NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE TEACHING OF READING IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN THE

Foundation Phase

basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Read to Lead
A Reading Nation is a Leading Nation

2030 NDP

National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase

List of acronyms

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Home Language
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
ORF	Oral reading fluency
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Foreword by the Director-General Mr H. M. Mweli

The development of the National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase (henceforth referred to as the Framework) is underpinned by the recognition that although learning to read is very similar across languages, differences in the way languages are structured and in their writing systems (orthographies) influence the reading process. With regard to the official languages of South Africa, whereas African languages have a regular writing system (transparent orthography) with a consistent relationship between letters and sounds, English has a highly irregular writing system (opaque orthography) with an inconsistent relationship between letters and sounds.

For historical and linguistic reasons, there are also differences in the orthographies of African languages, with some languages (e.g. isiZulu, isiXhosa) having conjunctive orthographies, with long words containing several morphemes, and others (e.g. Setswana, Sepedi) having disjunctive orthographies with shorter words sometimes consisting of single morphemes. This knowledge is important to keep in mind when teaching reading in our different African languages.

The Framework seeks to help teachers and curriculum specialists understand that the reading methodologies used to teach reading in African languages differ in some ways from English, especially with regard to the early stages of learning to read when children learn how to link letters to sounds, and to use this knowledge to read words (decoding). Currently, the influence of reading methodologies used in English is so strong that it overrides the development of reading methodologies and pedagogies that are appropriate for African languages.

The Framework takes the position that reading methodologies must be aligned with the linguistic features, namely the distinctive phonological and morphological features, of the different African languages. The Framework unpacks the teaching of decoding skills (phonological awareness, phonics) and dense morphology that pose challenges for young children in the early stages of learning to read in African languages. These challenges are different from those encountered by children learning to read in English, who have to master an irregular writing system. The Framework emphasises that the morphological, phonological and orthographical features of African languages should be factored into the design of reading

curricula, the development of teacher training programmes, and assessment for African languages.

The Framework seeks to enable teachers to utilise context-appropriate methods for teaching reading that will empower learners to acquire all the skills needed to become independent readers who are able to access new knowledge through print.

In conclusion, the Department of Education wishes to place on record its heartfelt gratitude to the Writing Team (African language curriculum specialists and reading experts) for their expertise, invaluable contributions and research inputs.

MR HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK

SECTION 1 explains the purpose of the framework and the principles underlying it, and then provides an overview of the rest of the Framework.

1.1 Introduction and context

The right of access to education is a fundamental human right enshrined in the South African Constitution (1996). Literacy, including the ability to read fluently and with understanding is central to education. Yet in South Africa, the 2016 Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results show that 78% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in any language in which they are assessed. When the results are analysed according to languages, the outcomes are even more disquieting. For example, 93% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in Sepedi, and 88% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in isiXhosa[1]. These results do not reflect on the abilities of Sepedi- and isiXhosa-speaking children; rather, the results raise questions about the effectiveness of our teaching methodologies and materials provisioning in helping learners become skilled readers. However, we are not alone in dealing with this challenge — about 250 million children around the world are not acquiring basic reading skills, despite half of them having been in school for at least four years[2]. Many countries in Africa, South America, India, South East Asia and the Middle East are looking for effective ways to improve reading development in the early years of school.

Reading is essentially about making meaning. Whatever we read, we read to understand. Reading also involves critical thinking skills, which empower learners to become productive citizens. Although the ability to read well can open doors to job opportunities in the 21st century and is important for economic growth[3], reading for enjoyment also has important emotional and knowledge benefits. The neurolinguistic reading researcher Maryanne Wolf describes this eloquently: 'While reading, we can leave our own consciousness, and pass over into the consciousness of another person, another time, another culture … our original boundaries are challenged, teased and gradually placed somewhere new'[4]. The main goal in primary school is to produce learners who are independent readers, that is to say, they can read **on their own** *accurately* and *fluently*, with *comprehension* and *enjoyment*. This reading

[1] Howie et al. 2017.
[2] UNESCO. 2014. Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all (Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4). Paris, France. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf
[3] World Bank. 2016. Implementation completion report: Reading education (READ-PNG) project. Washington, DC: World Bank.
[4] Wolf, 2008:7-8.

basis must be laid in the Foundation Phase – it is the responsibility of Foundation Phase teachers to ensure that all learners can read in what CAPS refers to as their Home Language (HL) by the time they move to the Intermediate Phase.

The overall aim of this Framework is to help improve early reading instruction in the African languages. The Framework is built on the premise that all children can learn to read successfully — *provided* that they are exposed to effective early reading instructional methodologies, given plenty of opportunities to develop their reading abilities, given lots of exposure to books and lots of encouragement to read. This reading framework provides explicit guidelines to help teachers achieve reading success in the classroom.

All 9 official African languages that are offered as the Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLTs) in Grades R to 3 use an alphabetic script. Therefore, the reading approach used in this Framework is informed by research on how decoding is taught in alphabetic scripts. All people, irrespective of their language or culture, use the same cognitive processes to read alphabetic scripts[5].

However, although the reading components and the underlying cognitive processes are the same for reading in alphabetic writing systems, languages differ in their structure. In African languages, words typically have many **morphemes** with prefixes, infixes and suffixes (e.g. in isiXhosa: *a-ndi-sa-bale-ki*); we call these **agglutinative languages**. English, on the other hand, has many short words without prefixes or suffixes (e.g. I do not run). Languages also have different writing systems called **orthographies**. African languages have orthographies in which letters always represent the same sound (**transparent orthographies**). In English, however, the same letter can represent different sounds, and a sound can be represented by different letters (an **opaque orthography**). In some African languages, such as Sesotho and Setswana, some morphemes may be written as separate words (**disjunctive orthographies**) whereas in Nguni languages they are typically all part of the same word (**conjunctive orthographies**). Early reading instruction in these languages must be sensitive to such differences and teach reading in ways that are appropriate for each language and its specific way of representing words.

Over and above orthography and cognitive processing, teaching reading in African languages must also take into account the social and pedagogical conditions in which teaching and learning often occurs in African language classrooms, including indigenous ways of using language and communication, cultures of literacy, large classrooms, and a relative lack of

[5] Wolf 2008; Dehaene 2009; Seidenberg 2017.

availability of a range of quality reading materials suitable for a range of reading interests and levels.

The Framework is underpinned by research evidence from five main sources. These include research done on reading in African languages in South Africa[6], research done on reading in African languages elsewhere in Africa, reading research in agglutinative languages, educational research done in developing countries, and research on teaching reading in alphabetic languages in general. The approach in this Framework is informed by evidence that is relevant to African languages, and to schooling conditions that are prevalent on the African continent.

1.2 Purpose of the Framework

The main purpose of the Framework is to unpack and mediate the core reading components, namely **language proficiency** (with emphasis on **emergent reading and writing**), **decoding, comprehension** and **reader response,** which underpin the teaching of reading in the early grades. Although the focus of the Framework is on reading, those aspects of listening, speaking and writing necessary to the development of early reading skills are also addressed. In the future, further Frameworks will be developed focusing on other important aspects of literacy such as oracy and writing. The Framework for teaching reading seeks to highlight the more general cognitive and socio-cultural developments that are required for all learners to learn to read, and how to teach reading effectively in African languages, taking into account their specific linguistic and orthographic features. There is thus constant interaction between what is general and what is specific in early reading instruction. The specific applies particularly when the focus is on teaching early decoding skills (i.e. the development of fluent code-based skills on which meaningful comprehension relies), while the general applies across languages when the focus is on reading comprehension and reader response.

The Framework is presented in a way that clearly informs the teacher:

- ***what*** *each component is*
- ***why*** *it is important*
- ***when*** *to teach it*
- ***how*** *to teach it*
- ***what*** *resources should be used, and*
- ***how*** *to identify the cracks* (i.e. learners experiencing barriers) in each component, namely decoding, comprehension and reader response).

[6] Pretorius, 2017. *Reading in the African languages: An annotated bibliography 2004-2017.*

In particular, the Framework is a response to the following:

- How best to teach reading in African languages, taking into account that they are syllabic, agglutinative languages with rich morphologies and linguistic structures, and with transparent orthographies different to English.
- It also reinforces the core reading methodologies in CAPS that underpin reading instruction in the early grades, namely Teacher Read-Alouds, Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, Paired Reading and Independent Reading, which are used alongside writing methodologies like Shared Writing and Independent Writing.
- In addition, the Framework outlines enabling conditions that support reading, such as the provision of core reading resources (print and digital), teacher training and support, and parental and community involvement.

The Framework has been used as a guide for the development of **Reading Manuals in each of the 9 official African languages**.

1.3 Principles underlying the Framework

South Africa is a multilingual, multicultural country. Bilingual and multilingual research has shown that there are many cognitive, social and affective benefits to being bi- or multilingual[7]. There are many children in South Africa who grow up acquiring more than one language in the home, and for whom the descriptor 'home language' is inadequate. These children are also likely to acquire other languages spoken in their communities, particularly in urban environments; or children who have as their home language a non-standard variety (or dialect) of the official home language, particularly in rural communities. These children come to school with varying knowledge of more than one language and with early multilingual communicative competencies. There are also children who come from homes and communities where only one language (or dialect) is spoken, particularly in rural areas, and who encounter another language in a meaningful way when they enter formal schooling. Our schools thus need to accommodate children with a range of language competencies, ranging from multilingualism to bilingualism to monolingualism. Whatever oral language competencies African language-speaking children bring with them to the classroom, the majority of them first learn to read in an African language (referred to in CAPS as 'Home Language' (HL) in the Foundation Phase, even though literally it may not be their dominant language), and in Grade 1 they are also being prepared to learn to read in a First Additional Language (FAL), even though literally it may be a child's second, third or fourth language. To

[7] Bialystok 2009; McIlwraith (ed.) 2013; Orwenjo et al. (eds) 2014; Baker & Wright 2017.

align with CAPS, the descriptors HL and FAL are used in this document, even though they may not be accurate descriptors of a child's language knowledge and use.

While spoken languages around the world tend to be vibrant and endlessly creative, with new words and linguistic changes constantly emerging, written language tends to be more stable: it reflects a standardised version of related dialects, and grammatical changes occur more slowly. Whatever spoken language competencies children bring with them to school, their knowledge of the specific *written language* in which they first learn to read and write can affect their reading development. Differences between spoken and written versions of a language, what teachers do to mediate the differences, and the extent to which books or any other print/digital materials are available in the written language also have an impact on early reading development[8].

Within this multilingual context, there are three principles that underpin the approach to reading development in this Framework:

Principle 1: There is a strong relationship between language and literacy

Oral language proficiency and literacy development are strongly linked, and this relationship works in two ways:

(i) Learners' oral language proficiency has a strong influence on learning to read[9]. Children differ in their language proficiency in that they start school with different abilities to speak and understand the language that is offered as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). This includes their official HL. In addition to everyday spoken language, rich oral language activities such as storytelling, singing songs and rhymes, as well as dialogic conversations (extended conversations focused on learning), not only enrich children's oral language development but also support reading and writing. The richer learners' proficiency in the HL, the easier they will find it to learn to read and write.

