



Guidance

Curriculum and  
Standards

# Primary

## National Strategy

# Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years

Unit 2

## Creating the learning culture: making it work in the classroom

**Headteachers,  
teachers and  
teaching assistants  
at Foundation Stage  
and Key Stages 1  
and 2**

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creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

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# Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years

Unit 2

**Creating the learning culture:  
making it work in the classroom**



## Defining terms

**EAL** stands for English as an additional language and recognises the fact that many children learning English in schools in this country already know one or more other languages and are adding English to that repertoire.

**Bilingual** is used to refer to those children who have access to more than one language at home and at school. It does not necessarily imply full fluency in both or all of their languages.

**Advanced learner of EAL** is a term used by Ofsted to describe children who have had considerable exposure to English and are no longer in the early stages of English language acquisition. These are children who, often born in this country, appear to be fluent in ordinary everyday conversational contexts but require continued support in order to develop the cognitive and academic language necessary for academic success.

**Minority ethnic group** is used in this publication for all those groups other than the white British majority. Although children from these groups may well form the majority in some school contexts, they are still members of groups in a minority nationally and will continue to be referred to as children from minority ethnic groups. Most children learning EAL are from minority ethnic groups. School Census data shows that only a very small percentage of EAL learners are white.

## Acknowledgements

McWilliam, N., (1998) *What's in a word? Vocabulary development in multilingual classrooms*. © Trentham Books. Used with permission.

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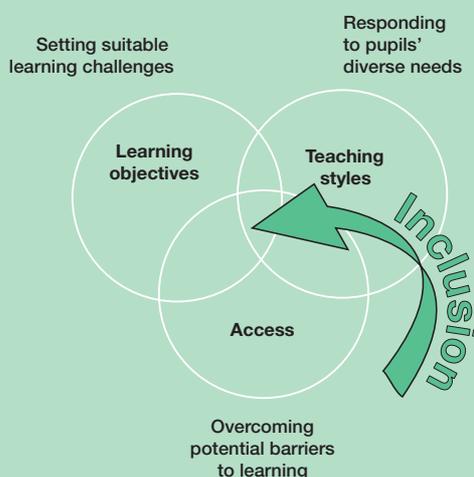
# Preface

This publication aims to support schools and settings in promoting the progress and achievement of all learners.

It is underpinned by the three principles of the National Curriculum inclusion statement:

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The Primary National Strategy model of three circles of inclusion illustrates these three principles in practice, and has been used to ensure that this publication will support the learning of children with diverse needs.



Teachers will need to further adapt the materials for individual children. Some examples of how teachers who have used the materials have done this for their classes have been provided. These are examples only – the particular choice of appropriate learning objectives, teaching styles and access strategies lies with the informed professionalism of the teacher, working with teaching assistants, other professionals, parents/carers and the child.

# General introduction

This is Unit 2 of a set of materials: *Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years*.

The materials consist of the following:

## Introductory guide: supporting school improvement

Unit 1: **Planning and assessment for language and learning**

Unit 2: **Creating the learning culture: making it work in the classroom**

Unit 3: **Creating an inclusive learning culture**

Unit 4: **Speaking, listening, learning: working with children learning English as an additional language**

## Professional development modules

(PDMs) linked to the units and designed to support school-based CPD

Three fliers: **First language for learning, ICT for EAL and Information for school governors**

A '**route map**' providing an overview of and some guidance for using these materials



A **CD-ROM** containing a variety of additional materials which are referred to throughout the pack



A **DVD** providing some exemplification, particularly of the material related to speaking and listening



An apple symbol is used to highlight practical strategies for teachers.

Although the content has been organised in this way there is a great deal of overlap between the different units. Some aspects covered in this unit are revisited in other units.

Aspects of practice, tools and techniques have been organised in this unit as part of one or other of two overarching but interrelated strategies:

- making contexts supportive for children learning EAL, and
- developing cognitive and academic language proficiency.

Most aspects, tools and techniques could equally well be considered as part of either strategy, for example planned opportunities for speaking and listening across the curriculum supports access by making contexts more supportive as well as developing cognitive and academic language.

Bilingual strategies, as well as building on previous experience, scaffold language and learning and support the development of cognitive and academic language. Teacher modelling supports sentence and word level learning and so on. Developing academic and cognitive language supports children's learning across the whole curriculum.

Some essential aspects are dealt with in other units; for example, using assessment for learning is covered in Unit 1; Unit 3 discusses ways to ensure that classroom ethos is supportive and the curriculum inclusive.

To help children's learning develop, teachers and practitioners adjust their pedagogy to match children's learning needs and contexts for learning ... Such an approach is at the heart of personalised learning. Personalised learning means adapting educational provision to meet the needs and aspirations of individual children. It is not about individualised learning but about building independence through interaction, intervention, stimulation and collaboration.

*Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years*, Creating a learning culture: Classroom community, collaborative and personalised learning (DfES 0522-2004 G)

**This unit looks at ways in which children learning EAL can be supported to access curriculum content while also developing cognitive and academic language within whole-class, group and independent contexts.**

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# Making contexts supportive for children learning EAL

## Building on previous experience

Activating prior knowledge

Using bilingual strategies

Creating shared experiences

see also Assessment for learning in Unit 1

see also Culturally familiar contexts for learning in Unit 3

## Scaffolding language and learning

Frames and prompts

The print environment

Modelling

Graphic organisers and other visual support

Collaborative activities  
see also Exploratory talk in this unit and Group discussion and interaction in Unit 4

Use

# Developing cognitive and academic language

Reading comprehension

Writing

Speaking and listening

At text level:  
making texts cohesive

At word level:  
vocabulary extension

At sentence level:  
grammatical challenges for children learning EAL

Experiential learning

Exploratory talk

Guided talk for literacy

Barrier games

see also Exemplar whole-class teaching sequences in Unit 4

of ICT

## Section 1

# Making contexts supportive for children learning EAL

## Introduction

Making the learning contexts supportive for children learning EAL includes:

- providing opportunities to build on previous experience;
- scaffolding learning in a variety of ways;
- carefully planned opportunities to listen and speak in a wide range of situations across the curriculum.

*Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years, Unit 1 Planning and assessment for learning: for children learning English as an additional language*

This section provides an overview of contextual support strategies which help children cope with the linguistic demands of classroom activities.

These strategies should be enacted within a classroom ethos and environment where children feel safe, secure and valued, and where they have a sense of belonging (see Unit 3).



# Building on previous experience

Building on previous experience includes:

- activating prior knowledge by sharing initial thoughts, ideas, understandings and experiences (see this unit, pages 10–12);
- using culturally familiar starting points, examples and analogies (see Unit 3, pages 36–38);
- starting with the language the child knows best, i.e. using bilingual strategies (see this unit, pages 14–17);
- creating shared experiences through practical activities, speakers and stories (see this unit, page 13);
- using a wide range of assessments for learning (see Unit 1, pages 30–44).





## Activating prior knowledge

Building in opportunities for children to activate prior knowledge is an important way to make learning contexts more supportive for all children and particularly for those learning EAL.

Since learning occurs mainly through ‘hooking’ new ideas onto what we already know, it is usually only when children have the opportunity to relate new ideas to previous knowledge and experience that real learning takes place.

Activating prior knowledge allows children to connect with prior learning, either to build on what has been learned in previous lessons or to assimilate a new idea or topic. It enables teachers to find out what children already know and understand, can do, believe or are aware of. It also sends explicit messages to children that their ideas are of value and that they have an active role to play in the learning.

### Strategies for activating prior knowledge include:



- giving a summary of the last related lesson’s outcome or focus;
- sharing quick ideas at the beginning of a new topic;
- concept maps;
- bilingual strategies;
- **KWL** grids;
- using artefacts and pictures.



**Sharing quick ideas** can be done orally as a whole class with the teacher acting as a scribe to record all contributions.

The words and phrases children offer will reflect what they already know about the subject and may include misconceptions. The ideas will be very different in terms of the categories they could be placed in, and how general or specific the information is.

Words and phrases may be recorded randomly or they can be grouped by the teacher in order to support children to make connections, classify, sequence and prioritise their ideas.

This activity can also be done in small groups with one child acting as a scribe or each child recording his or her ideas on separate slips of paper or card. Recording ideas in this way allows children to discuss all possible ways to group the words and phrases. Once agreement has been reached the ideas could be glued into position on a large piece of paper and annotated to make the connections explicit (see concept maps overleaf).





