaches

- ◆ Compare a moment in the text with a moment in a film adaptation (or in several)
- ◆ Talk and/or write about how you might film a moment and why



- ◆ Attach camera shot-types to moments in a passage
- ◆ Storyboard camera shots for a sequence
- ◆ Talk and/or write about how you would direct an actor playing a character
- ◆ Distil dialogue down to a given number of lines, for a screenplay version
- ◆ Design the set, costumes, lighting...
- ◆ Choose or describe music for a passage or moment

Drama approaches

- ◆ 'Vox-pop' characters, bystanders, the author...
- ◆ Interview characters
- ◆ Hot-seat characters
- ◆ Still pictures; slow-motion moments; 'video clips' (abstract and 'realistic') – small groups, or whole class
- ◆ Direct actors playing the characters, in frozen or moving moments
- ◆ Thought-tap characters
- ◆ Act out a sequence
- ◆ Perform poems
- ◆ Blind guide around the scene
- ◆ Teacher-in-role as character
- ◆ Inquests, trials and inquiries
- ◆ Ghost characters return to reflect on events
- ◆ 'Mantle of the expert'
- ◆ 'Sculpt' characters at key moments
- ◆ Positioning: arrange characters in a space, to show their relationships, status or feelings about each other.
- ◆ Mime a sequence from a story
- ◆ Eye-witness: describe what you see and hear happening in a story
- ◆ Dramatic writing: suddenly stop and write in role