(ii) Reading has a strong influence on learners' language proficiency[10]. Once children have learned to read, then their exposure to texts affects their language proficiency. Through reading, children develop an extensive vocabulary in the language(s) in which they read, acquire more concepts, learn to use complex syntactic structures, and increase their general knowledge of the world. In this way, children develop the type

[8] Mtsatse 2018; Kim et al. 2018; Van Staden & Tshele 2019.
[9] Hoover & Gough 1991; Melby-Lervåg & Lervåg 2011; Pretorius 2015; Wilsenach 2016; Schaffer & Kotze 2019.
[10] Cunningham & Stanovich 2001; Elley 1994.

of knowledge and language essential to understanding new reading material and for general academic learning.[11]

Principle 2: Language is acquired, reading is taught

Apart from children with severe hearing/speech or cognitive disabilities, all other children acquire oral language naturally through conversations and interactions while they are growing up. Reading, on the other hand, is not part of our genetic make-up and must be taught. Additionally, in order to support children to attain high levels of academic oral language proficiency in the child's home and additional languages, conditions must be created both at home and at school for socio-cultural uses of reading and writing. These conditions must include formal learning and acquisition opportunities which will expose children to reading and enhance their reading and writing development[12]. How well children learn to read depends on how well they are taught to read, how many opportunities they are given to read and write every day, how much access they have to a wide variety of high quality reading materials, whether they are encouraged and motivated to read, and whether they have reading role models to emulate.

Principle 3: The broader social context is important

Teaching and learning to read occurs in a social context. Most schools in developing countries serve children who come from underserved communities and homes[13] in which there is little print material to read and where caregivers have poor relationships with literacy owing to their own negative experiences with school literacy. Many children from disadvantaged backgrounds who enrol in a Grade R or Grade 1 classroom have not attended a quality Early Childhood Development Centre and, as a result, have not developed some of the basic concepts, skills and behaviours needed to begin to learn to read in earnest.

For a variety of reasons, many schools that serve poor children are faced with contextual challenges such as:

- large classes
- ineffective use of instructional time
- fewer and limited appropriate reading materials in African languages to support reading development
- few teachers who have been trained, mentored and coached to teach reading effectively in African languages.

[11] Cummins 2008.
[12] Wolf 2008; Dehaene 2009; Siedenberg 2017.
[13] Di Stefano 2012; World Bank 2016; Kim et al. 2016; Kim et al. 2018;

A combination of these factors can seriously hamper children's progress in reading and writing development.

Why is this important for Foundation Phase teachers?

Teachers cannot change the socio-economic status of their learners' home backgrounds, but they can change what happens in their schools and classrooms. Trained teachers and the provisioning of adequate and appropriate materials can launch learners into successful reading trajectories from the start of schooling. By the time learners leave the Foundation Phase, they should be able to read accurately, at a steady pace, with comprehension and enjoyment. It is important for schools serving poor communities to make schools centres where children are exposed to rich language and literacy teaching experiences, irrespective of their home background.

Schools should build up school and classroom libraries, and teachers should have reading corners in their classrooms where their learners can have easy access to many reading materials in the HL and Additional Languages (ALs). The Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) budget should be used every year to supply high-quality reading materials for the school and classrooms, including general and subject-specific dictionaries, graded fiction and non-fiction readers, and children's literature (fiction and non-fiction) that is rich in language and content.

1.4 The reading components

The Framework adopted in this document addresses four main components, namely **language proficiency** (with an emphasis on **emergent reading and writing**), **decoding**, **comprehension** and **reader response**.

These all play an important role in reading, but they do so in different ways. Reading is embedded in language and, as already pointed out, learners' language proficiency (e.g. listening comprehension, vocabulary, knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax) impacts on their reading ability.

Each of these components will be explained in greater detail in the Framework:

- **emergent reading and writing** in SECTION 2.1
- **decoding** in SECTION 2.2
- **reading comprehension** in SECTION 2.3
- **reader response** in SECTION 2.4.

It is important to understand that these components are *not taught in a specific order, but are integrated in the classroom and work together at ALL stages of reading development*.

Figure 1 below shows the interrelationship between these components and oral language proficiency, which is discussed in detail in SECTION 2.1.

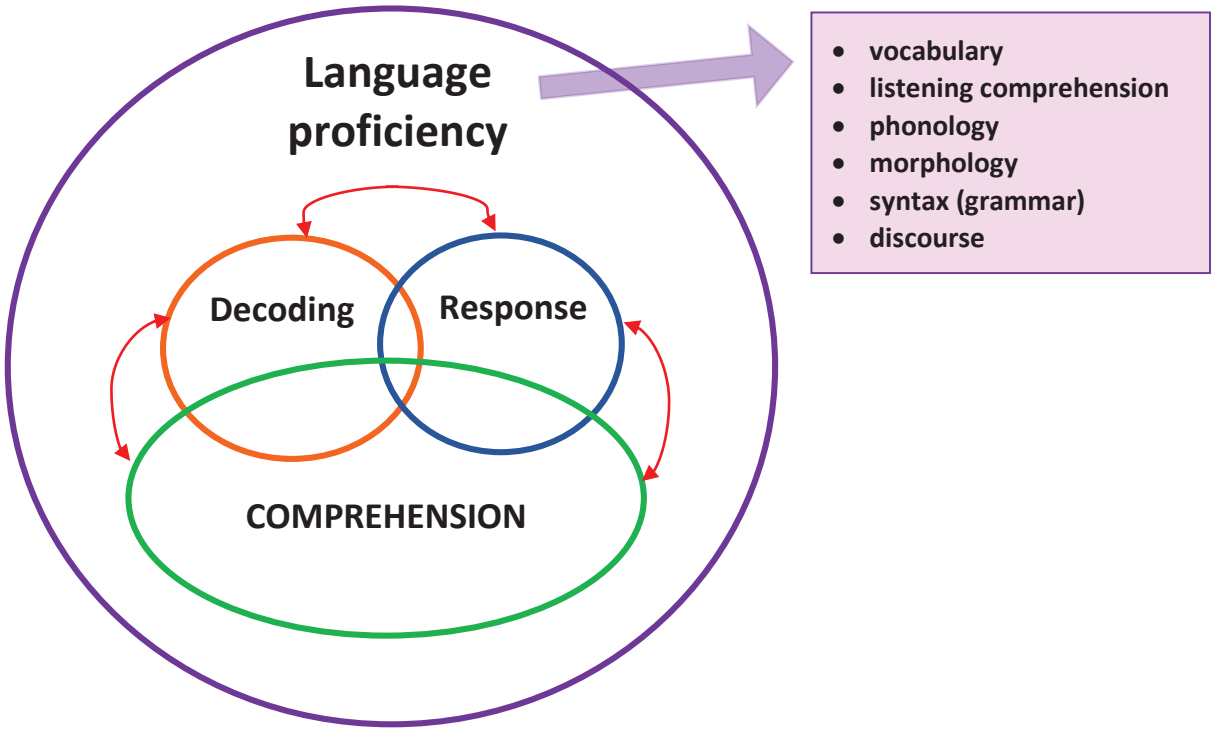


Figure 1: *The components of reading embedded in language*

1.4.1 Language proficiency

Oral language proficiency refers to our ability to speak and understand one or more languages appropriately. It relies on both conscious as well as unconscious knowledge we may have about the language(s). This includes the **semantics** (**comprehension** and **vocabulary**), as well as familiarity with the **phonology** (how meaningful sounds are formed), **morphology** (rules about how words are formed) and **syntax** (rules about how words are ordered to make meaningful sentences) of the language. It also includes **discourse features** of the language(s) relating to socio-cultural conventions regarding politeness, respect, gendered customs, etc., and understanding of non-verbal aspects such as gestures, facial expressions, pitch and intonation.

Oral language proficiency forms the basis of reading and writing. In whatever language we read and write, we need to have some level of oral language proficiency in that language.

Language proficiency affects how easily and how well we learn to read and write in that language. This applies equally to HL and FAL. Learners who have good oral language proficiency usually find it easier to learn to read and write (provided they have effective teachers and are well taught).

Children who struggle to learn to read and write often have problems with language proficiency in the language in which they are reading. Teachers need to give such learners a lot of support and create many opportunities for them to listen to and use complex and rich language in speech and writing. As mentioned above, activities that include storytelling, teacher read-alouds, songs and rhymes, language games, and rich dialogic conversations with children support the development of oral language proficiency. It is important to understand that for African languages, storytelling is an important resource for literacy development. It forms an important bridge from oral to written language, and thus a link has to be made explicitly between storytelling, story reading and story writing.

1.4.2 Emergent reading and writing

Emergent reading and writing refer to early oral language and literacy learning in the HL and/or the FAL and the ways in which reading and writing behaviours develop into conventional reading and writing. It is concerned with the earliest phases of literacy development – the period between birth and the time when children begin to read and write conventionally. In emergent literacy, literacy development is seen as emerging from children's oral language development and their initial, often unconventional, attempts at reading (usually based on pictures) and writing (at first drawing and scribbling). Children's early attempts at reading and writing are viewed as legitimate beginnings of literacy. The term 'emergent literacy' signals a belief that in a literate society, even one- and two-year-olds are in the process of becoming literate. At an early stage, children realise that writing, like speech, carries meaning. They experiment with making marks on paper, either to send messages or to imitate adults.

SECTION 2 explains more fully the characteristics and behaviours of an emergent reader and writer; how you can support emergent reading and writing across all learning areas in the Foundation Phase; and how you can support emergent reading and writing through story-based activities. Young children learn best when learning is meaningful and when new learning is connected to something they already know. Emergent literacy explains the meaning and importance of Shared Reading and Shared Writing in Grade R and Grade 1 (and where necessary in Grade 2 and 3); how to create environments and routines that support drawing, and the different ways in which we might support children who are attempting to

write about the pictures they have drawn. Emergent reading and writing flourish in print-rich environments; it is important for teachers to create opportunities for children to read print in their environment, and experiment with writing across the curriculum.

However, in order to support children's reading and writing development and to understand what we read in an alphabetic writing system, we need to know the relationship between letters of the alphabet and their sounds. This knowledge is called decoding. Decoding helps children to make the transition from invented spelling to conventional spelling.

1.4.3 Decoding

Decoding is knowing how the sounds (**phonemes**) of a language are represented by letters (**graphemes**) in the written form or script, and then using this knowledge to read words and sentences accurately and fluently in written language (printed texts). Many aspects of decoding are taught through phonics.

Teaching children to decode well in the early years of schooling (i.e. in Grade 1 and 2) is very important as this supports their entry into the written word. To become fluent and *independent* readers, children must draw on their emergent literacy experiences. They must also develop and integrate decoding and comprehension skills. Without decoding skills, children may display good oral comprehension skills if the teacher reads a story to them, but not when they have to read and make meaning from the written text *on their own*. However, decoding itself is not reading — it is a component of reading. It is a ***means*** to reading with understanding, not the end point. Together with decoding, teachers must also develop reading comprehension abilities and build up learners' language and vocabulary skills. All these aspects of reading happen at the same time.

1.4.4 Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to process, understand and make sense of a text and integrate the text's meaning with what the reader already knows. Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading - whatever we read, we need to understand. There are many different processes and skills that contribute to comprehension, such as language proficiency, vocabulary, general background knowledge, knowledge of different written genres and the way they are structured, and critical thinking skills and strategies.