**Bilingual strategies** build on children's prior learning by using the language the child brings from home. They can also prove an effective way to help children to key into any prior knowledge of the content.

Bilingual staff and staff who share a culture with children and/or who live in the same community may be able to provide a stimulus which helps children to make connections, provide examples and draw analogies. Providing opportunities for small-group discussion enables children to come up with their own examples and draw analogies for themselves.



**KWL grids** are another useful way to record prior knowledge. **K** stands for what children already know about the topic – the heading for the first column on the grid. **W** stands for what they want to know, a series of questions about what needs to be learned. The final column is filled in at the end of the research process recalling what has been learned – **L** stands for what the child has learned.



**Artefacts and pictures** can be effective ways of unlocking knowledge children already have about a topic they may initially have thought they did not know anything about. When children are asked direct questions about topics which seem remote from their experience they are likely to react by saying they know nothing. Providing an artefact or a picture as a stimulus and allowing time for discussion in pairs or groups can often unlock relevant knowledge as well as stimulate interest.





## Creating shared experiences

Trips or visits, speakers or visitors, practical activities or a story, video or performance can all be used to provide a shared experience. Different children will gain different benefits from these experiences because each child is different in terms of his or her previous experiences and ways of seeing the world, but using a shared experience as a stimulus creates a reference point and provides a rich source of examples and analogies.





## Bilingual strategies

Bilingual strategies:

- build on what children know and can do;
- scaffold learning by supporting access to the curriculum;
- help children learn about language.

Research has established that affording bilingual children the opportunity to continue to use their first language alongside English in school for as long as possible, and to use it in the context of cognitively demanding tasks, will support both the academic achievement of the child and the development of an additional language. There is considerable evidence that bilingualism can benefit overall intellectual progress where both languages continue to develop and when children feel they are adding English to their language repertoire. The first language has an important role in a child's sense of personal identity, and whether or not children feel their first language is recognised and valued is enormously significant.

*Children use their first languages, as well as English, for learning.*

*Linguistic diversity is celebrated explicitly here.*

*Adults and children use all their languages in conversation and play.*

*Children are encouraged to feel proud of their linguistic heritage.*

*Parents know that community languages are valued in school.*

*Parents understand that continued development of the first language brings benefits.*

See Unit 3 pages 22–33, where creating this kind of context is explored more fully.



Bilingual strategies include appropriately planned use of first language for learning and teaching before, during and after lessons. Productive support can be offered by peers, cross-age peers and parents and carers as well as by bilingual school staff. Bilingual additional adults should be involved in initial planning wherever possible. They need to be clear about the learning objectives and they may well suggest ways to embed new learning in culturally familiar contexts. (*Note:* For suggestions where no peers or adults share a first language, see page 17.)

**before lessons**

Pre-teaching or preparation in the first language provides a supportive context for children learning EAL. It is easier to learn a new label for a concept that has already been developed in the first language than it is to learn new concepts in a new language where children will have few 'hooks' on which to hang their new learning. Children who know they are going to hear a teaching input interpreted into their first language will listen with much less attention than they would if they had been provided with a context for that input in advance of the lesson. Support from a bilingual adult is very much more supportive of the child's developing English when organised in this way.

**during lessons**

Appropriate interventions during teaching enable children to contribute to class discussion and provide opportunities for checking understanding. These may include:

- using the child's first language to explain and discuss idiomatic phrases;
- using figurative language or culturally specific references;
- translating new lexical or grammatical items;
- encouraging children to compare and contrast their languages;
- using cultural knowledge to encourage children to make connections;
- providing analogies and identifying and addressing misconceptions.



Discussion in first language after whole-class teaching enables children to review and consolidate learning and facilitates assessment for learning.

**Other opportunities to use bilingual strategies include:**

- when sharing learning intentions and success criteria;
- partner talk in a shared first language to extend, check and consolidate understanding during whole-class teaching;
- during guided work with small groups where discussion in first language develops and consolidates learning. This will be greatly facilitated where groups of children all share a first language;
- during independent collaborative work;
- during questioning and dialogue to probe children's understanding;
- during discussion about language.

**Pakistani heritage children comparing and contrasting their languages**

*In our language we've got lots of different words for auntie.*

*In Urdu we say 'it's raining mortars and pestles'!*

*In our language dogs go 'bon bon' not 'woof woof'!*

*We couldn't have an 'animal design'. We don't have things in our houses which are decorated with animal pictures.*





**In addition to many of the strategies listed above, the following will be supportive for children learning EAL in situations where no one else in school shares their first language:**

- showing a general and academic interest in children's languages, and encouraging them to be interested in each other's languages (this develops understanding and use of metalanguage by all children);
- using ICT resources – audiotapes, video and film clips, dual-language texts as well as texts in the languages of the classroom;
- exploring options for involving others: links with other schools, links with parents and carers and the wider community.

### **Literacy skills in first language**

Ensure that children with existing literacy skills in their first language are encouraged to use these skills as tools for their learning, e.g. 'mid-stream' arrivals from overseas, and children learning to read and write their community languages through supplementary education.

Having the opportunity to become literate in the first language powerfully supports the development of literacy in an additional language. It would therefore be good practice for schools with significant numbers of bilingual learners to afford them the opportunity to develop literacy in their community language through the National Languages Strategy.



For school case studies describing the use of bilingual strategies see the CD-ROM.

# Scaffolding language and learning

## Scaffolding

One important view of learning, based on the ideas of Lev Vygotsky, is that inexperienced learners learn from working with more expert others. Working with a more experienced person, the inexperienced learner can achieve more than they could working on their own – they are ‘scaffolded’ by the expertise of the other. Gradually the learner takes over more and more of the task from the expert until they can do it without assistance. They are then ready to take on new, more challenging

learning, again scaffolded by an expert. Thus they continue to move from dependence to independence, constantly increasing their own expertise. Vygotsky claimed this was how children learned naturally within societies and families.

*Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years*, Creating a learning culture: conditions for learning (DfES 0523-2004 G)

### Scaffolding by adults

- Making expectations clear by sharing learning objectives and success criteria (see Unit 1, page 40)
- Modelling and demonstration (see this unit, pages 19–20)
- ‘Recasting’ of children’s language (see this unit, page 20)
- Providing opportunities for bilingual children to use their whole language repertoire as a tool for learning (see this unit, pages 14–17)
- Guided talk in small groups (see this unit, page 78)
- Focused feedback and specific praise (see Unit 1, pages 40–41)

### Scaffolding through collaborative work

Working in pairs or a small group provides scaffolding for EAL learners particularly when groups or pairs are of mixed ability or contain more proficient language users. (For advice on groupings and a rationale for collaborative activities see Unit 4, pages 25–27.)

### Scaffolding through visual support

- Pictures, props or models
- Frames and language prompts
- Graphic organisers
- Diagrams, graphs, maps and plans
- The print environment of the setting



Teachers and practitioners should model the construction and use of frames, prompts, graphic organisers and other visuals. Involving children in the development of writing frames and other scaffolds helps them to internalise the frameworks they need to shape their writing.

Recognising when to withdraw scaffolding is important if children are not to become over-dependent. Moving children on from scaffolded learning to independent learning can be greatly facilitated by offering children scaffolds such as criteria cards for self-evaluation, cue cards and writing frames that they can decide when (or if) to use. This helps children develop awareness of their own learning (metacognition) and the opportunities to work things out for themselves. Asking children to reflect on the strategies they have used is a further essential element of scaffolding: children are again encouraged to be explicitly aware of their learning processes.

*Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years*, Creating a learning culture: conditions for learning (DfES 0523-2004 G)

## Modelling

For visuals to support understanding in Mathematics, see the CD-ROM and charts pack *Models and Images* DfES 0508-2003 CDI

Demonstration and modelling are key learning and teaching strategies that scaffold or support children's learning to take them successfully from what they know into new learning.

*Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years*, Creating a learning culture: conditions for learning (DfES 0523-2004 G, pages 78 and 79)



When modelling for children learning EAL teachers should model:

- **what to do;**
- **how to do it;**
- **what to say or write in order to do it.**



The magnet on the bottom is pushing the magnet on the top away.

Yes, it's repelling it ... it's pushing the other magnet away.

People who live in the country grow most of their own food.

Yes, a lot of food is grown in the country ... in rural areas.

My uncle has mended our house in Kasanik.

... repaired the house. You must be pleased.

In Sri Lanka they got peacock. It's in the forest.

That's interesting, they have peacocks and they are in the forest. Did you see one?

Modelling provides an opportunity for EAL learners to hear the language associated with the particular purpose, including subject-specific vocabulary.

Modelling can be provided by anybody more expert than the child. It will be provided by other children during independent collaborative activities. Where the modelling of language is a priority for group work, it is essential to consider good language models when arranging groupings or pairs.

It is vitally important that practitioners are careful to model the appropriate language form for the purpose, for example, past tense to recount events in the past. The prompt *Tell me what you did on Sunday* is more likely to elicit from a child a past tense response, the appropriate form for personal recount or 'news', than the prompt *Tell me what you were doing on Sunday*.

### Recasting and remodelling to extend vocabulary and develop language

There is a tendency for EAL learners to stay within their 'comfort zone' – a narrow range of known vocabulary. They may also avoid using complex sentences and this could be overlooked if what they say is grammatically correct. However, if there is a gap in children's linguistic repertoire their range of meanings, their recognition of abstract ideas and their thinking processes will all be restricted.

Recasting and remodelling are positive ways to deal with the errors children make when trying out new vocabulary and new forms. If a child says, for example, *We goed Leicester on Sunday*, the practitioner should acknowledge the child's successful communication of meaning and model the correct form, *You went to Leicester on Sunday ... did you travel by car or train?*



We're weighing things in mathematics.

Yes, we're learning about weight.



## Use of frames and prompts

One of the key features of the National Literacy Strategy has been the emphasis on exposing children to a wide range of text types. Linguists and educationalists working in Australia developed theories, which had their origins in the work of Halliday, about how information is shaped and framed to achieve particular purposes in spoken and written texts. Genre theorists recognised that supporting children to gain control over different spoken and written genres would help them to develop into independent and effective learners.

Critics of this work argue that genres are often mixed in texts and that frames can be restrictive. However, it is widely recognised that children can be helped to gain control over different text types by providing them with frames to support their writing. The amount of support provided ranges from sentence completion activities at one end of a continuum through to single word prompts at the other. These frames have often been compared to trainer wheels on a bicycle, or to water wings, a temporary support, something that the learner should be able to do without as soon as possible. (See The National Literacy Strategy training pack (1998; NLS54), Module 6, for practical ideas.)

## Use of graphic organisers and other visual aids

### What are graphic organisers?

Graphic organisers are visual representations and organisational tools within which text is organised in order to make explicit connections of various kinds. They have important applications in two distinct areas:

1. They can be used to help practitioners to focus on, understand and develop children's 'meanings', the connections they make and the ways in which they organise ideas and information.
2. They can also be used to help children to focus on and understand organisational patterns and the cohesion of ideas within texts.

They are particularly useful tools for EAL learners as they:

- give teachers important insights into prior knowledge and experience;
- promote inclusion by allowing learners to construct their own meanings and make their 'ways of seeing' explicit;
- facilitate access to linguistically demanding tasks;



- generate talk and powerfully support the development of cognitive and academic language.

### 1. Focusing on, understanding and developing children's meanings, connections and ways of organising information

Purposes:

- to activate prior knowledge;
- to assess understanding and to use assessment for learning;
- to develop the relationship between ideas;
- to link prior knowledge to new learning.

Thoughts and ideas generated in order to activate prior knowledge can be grouped into diagrams to help children clarify their thinking. Semantic webs or concept maps can be constructed by practitioners or children in shared or guided sessions or during independent collaborative work. These help assess children's existing knowledge and promote discussion about the ways in which information and ideas are grouped and the connections children are making. Misconceptions can be identified and the visual can be revisited at the end of a unit of work to see how ideas have changed or developed.

Each step in a procedure, a sequence of events and the attributes of an object can all be represented in a visual form. Children will be developing and using the language associated with listing, classifying, sequencing and prioritising.

### 2. Recognising and using common organisational patterns in texts

Purposes:

- to develop awareness of the structure of a text;
- to summarise main ideas from a written text in a visual form;
- to organise relevant information and ideas from a discussion in order to support the construction of a formal talk or written text.

Structures typically identified are:

- lists, including chronological lists;
- cause – effect;
- problem – solution;
- compare – contrast;
- main idea – further detail.



Each organisational pattern can be represented by a visual. Information grids, retrieval tables, time lines, flow diagrams and cycles can all be constructed from different kinds of lists. Grids such as the one here showing comparison can also be used to show cause and effect, or problems and solutions. Tree diagrams and pyramids show ideas in a hierarchy.

<b>Life in a village in Pakistan</b>	<b>Life in a city in Pakistan</b>
Lanterns used to light the way at night	Street lights in many areas
Narrow streets	Wide roads
Clay ovens in the courtyard	Modern gas cookers
People go to bed early	People are out and about in the evening
Water comes from a pump	Water comes from a tap

These graphic organisers can then be used:

- before, during or after reading;
- before or during writing;
- before, during or after discussion;

or as a framework for note taking or as contextual support to help children with:

- text comprehension;
- text construction;
- listening or speaking.



### **Strategies to support children to understand and use graphic organisers**

- Practising sorting, sequencing and ordering a range of things from objects to information according to different criteria. Encourage children to explain their thinking during these activities.
- Using graphic devices within text, e.g. highlighting, underlining, using arrows to connect ideas, using bullets and numbers, using space.
- Demonstration and guided practice of constructing graphic organisers from text.



- Specific teaching of the language which signals the organisational pattern with opportunities to practise at sentence level where appropriate, e.g. using time connectives to talk about chronological events, using logical connectives such as *so* and *because* to distinguish between cause and effect.
- Demonstration and guided practice of constructing text from a graphic organiser.
- Opportunities for children to construct graphic organisers that reflect their thinking and understanding. This strategy is particularly powerful where children are required to explain their thinking to others and compare their format with visuals produced from the same text by other groups of children.





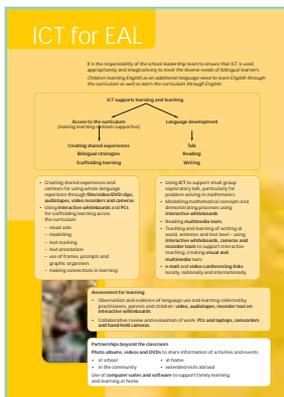
## Other visuals which support children learning EAL

Providing children know how to read or understand them, other visuals, such as labelled diagrams, graphs, maps and plans, can support access to the curriculum. When children also know how to create them they can be used as alternative ways of demonstrating understanding and communicating information.



### Use of ICT

Interactive whiteboards, the Internet, digital cameras and digital video recorders can all be used to extend the range of visual support.



See this unit page 11 for the use of concept maps as a strategy to activate prior knowledge.

See this unit page 93 for the use of graphic organisers during exploratory talk.



See the CD-ROM for more examples of graphic organisers.



See section 2 of the accompanying DVD for an example of the use of a graphic organiser in a speaking and listening lesson.



## The print environment

The environment in which children learn will provide a supportive context for children learning EAL when:

- reading areas, role-play areas and graphic areas reflect and celebrate the multilingual school community;
- there is a rich range of reading material which includes dual language and community language books, newspapers and magazines;
- displays reflect the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious make-up of the school.



**A print environment which scaffolds learning includes:**

- ~ learning objectives and success criteria displayed for children to refer to throughout a unit of work;
- ~ curriculum targets displayed;
- ~ learning prompts such as semantic webs; key vocabulary for specific purposes, processes and procedures; photographs and diagrams on display;
- ~ displays clearly showing the writing process from gathering and organising ideas, through the stages of drafting, redrafting, editing and proof reading to the final published stage;
- ~ texts displayed with a clear purpose and audience, written in the appropriate genre by a range of authors including children learning EAL;
- ~ writing frames displayed to help teach children how to construct texts in different genres - frameworks which clearly show the conventional structure of different text types and the functions of the various sections of the text along with the language forms and features appropriate for those functions;
- ~ new vocabulary modelled in meaningful contexts, well supported by relevant pictures and diagrams;
- ~ displays highlighting particular grammatical features such as prepositions or adverbials.

Additional references to scaffolding tools and techniques can be found on pages 44, 48–49 and 80–84 (reading, writing and talk). The accompanying DVD shows teachers using a range of scaffolding techniques and tools. See especially Sections 1, 2 and 3.



# Section 2 Developing cognitive and academic language

Children encounter academic language across the curriculum in texts they are expected to be able to read. As they progress through the primary years they are expected to be able to produce academic as well as literary writing. It is mainly through literacy that children develop and use academic language.