It is important to stress that although decoding is necessary for comprehension, it is not sufficient. In other words, being able to decode words on a page does not necessarily mean that you understand what you read. Many teachers think comprehension is about choosing a text or passage and giving it to children to read and answer questions set on it. They have a

misconception that assessing comprehension is teaching comprehension. This Framework shows that comprehension is what reading is all about, and that we can help children become good comprehenders by reading and discussing stories with them on a daily basis, building up their vocabulary, and by modelling strategies that can help them understand the text better. These strategies include building background knowledge, making connections (text-self, text-text, text-world), making predictions, sequencing events and retelling the story, summarising texts, self-questioning, comparing and contrasting, visualisation, making inferences, clarifying and evaluating texts, and more. We can also help children to deepen their understanding of what they read by engaging them in a range of multimodal and multisensory activities that will make a text memorable to them such as drawing, retelling, drama, songs and rhymes.

1.4.5 Reader response

The reader response component relates to **affective factors** associated with reading such as learners' feelings, attitudes, interests and motivation to read. The reader response component also includes the influence of adult role models in shaping children's early reading and writing experiences and activities via different socio-cultural practices. Affective factors help us to understand why good readers like to read and what we can learn from this to help those who do not. These different components of reading will be explained and unpacked in more detail in SECTION 2 of the Framework.

1.5 Fluency in decoding

Good readers are fluent readers. Fluent reading involves three things: accuracy, speed, and expression. Accuracy means that good readers identify words correctly because they have many words and spelling patterns stored in their memory from previous reading encounters, and many strategies to break down new words. Reading speed means that a reader can identify words with little conscious effort and process meaning at a rate appropriate for that language. Thus, an important aspect of decoding skills is that it must be done accurately and quickly. Achieving accuracy and appropriate speed in decoding is referred to as **automaticity**. When one processes information in the mind without consciously thinking about it, then it can be said that the process happens automatically. Automaticity can only be achieved after many opportunities for practice. Automaticity in decoding requires children to have **knowledge of the sounds that letters represent** (**letter-sound knowledge**), **the ability to blend these sounds together to form syllables and words**, and **the ability to read sequences of words in meaningful phrases and sentences**. All this knowledge is integrated so that decoding happens quickly, accurately, and with expression.

Unlike English, African languages have many long words (especially in the conjunctive orthographies of the Nguni languages) and children must be able to read these words and/or phrases quickly and accurately. For example, in isiZulu, ***Ngiyamuthanda*** *(I love her/him)* is different from ***Ngiyayithanda*** *(I love it e.g. a dog),* and the reader must be able to detect the difference between ***-mu-*** and -***yi***- in the middle of the string of letters to achieve the right meaning.

Knowledge of **tone** is also very important for reading with meaning in African languages. For example the word ***bona*** (in Setswana and Sepedi) could mean *see* or *them* depending on the tone used by the speaker.

When children start learning letter-sound relationships (e.g. through phonics) and blending them to form syllables and words, the process is at first slow and inaccurate (they make mistakes). Nearly all of the learners' concentration is taken up with decoding the letters and forming patterns in their mind about the shape of the word. Gradually, as learners improve at matching letters to spoken sounds, they become more accurate, the process of decoding speeds up and after many opportunities of practising to read aloud, the process becomes automatic. The memory (called working memory) is then freed up and the reader can focus more strongly on following the meaning of the text[14]. It is important to note that learners can read accurately and with an appropriate speed (read with automaticity) without achieving **fluency**[15]. Accuracy and speed must be accompanied by appropriate expression to achieve fluency. In order for accuracy and speed to be useful during reading, the learners must make the text sound like real language. As learners learn to read accurately and quickly, they must pay attention both to how to 'say' words and to what they 'mean'. This is especially the case with tonal African languages wherein how to sound out many orthographic words depends on their meanings.

Reading speed (also called reading rate) develops with age/grade. As learners get older and move up the grades, their reading speed increases as they become used to recognising orthographic, morphological and syntactic patterns in written forms. Decoding skills need to be regularly practised so that children can develop automaticity. Research from other agglutinative languages such as Finnish, Turkish and Basque suggest that although the phonological, morphological and lexical aspects unique to each language modulate the development of fluent reading, children can achieve reading accuracy and fluency in the early years[16].

[14] Stanovich, 1986; Mathson et al. 2006; Siedenberg 2017.
[15] Torgensen 2004.
[16] Durgunôglu et al., 2002; Lyytinen & Lyytinen 2004; Acha et al. 2015.

Automaticity (accuracy and speed) matters in decoding. It is very difficult for learners to read with good intonation and comprehension if processing does not happen quite quickly and if decoding has not become automatised[17]. Prosody, which refers to the patterns of stress and intonation in a language, also matters. Automaticity develops by learners regularly reading through a wide range of moderately challenging materials (not too difficult or too easy). Speed is important, but when the emphasis on speed is too great, we get learners chanting words and chorusing without understanding.

One way of assessing reading fluency is to make the learner read a grade appropriate text within a time limit (e.g. one minute) as done in the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). The EGRA requires the learner to read for one minute in each of three components, namely Letter Sounds, Word Reading and Passage Reading.

There are different fluency benchmarks for reading at various grade levels in different languages. It is important to note that these benchmarks are language-specific, depending on the orthography of the language, as a benchmark in one language may not be applicable to another language. For example, benchmarks for oral reading fluency in the Nguni languages are different to those for the Sotho language grouping or to English.

WARNING!

DO NOT CONFUSE READING SPEED WITH FAST READING!

Although processing speed is important in fluent decoding, this **does not mean** that teachers should make learners read fast. For word-level reading speed to be useful, the reader must always self-monitor for meaning during reading by skilfully using comprehension strategies. Readers adjust their reading speed according to the purpose of the reading and text difficulty. Fluent readers do not read a text at an even pace. Depending on the familiarity of the reader with the language and content in a text, parts of a text are read slightly faster and others slower. It is of no use to race through a text. The best way to build learners' reading rate and develop automaticity is to provide opportunities for them to read every single day. This can be done during Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, Paired and Independent Reading. Giving learners reading homework every day is also a good way to increase their opportunities to practise reading. Making learners read fast is bad reading practice and indicates a poor understanding of how automaticity develops in reading.

[17] Piper & Zuilkowski 2015; Pretorius & Spaull 2016; Siedenberg 2017; Spaull et al. 2018.

In their extensive research on reading in English, based on the assessment of over 28,000 readers over several years, the researchers, Hasbrouck and Tindal (2006), established norms for reading in English as a HL. According to their longitudinal data, by the end of Grade 1, children reading in English as a HL should on average be able to read 53 words correct per minute (wcpm). Children who read slower than 40 wcpm at the end of Grade 1 in English are identified as being vulnerable readers in need of additional reading instruction and support. However, English reading norms cannot be transferred to African languages.

Research on reading benchmarks in the conjunctive orthography of the Nguni languages and the disjunctive orthography of the Sotho languages, Xitsonga and Tshivenḓa has only recently started. Reading speed or reading rate can be measured in terms of syllables correct or words correct per minute depending on a specific African language. For example, data from the **Zenlit Literacy Project** showed for that for isiXhosa and isiZulu, at the end of the year, Grade 1 readers in control schools (i.e. schools where there were no literacy interventions) were averaging only 8 wcpm, while in intervention schools (with a focus on early reading instruction), Grade 1 learners at the end of the year were averaging 18 wcpm[18]. In Grade 2 the average was 40 wcpm and in Grade 3 it was 45 wcpm in the intervention schools. Such results show what is possible in early reading in the Nguni languages when attention is paid to developing decoding skills – there were even Grade 1 learners who were decoding faster than 18 wcpm, for instance, top Grade 1 readers were decoding around 25-30 wcpm and understanding most of what they read. The results from research on Grade 3 readers in African languages suggest that there are minimum thresholds of accuracy and oral reading fluency which it is virtually impossible to read for meaning. These thresholds were 52-66 wcpm in Northern Sotho, 39-48 wcpm in Xitsonga and 20-32 wcpm in isiZulu[19].

Reading research in the African languages is still in its early stages but the results do indicate that learners who read slowly with many stops and starts do not achieve automaticity and their reading comprehension is seriously compromised, such that they cannot answer even simple comprehension questions. Building strong decoding skills during the Foundation Phase is therefore very important for reading for meaning. There are some who argue that speed is not important in decoding, but there is strong research evidence to show that processing speed brings cognitive benefits, not only in reading[20] but also in other domains such as numeracy[21].

[18] Zenex Report 2018. Zenlit literacy outcomes 2017.
[19] Spaull et al. 2017.
[20] Biancarosa & Shanley 2016.
[21] Rhymer et al. 2000; Venkat 2019.

1.6 The importance of a solid reading foundation

It is important for children to have a good start when they learn to read and write. Literacy **cracks** in the early years can quickly turn into literacy **gaps**, which then turn into **chasms**[22]. Cracks and gaps are easier to deal with than chasms. Chasms are wide and deep and children can fall into them and find it very difficult to climb out. It is important for Foundation Phase teachers to recognise the cracks that can occur in early literacy development so that it can inform their teaching and they can remediate children who are faltering in their literacy development.

The underlying reasons why a strong reading basis in an African HL must be developed in Foundation Phase is based on these findings:

- How well children read in Grade 3 predicts how well they will read in high school. Good readers in Grade 3 have a good chance of being good readers in high school. Weak Grade 3 readers will stay weak readers if nobody helps them[23].
- Learners who develop strong reading and writing skills in their HL from an early age usually find it much easier to learn to read and write in an additional language. A strong reading foundation in HL forms a sound basis for literacy development in FAL.
- Children who struggle to read in the Foundation Phase will not catch up on their own in the Intermediate Phase. In fact, these learners often fall further behind in the Intermediate Phase because the focus in the Intermediate Phase is on content subjects, and children are no longer 'learning to read' but using reading as a learning tool – they are 'reading to learn'[24].
- Reading cracks and gaps should be identified and remediated in the Foundation Phase. Learners who struggle to read have a higher chance of dropping out of school in the Intermediate Phase or Senior Phase[25].

It is therefore important to ensure that good reading abilities are developed in the HL from an early age. Teachers need to be mindful of all the components of reading and ensure that all the components are being developed equally in their learners.

[22] Johnson 2012.
[23] Stanovich 1986; Farkas & Beron 2004; Hernandez 2011.
[24] Hernandez 2011; Pretorius 2014.
[25] Christenson & Thurlow 2004.

1.7 The approach to teaching reading in the African languages

All the South African official languages use alphabetic scripts (orthographies) to represent the sounds of the language. Languages are made up of different **phonemes** (sounds) and **graphemes** (letters) that represent these sounds. There are similarities in sounds and letters between the official languages in South Africa, for example the sounds represented by the letters **d**, **f**, **h**, **l**, **m**, **n** and **s** are the same in English as they are for most of the African languages. But there are also some important differences in phoneme to grapheme mapping between these languages, for example, the grapheme **c** is produced as a dental click in Nguni /|/ as in ***cula*** (*sing)*; it is pronounced /k/ in English as in *cat* and it does not exist at all in the Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi and Tshivenḓa alphabets. The African languages have a complex consonant system consisting of many digraphs, trigraphs and blends so young children need to habituate their eyes to recognising the letter combinations and matching them with their correct sounds.

Words in African languages are typically spelt how they sound, which is why they are said to have a transparent or shallow orthography. However, although they are transparent and easier to decode, the challenges in reading come from the stamina that needs to be developed to handle very long words and the complex consonant combinations they contain, especially in the conjunctive Nguni languages. Once learners have developed the alphabetic principle (i.e. the insight that each letter of the alphabet represents a distinct sound), teachers are encouraged to teach syllabication (breaking words into syllables) as a strategy for word reading, more especially in the Nguni languages. In addition, when reading in some of these languages, namely Tshivenḓa, Sepedi and Setswana, readers need to recognise and use diacritics to correctly sound out words or parts of words.

Phonics is very important in African languages and can be taught relatively easily. This is because African languages have a transparent orthography (writing system). This means that a letter (or combinations of letters) stands for a single static sound. For example, in isiXhosa, the sound /**f**/ in the word ***ufudo*** *(tortoise)* is always represented by the letter **f**, whereas in English the sound **/f/** can be represented by the letter **f** as in the word *fun*, or by **ph** as in the word *phoneme,* or by **-gh** as in the word *cough*[26].

In African languages, **decoding is on two levels: decoding on the syllabic level and decoding on the phonemic level**. Both syllabic and phonemic levels should be used as word reading strategies. The teaching of decoding in the African languages often occurs on the syllabic

[26] Note that when referring to **letters**, we write them as **b**, **m**, **s**, etc. When we refer to **sounds**, we put them between two slashes **/ /**.

level only (as in ***ba, be, bi, bo, bu***) which, given the syllabic nature of the African languages, is a simple and useful technique. However, even in agglutinative syllabic languages, phonemic awareness is important in alphabetic orthographies[27], and so explicit teaching on the phonemic level is necessary for reading success. Children must be able to see that ***ba*** consists of two separate sounds or phonemes: /**b**/ + /**a**/. Because of their rich morphological structures, **morphology** also plays an important role in reading in African languages[28].

[27] Alcock et al. 2010; Wilsenach 2019.
[28] Probert (2019).

SECTION 2: TEACHING READING IN THE EARLY GRADES: AN OVERVIEW OF THE READING COMPONENTS

This section provides a comprehensive overview of each of the reading components. In each case, the focus is on the following:

- **What is the component?**
- **Why is it important?**
- **How do I teach it?**
- **When do I teach it?**
- **How do I assess it?**
- **How do I identify cracks?**

It is important to keep in mind that these components are interrelated and interdependent. Even though instruction might focus on one or other component, teachers need to ensure that learners do not lose sight of the bigger picture (comprehension) and how work on each component contributes to the whole.

2.1 Emergent reading and writing

Emergent reading and writing are not isolated skills; rather there is a reciprocal relationship between the two. They develop through lots of exposure to written texts and purposeful writing activities. Adams (1995: 411) argues that,

> "Before formal instruction is begun, children should possess a broadly general appreciation of the nature of print. They should be aware of how text is formatted, that its basic units are specific speakable words and that its words are comprised of letters. Of equal importance they should have a solid sense of its various functions – to entertain, inform, communicate, record – and potential value to their own selves. All such awareness is powerfully fostered by reading aloud to children, by engaging them regularly in the enjoyment and exploration of print."

There are many behaviours, skills and attitudes that show that children are emerging as readers and writers. These skills develop over time in print-rich home and school environments where the children are immersed in spoken language and children's literature through lots of teacher read-alouds. We need to observe and celebrate this development, and support children who are not showing evidence of these behaviours, skills and attitudes.

TERM	EMERGENT READING AND WRITING
What is it?	When children watch adults reading and writing, they learn that the marks they make on paper carry a message and have meaning. They begin to understand what writing is for and this can motivate them to want to read and write themselves. Their reading may not be accurate: they may 'read' from memory, point to words that are not there, or make up stories to go with pictures. We call this emergent reading. Their writing may not look like conventional writing, but they are becoming writers as they try to communicate their ideas on paper and use writing for different purposes. We use the term 'emergent writing' to describe the mark making and writing that young children do before they learn to write in a conventional way.
Why is it important?	• It is important for teachers to understand the developmental stages of learning to read and write to resist labelling children as weak, average and strong, and to understand that reading and writing are developmental. • Different children will be at different stages of the reading and writing continuum largely depending on how much access they have to storytelling, read-alouds, drawing and writing opportunities at home and at school. • Engaging children in emergent literacy reading and writing activities is an important socialisation process for reading and writing. It helps to build children's motivation to read and write, and provides them with opportunities to take risks at reading and writing. • Understanding the early stages of learning to read and write helps teachers to respond appropriately to children's developmental needs without labelling them. • Teachers should also understand that pretend reading and invented spelling are necessary stages in learning to read and write conventionally and not label these children as 'not knowing'.
How do I support its development?	**Oral stories, songs and rhymes** are the basis for introducing children to written stories, songs and rhymes. Reading and writing activities build on and consolidate the language of a story, a song or a rhyme, and this forms a platform for learning about written language. **Shared writing**: By becoming a scribe for children as they tell you their news and stories, you model for them that what they say can be written down and read. You model directionality of text from left to right and from top to bottom. You also get a chance to 'think aloud' and model how to deal with the punctuation, grammar, cohesion and coherence of the text. Finally, you model for children the writing process. **Story play:** Letting individual children dictate stories to you, while you write them down on their behalf, and then read them aloud to children as they act them out

	is also equally effective in getting children to see the connection between storytelling, writing and reading, and acting out the story. By acting out the story, the teacher finds a way to bring play into reading and writing. **Reading aloud** is one of the best ways to build strong language skills and create a love of reading and books. Researchers studying how we read aloud to children have found that talking about books is as important as reading them. **Drawing** plays an important role in helping children to begin to express their ideas on paper and is an important step towards writing. **Have-a-go writing** develops when children start taking risks at expressing themselves in writing without fear. They are under no pressure to spell correctly, but may use some of the letters they have learnt during their decoding lessons, and may still invent others.
When do I create opportunities for children to develop?	During story time in Grade R, and across the daily programme in Grade 1, teachers can do Read-Alouds, and then give learners opportunities to respond to stories by drawing their favourite character, discussing the parts they like/dislike in the story, and acting out parts of the story. Read-alouds, visual art and role-play can also be integrated in the Life Skills curriculum, while the writing of shopping lists, for example, can be integrated in Maths when learners play shop. If you read stories at the end of the day, there may not always be time to talk about the book after you finish reading. Sometimes a story ends so beautifully that it is enough to just enjoy the moment! However, when there is time, even the next day, you could ask questions about what the learners remember about the story or let them share their personal responses to the story. What did they like about the story? What didn't they like? What was their best part? What did they learn from the story?
How to assess?	Teachers observe learners as they engage with stories, drawing, reading and writing. Teachers can tick and note where the learners are, whether they are moving towards the next stage of development or not, and identify those learners who need more support. Giving learners blank pages which can be stapled together, or unlined jotters, helps with tracking learners' writing development from the day they start Grade 1. These recordings can provide you with evidence of the learner's progress each term.
Resources	Stories, wordless books, storybooks, song and rhyme books, environmental print, labels on packaging, thick pencils and wax crayons, blank paper/unlined books, dry-wipe kokis and whiteboards or chalk and slates
How to identify the cracks?	Using observation and the rubric/checklist for emergent reading and writing stages, teachers can identify learners who are struggling and provide them with additional support.

2.2 Decoding

Decoding refers to the processes whereby the letter symbols on a page (or screen) are matched with certain sounds which make up words which form sentences so that written language becomes meaningful. Decoding forms the basis of reading: without decoding there can be no comprehension. Decoding consists of different subcomponents, which will be discussed below. Decoding is thus a means to an end – the end is comprehension. However, being able to decode does not necessarily guarantee comprehension. Even if learners can decode, they still use other abilities (such as language proficiency, and thinking skills and strategies) to help them understand what they read. Skilled readers decode quickly and accurately according to their age/grade level. This section will focus on the subcomponents that contribute to decoding.

Because alphabetic writing systems represent language at the level of the sound, it is important for reading teachers to have a good understanding of the sounds in their language and how these sounds are represented by letters. As an example of the sound system in a language, we use the following two charts to show the vowel and consonant systems in isiXhosa. Similar charts in all the other African languages have been included in the different **manuals for *Teaching Reading in African Languages.***

Table 1: Vowel system in isiXhosa

	Front	Central	Back
High	**i**		**u**
Mid	**e**		**o**
Low		**a**	

Table 2: Consonant system in isiXhosa[29]

OONONYE single consonants	OONOMBINI double consonants (digraphs)	OONOMBINI double consonants (blends)	OONONTATHU triple consonants (trigraphs)	OONONTATHU triple consonants (blends)	OONONE four consonants	OONONTLANU five consonants	IZANDI ZEMBOLEKO borrowed sounds	IZANDI EZIDITYANISIWEYO blended sounds preceded by 'm'
b	**bh**						**bhl** bhlowu **br** ibrashi	
c	**ch**	**cw**		**chw**				
d	**dl, dz**	**dw, dy**		**dlw**			**dr** idrowa	
f							**fl** iflawa **fr** ifriji	
g	**gc, gq, gx**	**gw**		**gcw, gqw, grw, gxw**			**gr** igrabile **gl** iglasi	
h	**hl**			**hlw**				
j		**jw**						
k	**kh, kr**	**kw**		**khw, krw**			**khr** ikhrayoni **kl** iklasi **kr** ikrisimesi	
l		**lw**						
m		**mb, mf, mp, mv**						m**f**, m**v**, m**y**, m**n**, m**w**, m**k**, m**s**, m**d**, m**g**, m**q**, m**j**, m**l**, m**z**, m**h**, m**c**, (m)**bh**, (m)**ng**, (m)**ch**, (m)**gq**,

[29] *Informed by Izandi zesiXhosa*. Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development.

								(m)**ph,** (m)**gw,** (m)**nt,** (m)**khw,** (m)**rh,** (m)**kh**
n	**nc, nh, nq, nx**	**nd, ng, nj, nk, nt, nw, ny, nz**		**ncw, ndl, ndw, ndy, ndz, ngc, ngq, ngw, ngx, njw, nkc, nkq, nkw, nkx, nqw, ntl, nts, ntw, nty, nxw, nyh, nyw, nzw**	**ngcw, ngqw, nkcw, nkqw, nkxw, ntsh, ndlw, ndyw, ntlw, ntsw, ntyw, nyhw**	**ntshw**		
p	**ph**							
q	**qh**	**qw**		**qhw**				
r	**rh**			**rhw**				
s	**sh**	**sw**		**shw**			**sk** ifaskoti **sl** isleyti **st** istovu **str** istrato, istreyini	
t	**th, ts**	**tw, ty**	**tsh, tyh**	**thw, tsw, tyw**	**tshw**		**tr** itreyini	
v								
w								
x	**xh**	**xw**		**xhw**				
y								
z		**zw**						

The subcomponents of decoding, and how they interconnect, are shown below in Figure 2.