This section focuses specifically on reading (pages 29–47), writing at text and sentence level (pages 48–66), strategies for extending vocabulary (pages 67–75) and planned opportunities for speaking and listening across the curriculum (pages 76–97).



# Introduction

**Reading and writing** present children learning EAL with particular challenges as well as opportunities. EAL learners need to:

- read with comprehension (see pages 29–47);
- write cohesively at text level (see pages 49–54);
- produce writing that is accurate and appropriate at sentence level (see pages 55–66);
- develop wide vocabularies, including academic language for reading comprehension and for writing (see pages 67–75);
- orally rehearse their writing (see page 82; see also Guided talk for literacy in Frater 2003).

**Experiential learning** provides children with opportunities to use language socially with peers, and to name and classify things in the world around them (see page 77).

**Planned opportunities for speaking and listening across the curriculum** provide the context for the development of cognitive and academic language. When children work together to investigate something, solve problems or discuss abstract ideas their talk is **exploratory**. They use cognitive language to predict and hypothesise, to express opinions, discuss possibilities, explain, justify and evaluate. During collaborative activities such as these, children have access to the vocabularies and language constructions of their peers. When meaning is supported by a visual context and language is being used for a real purpose, activities such as these facilitate the development of cognitive language (see pages 88–93). Reporting back following these activities requires children to move from using process talk to the use of presentational talk (see Unit 1 pages 22–23).

**Barrier games** support the development of academic language because they require children to use language unambiguously. Academic and technical language is more precise than everyday language (see pages 94–97).

**Guided sessions** Without planned intervention, children learning EAL will tend to stay within a narrow range of familiar vocabulary and grammatical forms. Guided sessions provide opportunities for adults to model and probe for the use of cognitive and academic language in order to support language development.



See also Planned opportunities for speaking and listening handout on the accompanying CD-ROM.



# Reading

Publications which are particularly useful are:

*Bookbands for guided reading*  
3rd edition, Bickler, Baker and Hobsbaum, ISBN 0 85473 687 5, Institute of Education, University of London

*Bridging bands: resourcing guided reading into Key Stage 2*  
Bickler, Baker and Hobsbaum, ISBN 0 85473 690 5, Institute of Education, University of London

*Guided reading: supporting transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2* (DfES 0064/2003 – CPD booklet and video)

*A handbook for teaching guided reading at Key Stage 2* (2nd edition), ISBN 0 85473 720 0, Institute of Education, University of London

*ICT in the literacy hour: guided and independent reading* (DfES 0015/2003)



*Raising standards in reading: achieving children's targets* (DfES 1317-2005)



*Understanding reading comprehension: 2. Strategies to develop reading comprehension* (DfES 1311-2005)



*Understanding reading comprehension: 3. Further strategies to develop reading comprehension* (DfES 1312-2005)

This section builds on the guidance provided in a range of publications by the Primary National Strategy, and explores how bilingual learners can be supported in becoming fluent readers who read for a range of purposes. The range of strategies for scaffolding learning explored in section 1 of this unit can be used to scaffold language comprehension during reading.

Practitioners and leadership teams should also refer to:

- further guidance which will be provided by the Primary National Strategy to incorporate the recommendations of the Rose review on the teaching of early reading (DfES 0201 – 2006DOC-EN).
- guidance and supporting material accompanying the PNS renewed framework for teaching literacy (2006)
- curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Bilingual learners bring a range of experiences and understanding to their reading in school. They are aware of and may be able to read texts written in their own language; they know that reading has a range of different purposes. 'The acquisition of two languages, with English as the additional language, must be a valuable attribute and should certainly not be seen as an obstacle to learning to read.' (Rose 2006)

Reading requires word recognition as well as language comprehension. Word recognition is 'the process of using phonics to recognise words'; language comprehension is 'the process by which word information, sentences and discourse are interpreted: a common process is held to underlie comprehension of both oral and written language.' (Rose 2006)

## Early Reading

It is very important to develop children's positive attitudes to literacy, in the broadest sense and from the earliest stages, including partnership with parents, carers and families. It is widely agreed that reading involves far more than decoding words on the page.



Nevertheless, words must be decoded if readers are to make sense of the text. Rose recommends that practitioners pay careful attention to both aspects of reading.

Word recognition and comprehension should be taught within a broad and rich curriculum, and experience of rich language through story-telling, sharing books, poems, rhymes and songs. Understanding, engagement, and personal response, which are provided through a rich language curriculum are important for early readers. Best practice for beginner readers provides them with a rich curriculum that fosters all four interdependent strands of language. Rose states that 'nurturing positive attitudes to literacy and the skills associated with them, across the curriculum, is crucially important, as is developing spoken language, building vocabulary, grammar comprehension and facility with ICT'. Work in mathematics, science, art and music provides rich opportunities for children to listen, speak, read and rapidly increase their stock of words. There are many references throughout the Rose report to the four interrelated strands of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing, and examples of the ways in which a stimulating variety of experiences is vital to children's ongoing development in language and literacy. In addition to experiences of rich literature, children also require structured and focused teaching to develop as fluent readers who understand what they read.

The knowledge and skills that enable beginner readers to decode print to read independently and encode sounds to write independently, which are provided through good phonics teaching (including opportunities to apply these skills) are also crucial. High quality, systematic phonic work should be taught discretely as the prime approach in learning to decode and encode.

Rose identifies the following features of best practice for phonics teaching – these apply to all children, including bilingual learners:

- focused work to develop phonological awareness;
- systematic, regular and explicit teaching of phonics i.e.
  - the alphabetic code and the correspondence between phonemes in spoken language and graphemes in written language in a clearly defined incremental sequence;
  - the skills of blending (synthesising) the sounds to read words and breaking up (segmenting) words to spell;
- discrete teaching of frequently used words which are not phonemically regular and ensuring that their meaning is understood;



- use of multi-sensory activities and stimulating resources, including ICT, to keep learners engaged;
- daily teaching which uses ongoing as well as formal assessment to reinforce and build on previous learning, with carefully planned progression of skills and knowledge as well as planned intervention with appropriate additional support when required;
- regular opportunities to apply the skills of decoding and to read text for meaning. Texts which young readers use to practice reading should include enjoyable literature with rich vocabulary, repetition of phrases and sentences, frequently used words which are not phonemically regular and phonemically regular words.

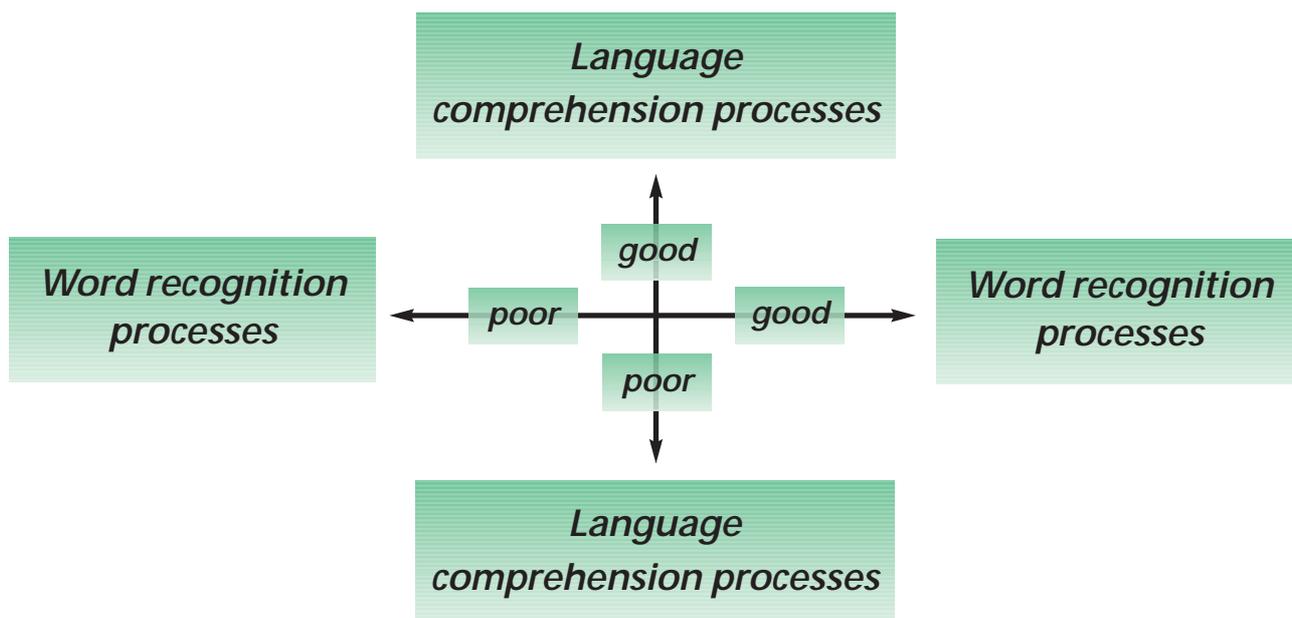
It is important that early phonic work is taught successfully within a language-rich curriculum. For young children, effective work draws on all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum to develop children's imagination and enrich their communication skills, particularly speaking and listening. For young bilingual learners, these communication skills need to develop in first and additional languages. It is also important to recognise that children's phonemic awareness in their first language should be built on to develop their understanding of phonics for reading and writing in English. Bilingual learners who have already learned to read and write in their first language usually learn phonics for reading and writing in English very easily and issues created by very specific differences in sound systems can be addressed explicitly.