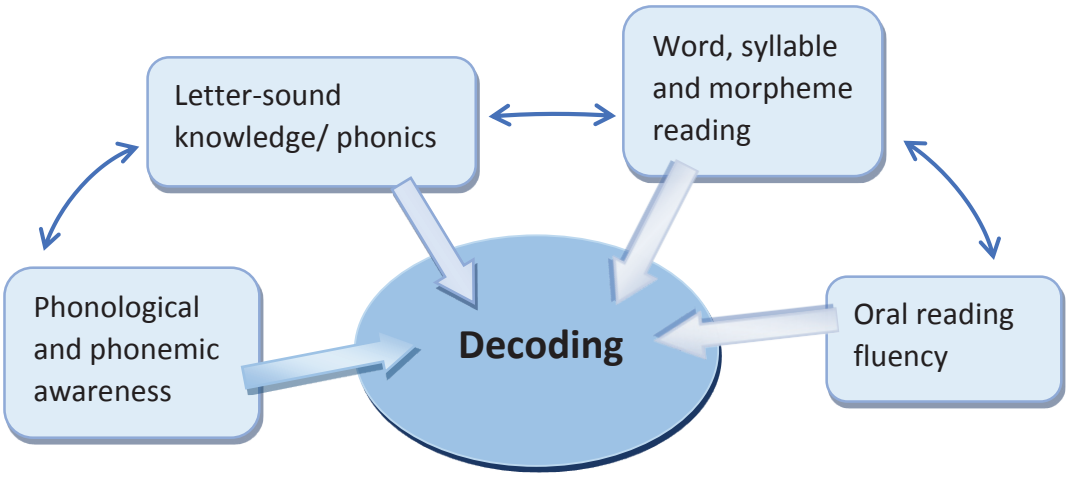


Figure 2: *The subcomponents of decoding*

Each of the subcomponents are explained in the sections below and guidelines are provided for how to teach them. Guidelines are also given for how teachers can be on the lookout for cracks in early literacy development and prevent or fix them before they become gaps.

TERM	PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
What is it?	Phonological awareness (PA) is an umbrella term that refers to an **awareness of the sound system of a language**. This includes different kinds of awareness: • the ability to distinguish words in a stream of speech, e.g. in isiXhosa, *imini yonke* is two words and not one continuous word *iminiyonke*. • the ability to identify syllables in words, e.g. in isiXhosa, *kakuhle* has 3 syllables: *ka-ku-hle; tshotsha* has 2 syllables: *tsho-tsha*. • the ability to identify rhyming words, e.g. *goat, coat; blow, go.* Rhyming occurs far more often in English than it does in African languages so it is not really an important part of African HL reading instruction, but it is important for EFAL reading instruction. • The ability to identify single sounds (phonemes) in words. Because this is so important in reading alphabetic languages, it is usually referred to separately as **phonemic awareness** (see section below).

Why is it important?	Developing learners' phonological awareness helps to form a bridge linking the auditory perception of language (oral language) with the visual perception of language (written language). Children who do not develop phonological awareness usually struggle to learn to read and write. Because the African languages are strongly syllabic, children find it relatively easy to identify syllables in their words. We therefore start with **syllabification** (breaking words down and building them up through syllables), first in learners' names and then in words generally. In the African languages, there is a simple vowel (V) or consonant-vowel (CV) syllable structure (e.g. *u-ma-ma*), and words can be accurately decoded by inserting a syllable break (pause) after each (V) in the word.
When do I teach it?	This should be taught mainly from Grade R to Grade 1. It can be done explicitly and systematically during Listening and Speaking activities. Attention can also be drawn to this during Shared Reading, Phonics, or Group Guided Reading. It can even be done when teaching a new word to children (e.g. asking them to clap the syllables in a new word). If learners have not attended Grade R, then the teacher should spend more time on phonological awareness in Grade 1.
How do I teach it?	• Work with syllables in learners' names, e.g. *Si-pho = 2 syllables*. • Work with syllables in words: identification and deletion of syllables, e.g. *Say baleka. How many syllables are there? There are three: /ba/-/le/-/ka/. Now take away the first syllable: what is left? /leka/* • Play with rhythm in words, e.g. *bala, vala, dlala, bhala,* or the isiXhosa rhyme about frogs hopping: *Nali isele. Emva kwendlu kabawo. Lithi ndakuligxotha. Lithi tsi gxada tsi, tsi gxada tsi*. • Identify syllables in words (by clapping them) encountered during Listening and Speaking, or Shared Reading activities.
How to assess it?	Ask learners to clap out the syllables in a word or to clap out the words in a sentence. Manipulatives such as bottle tops or buttons can be used to help learners count out the syllables in words, and words in sentences.
What resources are needed?	Because these are oral activities, few resources are needed. Listening and Speaking activities include body movements, e.g. hand, finger, foot movements, clapping, stamping, clicking, etc. Manipulatives such as bottle tops or buttons can also be used.
How do I identify cracks?	One way to identify cracks is to look out for learners who cannot accurately hear the number of syllables in a word, or the number of words in a sentence.
Remember	Lots of fun oral activities can be done by clapping out syllables in words, and words in sentences. You can let children close their eyes when doing many

	phonological awareness activities. Don't use written words or flashcards as then you are moving into **phonics, not phonological awareness**.

Term	PHONEMIC AWARENESS
What is it?	Phonemic awareness forms part of phonological awareness and refers to the ability to **hear and manipulate individual sounds within a word**. For example, the first sound in *buza* is /b/; in *hleka* it is /ɬ/. The sound at the end of *ubuso* is /o/. If we take away the /b/ from *buza,* we are left with /uza/. If we replace /b/ with /ph/ what word do we get?
Why is it important?	It is important that learners are able to identify individual sounds within syllables and words, i.e. *b + a = ba*. This is at the heart of decoding in alphabetic languages. Learners need to be able to identify individual sounds in order to map that sound to a symbol as part of reading. Even though African languages have a strong syllabic structure with V or CV syllables, learners still need to be able to identify individual sounds **within** syllables due to the alphabetic writing system.
When to teach it?	Phonemic awareness should be developed from Grade R up to Grade 2. By Grade 2 most learners should have a good understanding that words and syllables are made up of individual sounds. Activities that focus on oral phonemic activities should be a preparation for phonics. A good phonics programme also helps learners develop phonemic awareness.
How to teach it?	Phonemic awareness involves the ability to identify and manipulate sounds within words. Identification develops first, then manipulation. Learners must be able to do both. The last four examples below involve the manipulation of sounds within words, i.e. blending, deleting, replacing. • Identify sounds at the beginning of a word, e.g. *What sound is at the beginning of bonke? = /b/* • Identify sounds at the end of a word, e.g. *What sound is at the end of bonile? = /e/* • Blend syllables, e.g. *What syllable do I make when I put /l/ and /o/ together? = /lo/* • Blend sounds, e.g. *What word am I saying when I speak like a Slow Snail: /uuu-mmm-aaa-mmm-aaa/ (umama)* • Delete sounds from a word, e.g. *Say the word uhleka without the/u/ sound = /hleka/*

	• Replace or swop one sound with another, e.g. *Say the word bonke. Now say it again, but use /z/ instead of /b/ = zonke*
How to assess?	Assess learners' ability to: • identify the beginning and end sounds in a word (in African languages words usually end with a vowel, but not so in English or Afrikaans) • blend sounds to make syllables, and blend syllables to make words • segment words into syllables, and segment syllables and words into sounds • replace one sound with another in a word • identify the odd letter out at the beginning of a word in a group of words (e.g. *buza, beka, pela; thume, duma, thuma*). It is best to assess learners mainly through observation and orally in one-on-one or in small group sessions.
Resources	As in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness involves oral activities, so few resources are needed. Manipulatives such as bottle tops or buttons can be used to help learners count out the sounds in syllables and words.
How do I identify cracks?	• Learner cannot say the sounds in syllables or words correctly. • Learner cannot identify/say the beginning or end sound in a syllable or word. • Learner cannot blend sounds to form syllables or words. • Learner cannot segment (break up) words into syllables, and syllables into sounds.
Remember	You must not write out words or letters or use flashcards when you do phonemic awareness. In fact, children should be able to close their eyes when doing phonemic awareness activities!

TERM	**LETTER-SOUND KNOWLEDGE (PHONICS)**
What is it?	**Phonics** refers to matching written letters to their corresponding spoken sounds and vice versa.
Why is it important?	The goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn the alphabetic principle, which is the idea that letters represent the sounds of spoken language, and that there is an organised, logical, and predictable relationship between written letters and spoken sounds. Children are taught, for example, that the letter **m** represents the sound /m/, and that it is the first letter in words such as ***m****ina,* ***m****anje* and ***m****aye*. When children understand sound-letter correspondence, they are able to sound out and read new words.

	Phonics builds upon a foundation of phonological awareness, specifically phonemic awareness. As children learn to read and spell, they fine-tune their knowledge of the relationships between phonemes and graphemes in written language. As reading and spelling skills develop, focusing on phonemic awareness improves phonics knowledge and, in turn, focusing on phonics also improves phonemic awareness.
When to teach it?	The teaching of phonics should begin towards the latter part of Grade R and continue more intensely in Grades 1 and 2 until Grade 3. Phonics needs to be taught explicitly and systematically.
How to teach it?	The following steps should underlie phonics instruction in the African languages. 1. **Teach the five vowel sounds first.** Introduce one vowel sound a day. Make cards for each of the vowels. Integrate reading (letter recognition) and writing (handwriting) from the start. Learners should be able to recognise the letter, say the sound represented by the letter, and write the letter. Let the learners practise writing each letter and saying the sound as they write it. Make sure that the learners can distinguish the five vowel letters and the sounds that they represent quickly and accurately in any order that you present them. They should be able to: (i) say the sound when you show them the letter, and (ii) write the letter when you say the sound. This should be finger-tip knowledge – in other words, learners should recognise, say or write the letters/sounds quickly and accurately, without having to think about them for too long. 2. Introduce some of the high frequency **single consonant sounds**: two per week. As with the vowel sounds, make letter cards for each of the consonants. Learners should be able to recognise the letter, say the sound represented by the letter and write the letter. Let them practise writing the letters and saying the sounds as they write the letters. The 14 most frequently used consonant sounds in isiXhosa are: *l, k, m, b, z, s, y, w, ng, w, n, kh, ph, nd*.[30] 3. **Blend letters to form syllables:** Teach learners how to blend consonant and vowel sounds by putting a vowel card after a consonant card, e.g. *b + a = ba, b + e = be*, *b + i = bi*, etc. They must sound out each letter and then say them together to form the combined syllable. 4. **Practise recognising syllables:** Make syllable cards presenting different consonant + vowel combinations. Show them in different sequences so that

[30] Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy: isiXhosa corpus

	learners do not memorise the sequence, but are forced to decode the syllables as they appear. You should also say the syllables in different sequences and get the learners to write them down as you say them. This must become finger-tip knowledge, i.e. learners can perform the task accurately and quickly without having to think too much about what they are doing. 5. **Blend syllables to form words:** Use the different letter and syllable cards to form two- and three-syllable words, e.g. in isiXhosa: *mama, sisi, molo, ewe, eli, labo, nalo, siya, sala, yima, wena, ileli, ubusi, usana, iwuli, ubisi, baleka.*
How to assess?	Assess learners' ability to: • identify letter-sound relationships of all single letters • build words using sounds learnt • recognise common consonant digraphs and their sounds, e.g. *bh, hl* and trigraphs, e.g. *nyh, tyh* (isiXhosa);
Resources	• Alphabet frieze • Consonant cluster frieze (containing digraphs, trigraphs, blends, etc.) • Flashcards (for letter and syllable identification) • Decodable texts
How do I identify cracks?	• Learner cannot recognise the relationship between letters and their corresponding sounds. • Learners cannot blend sounds or syllables together to form words.
Remember	• Make sure that learners can recognise both single letter-sounds as well as syllables. It is very important for them to be able to distinguish the different letters that make up a syllable. • Make sure that learners can blend sounds. This includes blending single C+V sounds as well as blending syllables together to form words. • Make sure that learners know the meanings of the words that they decode. • Make phonics fun! • Develop the learners' oral language all the time. It is more difficult for children to decode words that they don't know.