The link between oral and written language comprehension: 'developing speaking and listening and intensifying language comprehension in English as precursors to reading and writing, including phonic work' (Rose 2006) is particularly important for children learning English as an additional language. It is also important that word recognition and comprehension are taught within a broad and rich curriculum which reflects as well as extends the learners' cultures, identities and experiences.

Rose (2006) draws on Gough and Turner's 'simple view of reading' as consisting of decoding and comprehension to provide a conceptual framework. Decoding is the ability to recognise words presented singly out of context using phonic rules. Comprehension is language comprehension (the process by which lexical, sentence and discourse are interpreted) and not just reading comprehension. A common set of linguistic processes is held to underlie comprehension of both oral and written language.



This framework is represented diagrammatically to show the two dimensions in the form of a cross to emphasise that both word recognition processes and language comprehension processes are essential at all points during reading development and in skilled reading.



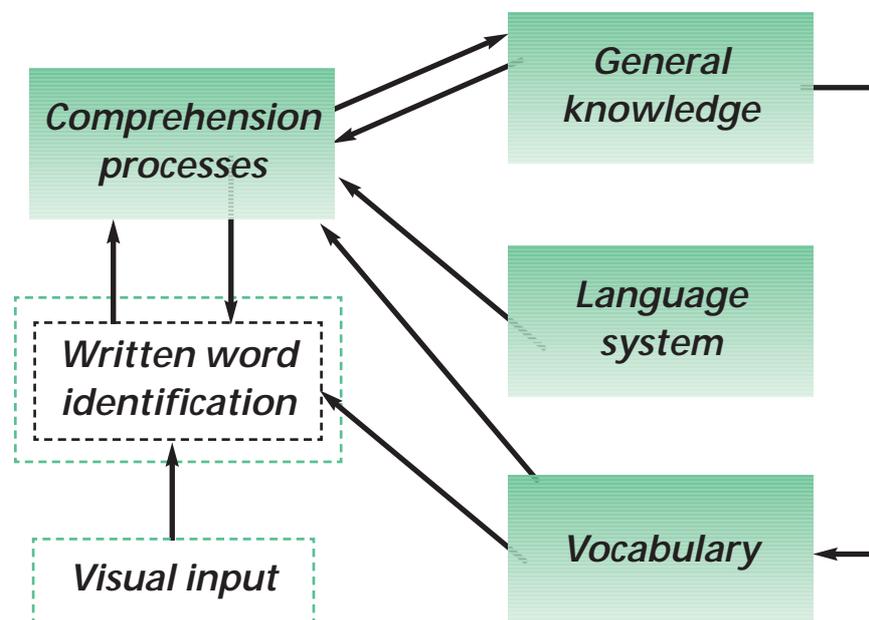
'Gough and Turner further make clear that word recognition is necessary, but not sufficient for reading because ability to pronounce printed words does not guarantee understanding of the text so represented. Furthermore, linguistic comprehension is likewise necessary, but not sufficient, for reading: 'if you cannot recognise the words that comprise the written text, you cannot recover the lexical information necessary for the application of linguistic processes that lead to comprehension.' (Rose 2006)

Recognition that these two aspects are equally important, and that ability to pronounce the printed word does not guarantee understanding of text is of particular relevance for bilingual learners as they can often master word recognition skills ahead of language comprehension, and fluent decoding may mask lack of comprehension. Opportunities to talk about what they read in order to develop understanding, and the importance of speaking and listening to the development of language comprehension are key aspects for practitioners to consider.



Rose also suggests that 'by the time children enter school, their language skills are considerably advanced . They already understand much of what is said to them and can express their ideas so that others can understand them.' Though they need to continue further development in areas of vocabulary and syntax, they are likely to be proficient language users.

The diagrammatic representation below (Rose 2006) shows the components of comprehension for spoken and written language.



When children learn to read, the comprehension processes they use to understand written text are the same as those they already use to understand spoken messages – written text is accessed via the eyes rather than the ears.

While the above is true for speakers of English as a mother tongue learning to read, children learning English as an additional language are learning to understand what is said to them and to express their ideas to be understood while learning to read words. Early readers learning English as an additional language will require planned teaching and opportunities to understand the language they hear and read.



As a result of direct instruction in word recognition, EAL learners are often able to efficiently decode words which they do not understand and so it is important that understanding develops alongside the acquisition and application of phonic knowledge. This is particularly important for young bilingual learners as well as older early stage learners who are developing language comprehension at the same time as word recognition processes.

Rose (2006) suggests that the simple view of reading is useful as it:

- makes explicit that different kinds of teaching are needed to develop word recognition skills from those that are needed to foster comprehension;
- offers the possibility of separately assessing performance in each dimension to identify learning needs and guide further teaching.

Written language is generally more complex than spoken language. Knowledge of syntax in the additional language will be limited for emergent bilinguals and so needs particular attention when developing comprehension. Play and role-play support reading through linking language and experience; they provide opportunities for rehearsing 'chunks' of language and recognition of grammatical structures. Texts with repetition provide further opportunities to develop grammatical knowledge which can in turn be applied to other texts.

The cultural contexts of texts is crucial in engaging children and supporting them in understanding the meaning of what they read. Texts from culturally familiar contexts build on children's own experiences and create an ethos where children feel confident in attempting to make sense of texts set in less familiar contexts. This is particularly important for bilingual learners who are learning to live in two cultures. Culturally familiar texts for early readers can be made using photographs of shared experiences, writing down stories that parents have shared with children and writing children's own stories and experiences.

For further guidance on developing language comprehension through planned opportunities for speaking and listening see section 1 of this unit and unit 4 in these materials. Also see the section on developing and extending vocabulary in this unit.

Rose also suggests that the balance of learning needs across the two dimensions of word recognition and language comprehension changes as children become more fluent and automatic readers of words. That is, establishing the cognitive processes that underlie fluent automatic word reading is a time limited task, and involves acquiring



and practising certain skills, whereas developing the abilities necessary to understanding and appreciating written texts in different content areas and literary genres continues throughout the lifespan. Bilingual learners need focused support in developing language comprehension in the additional language whether they are beginner readers or fluent readers.

## Challenges in reading for meaning

Bilingual learners face particular challenges in reading for meaning. These include:

- Understanding of vocabulary;
- Understanding of cultural content;
- Application of syntactic cues for making meaning;
- Understanding of idiomatic phrases, words with multiple meanings, figurative language including metaphor and irony;
- Reading for inference and deduction;
- Reading for detail within the overall text.

Reading for meaning by fluent readers is an active process which involves a range of strategies and behaviours. The National Literacy Strategy teaching sequence for reading (see p39) is particularly supportive of children learning EAL. In addition, the strategies described earlier in this unit (section1) for making the learning contexts supportive for children learning EAL can be used to develop comprehension skills. For further information on strategies for developing understanding at word level (vocabulary) see pages 67–75.





## What is reading comprehension?

Comprehension is an active process that involves all these strategies and behaviours

### Comprehension – making meaning from texts

*understanding  
language systems*

*engaging with  
the text*



*making connections  
with existing  
knowledge*

*critically evaluating  
the text*

*reflecting on  
responses*

*monitoring own understanding  
making decisions about which strategies will help  
clarifying understanding*

Research has identified the following key strategies for improving reading comprehension:

- teaching decoding and explicit work on sight vocabulary
- encouraging extensive reading;
- teaching vocabulary;
- encourage readers to ask their own 'Why?' questions of a text;
- teaching self-regulated comprehension strategies, for example:
  - prior knowledge activation;
  - question generation;
  - construction of mental images during reading;
  - summarising;



- analysing text into story grammar and non-fiction genre components;
  - encouraging reciprocal teaching (teacher modelling of strategies + scaffolding for student independence);
  - encouraging transactional strategies (an approach based on readers exploring texts with their peers and their teacher).
- (From Pressley, 2000)

The National Reading Panel (2000) identified three important factors in the effective teaching of reading comprehension:

- Learning about words: vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction play an important role in understanding what has been read.
- Interacting with the text: comprehension is an active process that requires ‘an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text’.
- Explicitly teaching strategies for reading comprehension: children make better progress in their reading when teachers provide direct instruction and design and implement activities that support understanding.

## Text selection

All children need to have access to a wide range of texts, but this is particularly important for bilingual learners in order to support the development of an understanding of the bibliographic knowledge and the varied use of academic language in different genres. Children should have access to a rich reading repertoire which includes good quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Research indicates that the most effective developments in improving comprehension have taken place in classrooms that promote extensive reading. This creates an environment where high quality talk about texts can be encouraged. However, it is important to consider the following when selecting, sharing and providing reading material:

- The reading repertoire should reflect the diversity of society and the school positively through the choice of content in fiction and non-fiction, use of language, use of illustrations, roles assigned to characters, choice of settings and plot.



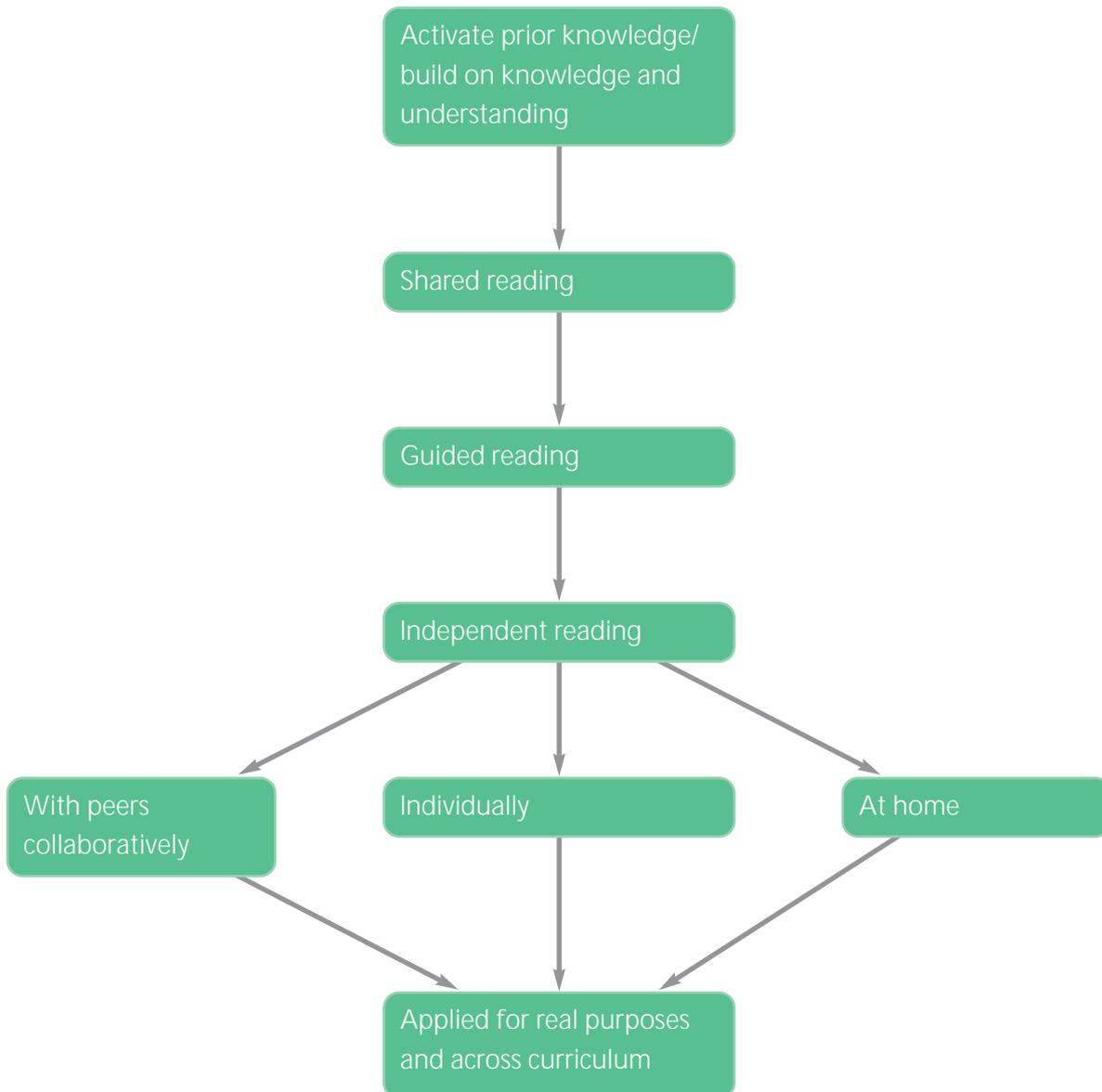
- Texts which reflect children's interests and experiences as well as texts which enhance and extend their experiences.
- Texts with familiar contexts (setting, cultural context, non-fiction linked to topic work) support the development of skills, particularly of deduction and inference, and confidence which can be transferred to other texts.
- Using fiction with universal characters and themes – relationships between friends, parents and children, jealousy, trickery – appeal to all and are supportive in developing comprehension.
- Children should have access to texts which provide positive images for ethnicity as well as gender.
- Texts which include bias, stereotyping and negative images should only be used if the purpose is to explore these themes. Stereotypical and negative images can be reflected through choice of content, use of language, use of illustrations, roles assigned to characters, and representing minority cultures as exotic. Omission and tokenism are also forms of bias.
- The reading repertoire in schools should include good quality material in children's first language as well as dual-language material.
- The reading repertoire should include access to multimedia texts, web-based and other screen texts, films and videos. The Primary Framework (2006) includes learning outcomes related to multimedia texts.

### Vocabulary development

Research stresses the importance of work to develop children's phonic skills, their vocabulary and teaching them about words. Children who can decode quickly and accurately and have a sight vocabulary of known words, can automatise some of the reading process, thus freeing up more mental capacity to think about the meaning of what they read. For practical strategies which support vocabulary extension, see pages 67–75 in this unit.



## A teaching sequence for reading





The teaching sequence	Within the literacy hour	The wider reading environment
<p><b>Teacher modelling</b></p>	<p><b>Shared reading</b></p> <p>Demonstrate how to use a range of comprehension strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• model active engagement with the text, for example rehearsing prior knowledge, generating mental images, making connections with other texts;</li> <li>• plan opportunities for children to interact and collaborate, for example ask ‘why’ questions, make comparisons between texts;</li> <li>• demonstrate how fluent readers monitor and clarify their understanding, for example encourage reciprocal teaching</li> <li>• plan opportunities to interpret and respond to the text, for example teach strategies for using inference and deduction (and <b>Word level work</b>).</li> </ul> <p>Plan direct instruction so that children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a wider vocabulary;</li> <li>• understand why words are spelt in a particular way;</li> <li>• learn to read and spell an increasing number of words by sight.</li> </ul>	<p>Encourage extensive reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure regular opportunities for independent, extended reading;</li> <li>• provide access to a wide range of quality reading materials;</li> <li>• provide opportunities and resources to read for a range of purposes across the curriculum;</li> <li>• plan a read aloud programme for all ages;</li> <li>• provide story props, puppets and artefacts for retelling stories;</li> <li>• plan opportunities for children to use the class collections and the school library;</li> <li>• promote reading at home;</li> <li>• organise a regular author focus in each class;</li> <li>• organise special events, for example book weeks, author visits, storytellers, book sales, book awards, etc.</li> <li>• celebrate personal reading achievements, e.g. book awards, reading heroes and advocates, displays, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guided practice</b></p>	<p><b>Guided reading</b></p> <p>Support children as they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply word level learning to decode words;</li> <li>• actively engage with the text;</li> <li>• monitor their own understanding and prompt them to utilise different strategies when solving reading problems.</li> </ul> <p>Scaffold opportunities for children to use different reading comprehension strategies, for example using the strategy modelled in the shared reading session and applying it to a new text.</p> <p>Encourage children to explain how they solved a word problem.</p> <p>Encourage personal response and reflection.</p>	
<p><b>Independent practice and autonomy</b></p>	<p><b>Independent reading</b></p> <p>Expect children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use word level learning independently;</li> <li>• monitor their own understanding and choose an appropriate strategy when necessary;</li> <li>• engage with and respond to texts, for example in a reading journal.</li> </ul>	



## Activating prior knowledge

A range of strategies can be used to activate prior knowledge and teaching to build on what children already know and understand.