TERM	WORD READING
What is it?	This refers to the **ability to read words accurately and quickly** while reading, and **to recognise shorter high frequency words quickly** without having to sound them out (e.g. in isiXhosa: *ukuba, phantsi, watsho, kodwa*). Word reading happens at the level of phonemes, syllables and morphemes, so it relies on knowledge of letter-sounds, syllables and morphemes that make up words (e.g. prefixes and suffixes). **Morphology** involves learning that particular groups of letters are associated with particular meanings. African languages have very rich morphological systems, with lots of prefixes and suffixes that are added to noun and verbal elements, so the ability to use morphological knowledge while reading in African languages is very important. Knowledge of morphology helps children to understand words by knowing the meaning of word parts. Children also need to understand that sometimes when these word parts come together, the sounds can lead to a change in spelling. They must be able to accurately decode the word and recognise the meaningful word parts. For example, in isiZulu *abantu* becomes *abantwana*, which comes from *aba + ntu + ana*: here the /u/ and /a/ undergo a process of vowel coalescence, and it becomes /wa/. In addition to this, the syllable and morpheme often overlap, e.g. */ba/* in the word *bayadla* is a syllable but it is also a morpheme (the subject morpheme for class 2 or 2a) and it denotes the meaning 'they' in the Nguni languages. The major impact of morphology is to identify and understand word relations involving words with similar morphemes. It is also about the establishment of semantic fields (making meaning) and contributes directly to vocabulary building.
Why is it important?	If children know their letter-sounds and how to blend them (i.e. put them together), then they can put letters together to form words and they can read words which they have not encountered before. Words are the building blocks for communication. We use sequences of words in sentences to express our thoughts, so for written text to be meaningful, it is important for children to accurately and quickly read the words in sequence in order to construct meaning while they read. Phonological and phonemic awareness, knowledge of letter-sounds, and the ability to blend letters, form the basis of word reading skills in languages with an alphabetic writing system. Learners store in their memory sequences of letters such as syllables and morphemes that they recognise in words. This is called orthographic mapping, and it helps readers process words more quickly while they read. For example, in isiXhosa these sequences of letters should match commonly occurring

	morphemes, e.g. prefixes (*izimaphambili*) ***ku-, uku-, u-ya-, u-si-, ndi-ya-, baya-,*** etc. and/or suffixes (*izimamva*) ***-ile, -eni, -i-we, -ini,*** etc. An awareness of morphological structure contributes to vocabulary learning, understanding new words, and overall comprehension of texts. In the Nguni languages, for example, all nouns are formed from at least two morphemes, a prefix and a root.
When to teach it?	Word reading should start in Grade 1, when learners acquire knowledge of letter-sound relationships. Learners should be able to read words on their own as well as words in sentences. Learners should become increasingly fluent in word reading in the early grades. The teaching of morphology in African languages requires explicit instruction. This can start in Grades 2 and 3, and should contribute to fluent word reading.
How to teach it?	Due to the strongly syllabic nature of the African languages, it is useful to use the syllable structures in early word reading as a bridge to fluent decoding of words. In order to recognise syllables, learners must be able to: (i) identify single letters in syllables, (ii) know what sounds they stand for, and (iii) be able to blend them. • Teach common high frequency words, for example in isiXhosa: *futhi*, *phezulu, wakhe*, *zonke,* etc. using flashcards. Make sure that readers can identify the letter-sounds and syllables in the words. Also make sure that learners know the meanings of the words that they read from flashcards. Teachers can provide learners with lists to practise reading, and can do activities such as "Show me the flashcard that says *wam* or *kuhle"* for example. These words are frequent enough to warrant knowing them by sight and will assist in decoding. By automatically recognising commonly occurring words "by sight", more effort can be given to decoding and comprehending the longer and morphologically more complex words in the sentences. • After introducing the words on flashcards, mix the sequence of words to ensure that learners are actually reading the words rather than memorising them in predictable sequences. • Word reading activities can be done during Phonics, Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading. While the teacher is busy with Group Guided Reading, s/he can organise for other learners to practise word (and text) reading with one another in pairs (Paired Reading). **HOW TO TEACH MORPHOLOGY WITHIN WORD READING** There are different ways to teach the decoding of morphemes. These relate to the commonly known strategy of teaching word attack skills that involve

identifying different word parts or morphemes within words. Strategies for teaching morphology include:

1. **Identifying roots**, particularly in long words, for example:

Nguni	u-ya-si-**ty**-a, a-ndi-sa-**balek-**i, e-**festile**-ni
Sotho	ke a **tsamay-a**, **tafole**ng, **mots**ana

The Sotho language group, Xitsonga and Tshivenḓa are written disjunctively so it is easier to see the root. The strategy of root identification therefore works best for the Nguni languages, where the morpheme needs to be identified within the word. The root can be a noun root or a verb root. This is the unit which holds the core meaning of the word. By recognising the root, learners may find it easier to read the smaller units which contribute to its meaning. This speeds up reading.

2. **Helping learners recognise prefixes and suffixes**

The different morphemes or sequences of morphemes can be colour-coded in words to teach past tense, negation, etc.

Prefixes: **ndi-, ngi-, di-, aba-**
Suffixes: **-ile, -wa, -isa, -anga**

For example, teachers can draw learners' attention to tense inflection on verbs: "Today we will be looking at the suffix ***-ile,*** e.g. uthand**ile**, bacul**ile**, siphek**ile**" etc.

Then read a story to the learners in which the past tense morpheme ***-ile*** is used, and ask them to put up their hands every time they hear the morpheme unit ***-ile***.

Learners can then identify the morpheme ***-ile*** in connected text by underling it every time they see it in the story.

3. **Drawing attention to morphological agreement**

Beyond prefixes and suffixes, the grammatical agreement system can be taught explicitly to learners in the written form even though it comes naturally to them in their oral language. For example:

Ngi*pheka ukudla.*
U*pheka ukudla.*
Si*pheka ukudla.*
Ni*pheka ukudla.*

What is different in terms of form between these sentences? What difference in meaning does the difference in (morphological) structure bring about? Which part of the word denotes the meaning of 'I', 'you', 'we', etc.?

4. **Chunking**

	Once children are familiar with identifying morphemes, they learn to recognise parts or 'chunks' of words while they read. Chunking is part of orthographic mapping and helps to speed up word reading as the reader can use word patterns to decode longer words. It is essential that teachers provide learners with many opportunities to practise word attack skills. To summarise, word attack skills for word reading consist of the ability to: ✓ (i) identify single letters in syllables or words, (ii) know what sounds they represent, and (iii) be able to blend them into syllables and words. ✓ Divide longer words into syllables to decode them. ✓ Use morphological knowledge to recognise common sequences of sounds such as prefixes or suffixes, identifying grammatical agreement markers, personal markers, root verbs, tense markers, etc.
How to assess?	Assess learners' ability to: • read high frequency words using flashcards in random sequences. This can be done in small groups or one-on-one. • read words using a 1-minute word reading chart as in the EGRA tests. (The number of words will depend on the language and grade.) Begin with shorter, simpler words but make sure to include increasingly longer words in the chart. • identify morphemes by asking them to orally identify different word parts in longer words.
Resources	• Flashcards containing high frequency words that occur often in written language, e.g. *kakhulu, uphi, futhi, kodwa, sonke, zonke, ngomso,* etc. in isiXhosa. • Flashcards with different roots, prefixes, and suffixes on them for learners to manipulate in pairs to build up morphologically complex words, for example *[u]+[ya]+[bon]+[a], [a]+[ndi]+[bon]+[i]*, etc.
How to identify cracks?	• Learner cannot read short, high frequency words (i.e. of 2-3 syllables) quickly. • Learner cannot apply word attack skills when encountering new words or very long words. • Learner chunks words incorrectly instead of using morpheme boundaries, for example, the learner reads *[um][ama]* instead of *[u][mama]*, or reads each word syllabically, e.g. *[u][si][si]* instead of *[u][sisi]*. • If morphological awareness is weak, the learner may also struggle with oral assessments of nouns derived from verbs and vice versa such as *ukulwa* → *umlwi … ukupheka* → ??? (expected answer: *umpheki*).

Remember	Roots in words may undergo sound changes that could make the root difficult to identify. For example, it may be difficult to recognise the root in *um**thi*** (tree) in the word *em**thi**ni* (in the tree) or *um**thi**kazi (*a huge tree). Also remember that the same word can sometimes have different meanings depending on the analysis of the morphemes comprising the word. Tone may also play a role. Consider the isiXhosa word ***abafundi***: *aba-fund-i* (students) and *a-ba-fund-i* (they are not learning).

TERM	ORAL READING FLUENCY
What is it?	Oral reading fluency (ORF) refers to the ability to read a text **smoothly** and **accurately**, with appropriate **intonation and feeling**, paying attention to **punctuation**. This kind of reading sounds like spoken language. Although reading eventually becomes silent, developing ORF is a way for learners to practise their reading and for teachers to monitor learners' progress in reading development. When children can recognise high frequency words and use their letter-sound knowledge to read new words their ORF can develop. ORF has three components: (i) accuracy (ii) speed, and (iii) prosody (reading with intonation and feeling). **Accuracy:** It is very important for learners to decode and recognise words correctly. Not being accurate can change the meaning of what is being read, e.g. in isiXhosa, if one reads *ndiya**ni**thanda (I love you [plural])* instead of *ndiya**yi**thanda (I love it [the dog])*, one will get the wrong meaning of what one is reading. **Speed/reading rate:** This refers to reading at a brisk and appropriate pace (appropriate to age/grade level), not slowly, word-for-word. The speed at which learners read at their grade level indicates their decoding knowledge and the extent to which their decoding has become automatised. Decoding requires attention and memory – the more automatic our decoding becomes, the less attention and memory we need for decoding, and the more attention and memory we have for comprehension. The Nguni languages are agglutinative languages with a conjunctive writing system, so they have much longer word units than English. As a result, ORF norms for reading speed are different in Nguni languages compared to English, Afrikaans, the Sotho language grouping, Xitsonga and Tshivenḓa. **Prosody:** This refers to reading with feeling and in a natural, speech-like way, chunking up sentences in suitable ways and pausing in appropriate places (e.g.

	after a full stop). A learner who reads with prosody is more likely to understand the sentence and thus be able to choose the correct pronunciation/meaning. Prosody is particularly important in the African languages due to their tonal characteristic. For example, the word *ithanga* in isiXhosa has three meanings depending on the tone: 'grazing land', 'pumpkin' or 'thigh'. Other examples include: *abafundi* (discussed above), *ubonile* (pronounced with low tone on the u *(ù)* means 'you have seen', while *ubonile* (pronounced with high tone on the u *(ú)* means 's/he has seen', etc.
Why it is important?	**Fluency in reading is regarded as the bridge between decoding and comprehension**. ORF shows a strong relationship with reading comprehension. Becoming fluent is a very necessary part of becoming a good reader. If learners do not become fluent readers, then they will find it very difficult to understand what they read and '**reading to learn**' becomes an almost impossible task. This is because reading slowly, word-for-word, takes up a lot of cognitive attention and memory, which means that there is not enough time or memory capacity to pay attention to meaning. Readers who read slowly also tend to make more mistakes. With practice, young readers become more accurate, they start decoding letter-sounds and words more quickly, and their reading speed increases. Once their decoding starts becoming more automatic, their memory is freed up to pay more attention to comprehension. **A very important responsibility of Foundation Phase teachers is to develop their learners to be fluent readers by the end of Grade 3**. If learners do not read with fluency by the time they enter the Intermediate Phase, then they will find it very difficult to catch up later.
When to teach it?	**Even though most learners are still learning to decode in Grade 1, fluency work should start by the middle of Grade 1 with simple decodable texts**. More attention to ORF should be given in Grades 2 and 3. It is especially important to do fluency work in Grade 3, to prepare learners for the transition into the Intermediate Phase, when they begin reading textbooks. For struggling readers, Grade 2 and 3 teachers should conduct 10-15 minutes of phonics instruction on a daily basis to make sure that these learners (i) develop good letter-sound knowledge, and that they (ii) can do blending and segmenting to form letters into syllables, and syllables into words. Fluency cannot develop without these foundational skills.
How to teach it?	**ORF is NOT taught by making learners read fast.** Instead, improvement in ORF is achieved **mainly through practice,** through reading connected text (i.e. passages with little stories, not just single sentences) on a daily basis. In addition, teachers should be role models for fluency in reading, showing learners how to use their

	voice appropriately to achieve natural intonation, and to make reading aloud sound natural, like spoken language. • Model fluent reading to your learners every day. If they are not exposed to good reading models, they won't know how to become a good reader themselves. This helps them learn how to use their voice to help make sense of written text. The teacher can do this during teacher Read-Alouds, Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading. • Help learners identify the morphological units in words such as, in isiXhosa, **prefixes** (izimaphambili) e.g. *no-, yo-, ye-, ndi-, asi-, ka-, ku+yi-, uku-* and **suffixes** (izimamva) e.g. *-ile, -iwe, -ela*. This helps them decode high frequency word units more quickly, which in turn improves their fluency. It is best to do this within the context of connected text. Some learners read in a very exaggerated syllabic way that does not sound like natural speech. This is acceptable in Grade 1 while children are still learning basic decoding skills, but in Grade 2 and 3, learners should read in a way that reflects the natural tone and rhythms of the language. • Draw learners' attention to **punctuation** in text, and the need to adapt one's reading rate depending on where there are commas or dashes in the text, and where new sentences begin after full stops. Learners should also be able change expression when there is an exclamation mark or question mark at the end of a sentence. Learners must take note of direct speech and adapt their voice according to the character who is speaking in the story, e.g. is it a male or female, young or old character, or a character with a soft, small voice (like a mouse) or a deep, loud voice like an elephant or lion. • Draw learners' attention to accuracy and prosody while they read. Give them feedback on their ORF by saying things like: – *When you read that sentence did it sound natural? Can you read it again and try to make it flow more smoothly? … That was a good effort. Well done!* – *You hesitated a bit when you came to the long words in that sentence. Can you read it again so that you read the long words more fluently? ... Thank you, that was much better!* – *In this part of the story, the granny / a little mouse / an angry lion is speaking. Can you make your voice sound like a granny's / mouse's / angry lion's voice when you read it? ... Yes! That was great!* • Always provide **corrective feedback** in a kind, supportive way. If learners read in a monotonous or syllabic way, ask them: *Did that sound natural? Did that make sense? Read the sentence/paragraph again and make your voice sound like natural speech.*

	ORF can be practised during Group Guided Reading and Paired Reading, and by giving learners reading cards or little books to take home and read aloud to someone for homework.
How to assess it?	• Informally assess learners' ability to read a text aloud accurately and at a steady pace (not word-for-word reading), and in a way that sounds like natural spoken language. • You can listen to learners reading a text aloud during Group Guided Reading sessions and monitor how many words each learner can read in a minute from the grade appropriate text. • To assess learners' ORF formally, give them a passage to read (at least 2-3 paragraphs long): time their reading for a minute, note the number of words they read incorrectly, then subtract the number of errors from the total number of words they read in a minute. This will give you a score of words correct per minute (wcpm). This needs to be done one-on-one. If you assess their ORF at the beginning of the year (in Grade 2 or 3) and keep a record of their ORF scores, then you can assess them again in Term 3 and see how their reading fluency has improved.
Resources	• Story books • Reading cards • Graded readers • EGRA Toolkit
How to identify cracks?	• Learner reads very slowly for their age/grade level. • Learner reads each word slowly and syllabically (often their head nods up and down with each syllable) instead of reading words with natural intonation. • Learner cannot read fluently, makes unnecessary pauses, repeats words, rereads the same word, and hesitates while reading. • Learner 'barks at print', i.e. learner can decode quite well but does not seem to understand what they are decoding. In these cases, use an easier text, and give more practice with decoding (phonics and word reading).
Remember	Some teachers mistakenly think that ORF is only about making learners read quickly. Although the aim of reading is to enable learners to read fluently and with understanding, this does not mean that speed is all that matters. The teacher should focus instead on accuracy and intonation and provide many opportunities for lots of reading practice. Speed increases with practice. As mentioned above, the Nguni languages are agglutinative languages with a conjunctive writing system, so they have much longer word units than in English. As a result, ORF norms for speed will be slower in Nguni languages compared to English, which has many short words which can be read quickly.

ORF Benchmarks

Extensive research has been done on ORF in English that has made it possible to set ORF benchmarks at each grade level for English reading. For example, by the end of Grade 3 most English Home Language learners should be able to read at least **90-107 wcpm**. If they read slower than this, their comprehension is compromised and they will struggle to keep up in the Intermediate Phase. However, ORF rates will differ across languages, depending on their linguistic and orthographic features.

Less research has been done on fluency in the African languages. ORF norms will be slower in the African languages, especially the Nguni languages, because they are agglutinative languages with much longer word units than in English. Based on available data**,** the figures below show ORF averages of isiXhosa readers in the Foundation Phase in the Zenlit study[31]. They give us a tentative idea of what ORF benchmarks might look like in the Nguni languages

End of Grade 1	End of Grade 2	End of Grade 3
18 wcpm (maximum 45 wcpm)	40 wcpm (maximum 56 wcpm)	45 wcpm (maximum 68 wcpm)

These figures reflect *average* ORF reading scores at each grade level. There were some learners who read very well and reached much higher ORF rates than their peers at each grade level, and there were also some learners who read slower than the grade averages. The maximum scores are interesting as they show what very good readers at each grade level can achieve.

The isiXhosa benchmarks are relevant for other Nguni languages. Benchmarks for the Sotho language group, Xitsonga and Tshivenḓa will be higher since word length is shorter in these languages with their disjunctive orthographies.

You will notice a large increase in ORF between Grade 1 and Grade 2 as learners become more fluent in their reading. The gap between Grade 2 and Grade 3 is smaller. This is normal, as the most ORF gains happen in early reading development.

[31] **Zenex Foundation, July 2018.** ZenLit Overview Report.

2.3 Reading comprehension

Comprehension is the heart and soul of reading. We read in order to understand. Comprehension refers to the processes whereby readers use different kinds of knowledge and skills to make sense of the texts they read. Comprehension relies on fluent decoding skills but goes beyond decoding to construct a bigger picture of what the text is about. When we read, we make sense of the words and sentences in the text, and in our minds, we unconsciously put together a bigger picture of the meaning of what we read.

Many teachers think that when they get their learners to read a passage and answer comprehension questions, they are teaching comprehension. This is not so; what they are doing is *assessing* comprehension, not *teaching* it. Research shows that *explicitly teaching* learners *how* to read attentively and with meaning can improve their understanding of texts. It is therefore important for Foundation Phase teachers to pay attention to building up the comprehension abilities of their learners. Knowing *how* comprehension works helps teachers improve instruction and provide high-quality instruction.

The Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 results showed that 78% of Grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read for meaning – irrespective of the language in which they did the test. Comprehension is, thus, a much-neglected component of reading in South African classrooms. In this section we focus on factors that influence comprehension, namely **vocabulary, language proficiency, background knowledge, thinking skills** and **knowledge of different text types**, so that teachers can have a better understanding of what reading comprehension entails.

For children to become skilled readers, they need to develop **both** decoding as well as comprehension skills. If learners have a positive response to texts, if they enjoy reading and expect books to make sense, to convey information and to provide entertainment, then comprehending texts will also be easier for them. Learners' language proficiency affects their text comprehension. The more words they know and the more sophisticated their sentence constructions are when they speak, the better their chances of understanding texts while they read. Figure 3 below shows the components of reading that contribute to reading comprehension. Each of the subcomponents are then explained, and guidelines are provided for how to teach them. Guidelines are also given for how teachers can be on the lookout for cracks in comprehension, and how to fix them before they become gaps.

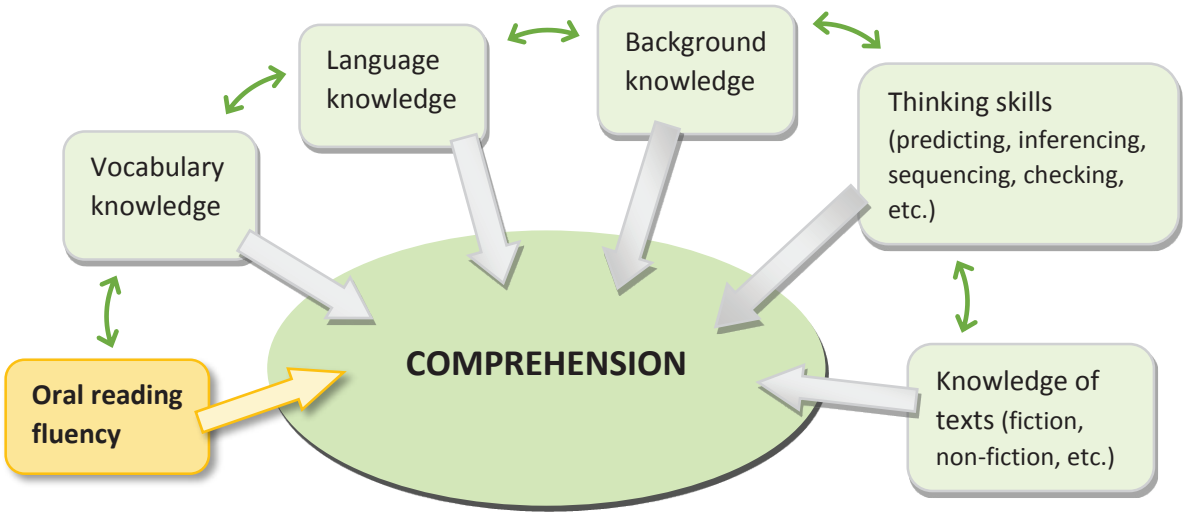


Figure 3: *Components of reading comprehension*

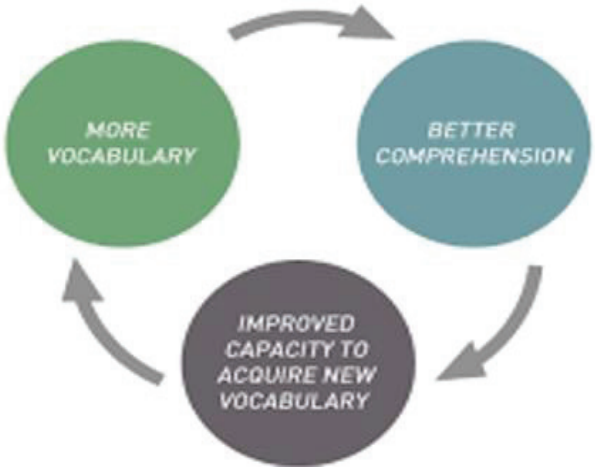
Learners can be taught strategies that utilise each of these components to help them engage with and understand written text at a deeper level. Learners can also develop comprehension skills when teachers read them stories, and then ask them questions which help them engage with the story on a more complex level. In such cases, comprehension is *mediated* through listening comprehension and through the teacher's guidance and modelling. However, decoding ability is needed to comprehend a text when learners read *on their own.*