- Bilingual approaches can be used in a range of ways to provide access to meaning.
- Introduction to the text, or a summary of the key points in the text in first language, provide a supportive context for reading.
- Listening to an audiotaped version of the text in first language enables the learner to cue into the text in English and explore meaning further. (Reading text in first language when children have those skills is also useful.)

Opportunities to discuss the text in first language with adults as well as peers extends understanding – discussion of content, use of language, key points, answering questions relating to text at literal and inferential level.

It is also important to activate children's prior knowledge about the content through a discussion of the title/title pages, discussion of illustrations/pictures, use of KWL grids (we **K**now, we **W**ant to find out, we have **L**earned).

Readers can be cued into texts through introduction of key ideas, names of characters and places, and introduction of key vocabulary and phrases which are crucial for understanding.



For additional suggestions to activate prior knowledge, see *Understanding reading comprehension: 2. Strategies to develop reading comprehension* (DfES 1311-2005) available on the CD-ROM.

## Shared reading

The model of teaching advocated by research is a balance of direct instruction along with teacher modelling and guided practice leading to independent practice and autonomy. The role of the teacher is crucial in explicitly encouraging the use of comprehension strategies. Comprehension improves when teachers provide explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and when they design and implement activities that support understanding.

Shared reading provides:

- opportunities to hear text read aloud by an expert, allowing the learner to hear the language (vocabulary and syntax) and the sound of written language (pronunciation and intonation);



- access to explicit modelling of reading strategies for word recognition and meaning making (language comprehensions) by expert adults as well as peers, providing access to comprehension strategies;
- opportunities to develop decoding as well as meaning making at word, sentence and text level. Text marking, text annotation and text restructuring are particularly useful strategies to support understanding and provide strategies for independent meaning making;
- demonstration of strategies for active engagement with text through generating mental images, making connections with other texts;
- opportunities to access the modelling of specific vocabulary and language structures from the text which can be used in the discussion and support development of academic language;
- use of strategies to develop vocabulary (also see pages 67–75);
- opportunities to interact with the text through the use of well-structured questions, which allow homing in on detail, and open-ended deductive, inferential and evaluative questions which support discussion of text as well as use of language to discuss text;
- opportunities to develop reading for detail, which is important for EAL learners who may stop once they have grasped the overall meaning and may not engage closely with the detail. Close reading is also important for developing inference, responding to, evaluating and giving justified opinions about a text;
- opportunities to model strategies for monitoring and clarifying understanding.

### Guided reading

- Guided reading provides opportunities for children to apply decoding strategies, engage with text and monitor their own understanding, and encourages personal response and reflection with the support of an adult.
- The structure of guided sessions in small groups, with a clear focus for reading, effective use of questions and dialogue to extend understanding and focused feedback on learning, is particularly supportive of bilingual learners.



- Bilingual learners benefit from revisiting the same text with further support from adults to deepen understanding.



For further guidance on guided reading, see the list of Primary National Strategy and other resources on the CD-ROM.

### Independent reading

Children need to read extensively and independently at home and in school. Individual reading is more likely to be effective if it is supported by preceding opportunities to read collaboratively with peers. Reading for real purposes across the curriculum provides supportive contexts for comprehension.



For suggestions to support independent reading, see the handout on the CD-ROM and suggestions for collaborative reading on pages 39–40.



### Using syntactic strategies

While competent speakers of English as a mother tongue will be able to apply their own knowledge of the language system drawn from their understanding of parallel examples, EAL learners will need explicit demonstration of the use of these.

Syntactic information is carried in the grammatical words which have a specific function within sentences. These make the text cohesive and link the content words. They include connectives, pronouns, word order, verbs (endings, auxiliaries and irregular forms) and articles.

Strategies for teaching the use of syntactic cues include:

- tracking the use of pronouns or verb tenses by underlining and highlighting. This supports discussion as to how these grammatical features influence meaning;
- identifying connectives or conjunctions in a text and linking them to the genre. This supports the explicit discussion of their use as ‘signposts’ to help the reader understand what comes next in the text;
- masking a particular grammatical word in the text, e.g. pronouns, word endings, past tenses, so that their particular function can be discussed;



- text reconstruction and sequencing of jumbled paragraphs. This provides opportunities to develop greater understanding of pronouns, connectives and verb tenses to make text cohesive. It is important to make explicit the grammatical as well as the semantic links.

ICT can be used to provide access to and extend reading. Interactive whiteboards enable effective use of text marking and text annotation to support reading for detail and understanding of language use. They also provide visual support to scaffold understanding overall or for specific aspects. Use of the Internet is particularly effective for research on biographies of people from different ethnic and cultural heritages.

### Scaffolding reading comprehension

The following strategies support comprehension during shared, guided, supported and independent reading. They are particularly supportive in reading for detail, reading for inference and deduction, and understanding of text structures.

#### Use of frames, prompts and props

- Pictures, video clips and artefacts can be used to provide visual images of the content of the text overall as well as specific aspects which focus on the detail.
- Frames and graphic organisers can be used in a range of ways to support understanding, for example:
  - completion of **KWL** grid during and after reading;
  - annotating pictures of characters and settings as information is collected from discussion. This supports understanding of the detail as well as the whole text;
  - collecting information in story maps and graphic organisers to identify cause and effect, arguments for and against and a range of information in non-fiction. This supports understanding of the structure of the text as well as the detail;
  - using speech and thought bubbles, thought tracking.

**ICT for EAL**

In the responsibility of the school leadership team to ensure that ICT is used appropriately and imaginatively to meet the diverse needs of bilingual learners. Consider reading digital or audiovisual support needs to work through the curriculum as well as learn the curriculum through English.

**ICT supports learning and teaching**

Access to the curriculum (presenting content in different ways)

Developing shared experiences  
Managing language  
Scaffolding learning

Language development  
Reading  
Writing

- Drawing shared experiences and content to support language acquisition through interactive whiteboards, multimedia, digital resources and software for scaffolding learning across the curriculum
- Visual aids
- Mapping
- Text marking
- Text annotation
- Text editing, graphics and graphic organisers
- Interactive whiteboards

- Using ICT to support small group responses and protocols for problem solving mathematics
- Identifying mathematical concepts and processes through interactive whiteboards
- Using interactive whiteboards
- Teaching and learning of writing on word processors and text marking and annotation
- Interactive whiteboards
- Multimedia tools
- Email and video conferencing facilities
- Social networking sites

**Assessment for learning**

Observation and evidence of language use and learning collected by practitioners, parents and children, video, audio, mobile tool on interactive whiteboards

**Partnerships beyond the classroom**

Home, school, wider and other, in the interests of all children and parents

- 1. at school
- 2. in the community

Use of interactive whiteboards and software to support learning and teaching in class



### Planned opportunities for speaking and listening

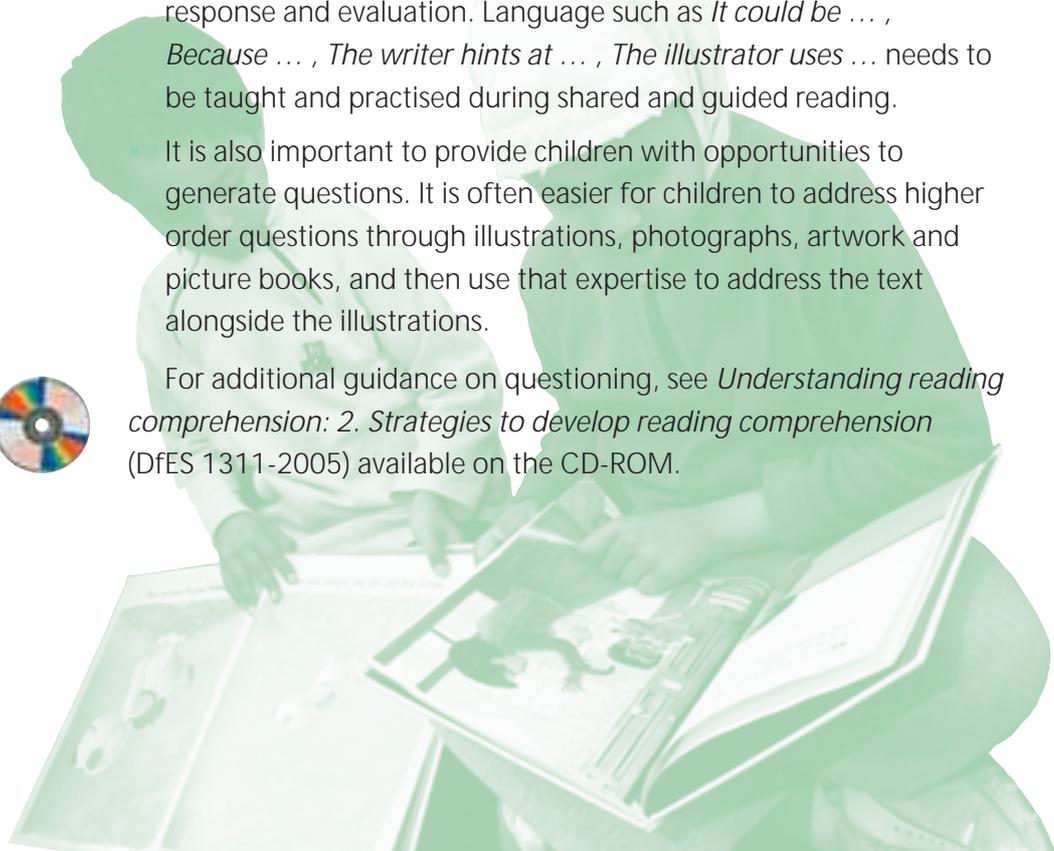
- Use of partner talk during shared, guided and independent reading to provide opportunities to rehearse language as well as sharing, evaluating and reflecting on understanding of the text.
- Creating shared experiences through drama and role-play which contributes to the development of understanding and empathy for the characters and situations by enabling children to draw on their own experiences and link these to the events and characters in the text.
- Use of paired or small-group work involving frames and graphic organisers.

### Questioning

- Carefully planned and thoughtfully constructed questions support understanding of the deeper meaning of text. Questions such as *Why is the character ... ? What does the writer mean by ... ? What if ... ?* provide opportunities to think about and use the language of deduction and inference. Questions such as *What do you think about ... ? What criteria would you use to ... ?* provide opportunities to think about and develop the language of personal response and evaluation. Language such as *It could be ... , Because ... , The writer hints at ... , The illustrator uses ...* needs to be taught and practised during shared and guided reading.
- It is also important to provide children with opportunities to generate questions. It is often easier for children to address higher order questions through illustrations, photographs, artwork and picture books, and then use that expertise to address the text alongside the illustrations.



For additional guidance on questioning, see *Understanding reading comprehension: 2. Strategies to develop reading comprehension* (DfES 1311-2005) available on the CD-ROM.





### Constructing images as a strategy to support meaning

Creating visual images using visualisation, drawing or freeze-frames encourages children to return to the text to look up or check for more detail, for example:

- children can create a picture in their head while the text is read aloud by an adult or peer, and then describe their image to one another;
- children can draw characters, a map of a journey in a story, or a diagram to represent an instruction or explanation;
- a freeze-frame based on a particular section of or moment in a text can be used to describe characters' thoughts at that moment. A digital photograph of the frame provides opportunities for further collaborative or independent work.



### Collaborative reading strategies

- Reader's theatre  
A group activity where all children have access to the text and read the dialogue and linking narration. This may include use of props and puppets.
- Jigsaw reading  
Use different texts based on the same topic. Regroup children into home/expert groups. Each group becomes an 'expert' on its own text and then has to report the information back to their 'home' group. Use of whiteboards and key visuals can further support this activity.
- Summarising  
Demonstrate a range of summarising strategies such as skimming and highlighting key information. Children can then work in pairs with a text to give each paragraph a subheading and explain the key points of a text in one minute.
- True or false statements  
These can be at literal or inferential level. Children can identify the text reference to justify their decision.



- Reciprocal teaching  
This process, after modelling by the teacher, trains children to monitor their own understanding. For details, see *Understanding reading comprehension: 3. Further strategies to develop reading comprehension* (DfES 1312-2005).

In addition to these generic approaches, aspects which pose particular challenges to bilingual learners need specific attention.

- Understanding of vocabulary, idiomatic phrases, words with multiple meanings, metaphors and similes, irony.
- Previewing unfamiliar words and phrases in text to discuss meaning before reading. These could also include words or phrases with multiple meanings and phrases which are linked to the cultural context of texts.
- Covering words in the text. These may be content related or words with a grammatical function. This will facilitate vocabulary development in context and the use of syntactic cues.
- Being a Word Detective:
  - reading to the end of a sentence;
  - reading the paragraph around the unfamiliar word/phrase;
  - identifying the grammatical function of the word;
  - using the context to actively seek its meaning.



All the above strategies support reading at deductive, inferential and evaluative level. For further suggestions, see the handout on the CD-ROM.



For additional semantic strategies see *Understanding reading comprehension: 3. Further strategies to develop reading comprehension* (DfES 1312-2005) and Vocabulary extension on pages 67–75.



# Writing

Research carried out by Lynne Cameron and published by the DfES in 2004, together with earlier Ofsted research carried out by the same author, provides insights into those aspects of writing where additional focused teaching may be needed for children learning EAL.

Scripts from the 2003 National Curriculum end-of-Key Stage 2 tests for writing (a narrative and a radio advertisement) were analysed using an integrated framework for writing that examined both the text as a whole, in terms of overall control and use of the genre, and language use at the levels of sentence, clause, phrase and word.

In many ways the writing of children learning EAL at Key Stage 2 was more fluent and accurate than the writing seen at Key Stage 4 in the earlier research. These differences were attributed to the positive effects of the National Literacy Strategy.

The best EAL writers employed grammar, vocabulary, direct speech, rhetorical features and punctuation with flexibility and adaptability to create strong writing (QCA assessment focus: composition and effect). Narrative writing employed figurative language though this was usually animal metaphors and similes.

EAL learners handled adaptation to a variety of genres less confidently than their peers who spoke English as a first language (QCA assessment focus: text structure and organisation). Certain grammatical features were also handled less confidently, e.g. subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, modal verbs and adverbials. The EAL writing contained more errors in the use of determiners, prepositions, phrasal verbs and idiomatic phrases (QCA assessment focus: sentence structure and punctuation).

## Early writing



Like all children, bilingual children will have learned a great deal about print and about purposes for writing in their communities. Emergent writers use their prior knowledge to construct initial hypotheses about writing during the emergent stage. Early attempts to produce letter forms by children with experience of alphabetic systems other than English may produce shapes which reflect these systems. Bilingual children may have experience of a different directional flow or orientation on the page. They may come from communities where the separate skill of handwriting or calligraphy is valued over the process of communicative writing. It is important that practice during the Foundation Stage respects and builds upon this existing knowledge.



Graphic areas should include examples of writing in different scripts, different conventions and for purposes which reflect the cultures of the children in the settings. Bilingual children benefit from the opportunity to notice, compare and discuss differences as well as similarities.

At a later stage young bilingual learners should be encouraged to produce phonemic approximations of words from their first language including of course their own name and the names of other members of their family.

Young children who are learning English as an additional language need plenty of opportunities to listen to and orally rehearse the patterns of written English. They need real purposes for writing which reflect their ethnic, social, cultural and religious background.

## Writing at text level

At the level of the whole text, the concept of genre provides a useful tool to help us recognise and describe how language is used to achieve particular purposes in a range of situations. Each genre has an overall pattern or shape which is related to its purpose. Children need to gain control over those genres which are required for writing across the curriculum and for active participation in the world beyond school. To support them to do this, teachers need to make explicit the ways in which language is shaped and framed to achieve different purposes.

### Cohesion in texts

Although different text types or genres are organised in different ways according to their purpose they share certain common features. The writing is divided into paragraphs which deal with separate topics. Usually each paragraph contains a sentence which can be identified as the main sentence or topic sentence. It often summarises what follows in the rest of the paragraph. The theme determines the way the information in each paragraph unfolds.

These are some of the features writers use to make their texts coherent and cohesive:

- maintain tense consistency;
- consistent use of person – first, second or third person, or impersonal;
- use of appropriate connectives;
- 'referring back':