In Figure 3 above, **oral reading fluency** (see also Figure 2 on page 28) is in a different colour because, as explained in the decoding component, it forms a bridge to comprehension. It is a necessary step in comprehension when reading on one's own. If children have developed automaticity in their decoding and can read fluently, accurately (at an appropriately level for their age/grade) and with expression, then they have enough memory capacity to pay attention to comprehension when they read on their own.

REMEMBER THAT READING INSTRUCTION IS CYCLICAL. IT DOES NOT BEGIN OR END WITH DECODING.

As pointed out previously, all the different components of reading should be developed together**, in an integrated way.** Many people mistakenly think that because decoding is a necessary (but not sufficient) skill for reading comprehension that this means that decoding must first be taught before comprehension can happen. This is not true. Through listening to stories read to them by parents or teachers, children develop their vocabulary and oral listening comprehension skills that can transfer to reading comprehension. Through reading stories to and with their learners (in Teacher Read-Alouds, Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading),

teachers ask questions and discuss stories with their learners. This kind of mediated reading and discussion shows learners how to interact with texts and also helps them develop comprehension skills that they can use when they read a text on their own. All these comprehension skills are being developed from Grade R concurrently while learners are developing decoding skills.

TERM	VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE
What is it?	Vocabulary knowledge refers to **our knowledge of words** in a language. This includes knowledge of their **form** (what they look like, their spelling, how they are pronounced, whether they are nouns, verbs, etc.), their **meaning**, and their **use** (are they used for formal/informal situations, do they have positive or negative connotations, etc.)  ***Figure 4**: The relationship between word knowledge and comprehension* Vocabulary knowledge can be measured in terms of **size** (the number of words we know) and **depth** (how well we know the words and their meanings). Although little research has been done on word development in African languages, we know from research in other languages that children can learn between 2,000-3,000 new words a year, most of which are learned without formal instruction (incidentally). See 'How do I teach it?' section below.
Why is it important?	Vocabulary is central to both spoken and written language. We cannot understand a text if we do not know what the words in the text mean. Vocabulary shows a strong relationship to all other language skills. The more words children know, the better their listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing will be. A large vocabulary is also associated with academic performance – learners who know lots of words do better at school and university.
When do I teach it?	Vocabulary building can be both incidental and explicit. Incidental vocabulary building starts when children are born and parents talk to their babies, read

	stories and sing songs to them. Explicit vocabulary building in school starts in Grade R and continues throughout school. Teachers should work to develop learners' vocabulary knowledge every day and every week throughout the year. Every opportunity to build up learners' vocabulary and language knowledge should be used!
How do I teach it?	As mentioned above, words are acquired in two ways – incidentally and explicitly. It is important for teachers to be aware of how they can increase word growth using both ways. **Incidental learning** happens when learners are focused on something else (e.g. playing, watching TV) and they hear and learn a new word. Reading storybooks is a very powerful way for learners to learn new words – through listening to the teacher or other adults reading stories to them, or through reading storybooks on their own, learners are exposed to rich language and words that build up their vocabulary. Providing rich teacher talk in the classroom is important for incidental vocabulary development. This is done by, for example, using standard and non-standard forms of the HL, discussing texts/stories with learners and encouraging them to engage with the content using full sentences and providing reasons for their answers. **Explicit learning** happens when teachers teach learners new words in a direct and specific way. They do this by drawing the learners' attention to the new word, pronouncing it clearly, explaining the meaning, using the word in a sentence to show its use, putting the word up on the word wall, providing opportunities for learners to write the new word in their word books, using the new word several times during the rest of the week, and encouraging learners to use the new word. Teachers can teach the meanings of different word types in different ways. For example, the meanings of nouns can be conveyed using real objects/pictures, verbs by demonstrating actions, and abstract words can be explained using simple definitions. Learners should be allowed to practise using all new words in the context of sentences. Although fewer words are learned this way, they can be learned deeply. **There are about 38 teaching weeks in the school year. If teachers teach at least 5 words a day per school week** (5 x 5 = 25 words a week)**, they can teach their learners at least 950 new words in a year** (25 words x 38 school weeks = 950 words)**.** It is thus important for teachers to think about how they can increase learners' word growth through both incidental and explicit means. In African languages, explicit vocabulary learning must simultaneously pay attention to roots of words, their morphology, and how they are used in sentences (syntax).

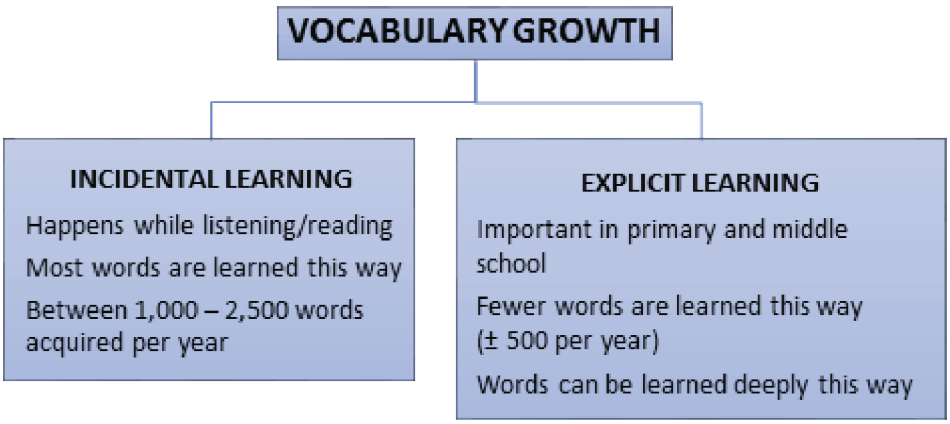


***Figure 5**: Two main types of vocabulary learning*

Create incidental word learning opportunities in the following ways:

- Provide rich teacher talk in the classroom during activities like Listening and Speaking, Shared Reading and Teacher Read-Alouds. Use words in the HL that are not usually used in the children's everyday world. Rich teacher talk can also be provided when new words are encountered during Mathematics and Life Skills.
- Create a print-rich and language-rich classroom.
- Read lots of storybooks to the learners during Teacher Read-Alouds and Shared Reading.
- Encourage learners to read storybooks with a partner during Paired Reading or on their own during Independent Reading. Storybook reading is the most powerful way of learning new words and more complex language structures in the HL and the FAL.
- Encourage learners to become 'word detectives': to notice new words they don't know and which they encounter outside the classroom (e.g. after school, while watching TV, etc.), to find out their meanings, and to enjoy building up their word banks.

Create explicit word learning opportunities:

- Always **pre-teach 3-5 new words** before reading a new story to your class. Knowing the meanings of new words before they read the story will help the learners understand the story better. Put these **vocabulary words up on your word wall.**
- **Children must encounter words in texts from 6-14 times in order to remember them.** Use the new words several times during the week so that learners get multiple exposures to the new words. Encourage learners to use the new words when they speak or write.

	• Encourage learners to take notice of words they don't know and to be proactive about it, e.g. whenever the learners hear or see a new word in the classroom, encourage them to put up their hand and ask for clarification. • Encourage your learners to write the words down in their word books. • Regular and repeated reading of storybooks provides **multiple exposures to new words** and deepens knowledge of newly learned words. Storybooks provide an excellent medium for both incidental and explicit learning. • In **Grades 2 and 3 you can draw learners' attention to word parts, e.g. prefixes, suffixes, roots**, etc. Show them how a verb can change into a noun (*run → runner; baleka → imbaleki; know → knowledge; ukubhala → umbhali*). • Encourage independent reading at home and in the classroom. This increases the chances of vocabulary growth through incidental learning. Remember that children who read more also know more words. • You can expand vocabulary in African languages by including other recognised varieties of the language and creating synonyms for words, e.g *ukosa* and *ukoja* for making a braai. • You can also implement an inclusive pedagogy by using the home languages of those children who are being taught to read and write in a language that is not their own, for example, building a multilingual word wall. Drawing learners' attention to similarities and differences in languages helps to build their language awareness and metalinguistic skills, for example (English-isiXhosa-Afrikaans): *brother–ubhuti–broer; chocolate–itshokolethi–sjokolade; cat–ikati–kat; school–isikolo–skool; paper–iphepha–papier*. This also builds the teacher's knowledge of the languages of all the learners, and helps to build children's individual multilingualism, thereby contributing to societal multilingualism as expressed in the Language-in-Education Policy of 1997.
How to assess?	Every Friday do a quick oral revision of the words you have taught that week to make sure that the learners remember, understand and can use the words you have taught and discussed in class. **Assess learners' ability by doing a 1-minute word reading test containing random sequences of the new words that you've taught them during the week.** Learners read words more quickly if they know them. If they struggle to read the words, then they have not yet internalised the forms of the new words. You can also get them to match meanings or pictures to the new words, or to use the new words in sentences of their own.
Resources	• A print-rich classroom that fosters word learning • Vocabulary charts (e.g. colours, shapes, days of the week, months of the year, numbers, weather, parts of the body)

	• A Reading Corner with different books (storybooks and information books) in the HL and the FAL • Personal word books (exercise books that serve as personal dictionaries). Tell learners that their personal word books are their 'word banks' – the more words they put in them, the richer they become. Encourage the children to use the new words in sentences, orally and in writing. They must all become word millionaires! • Phonic word flashcards and vocabulary word flashcards on the word wall.
How to identify cracks?	• Learner does not always use full sentences when talking. This shows limited oral language proficiency. • Learner seems to have a limited range of words when speaking (in both the HL and FAL). • Learner can decode quite well while reading aloud but seems to have poor comprehension. (This could be because the learner's vocabulary knowledge is limited.)

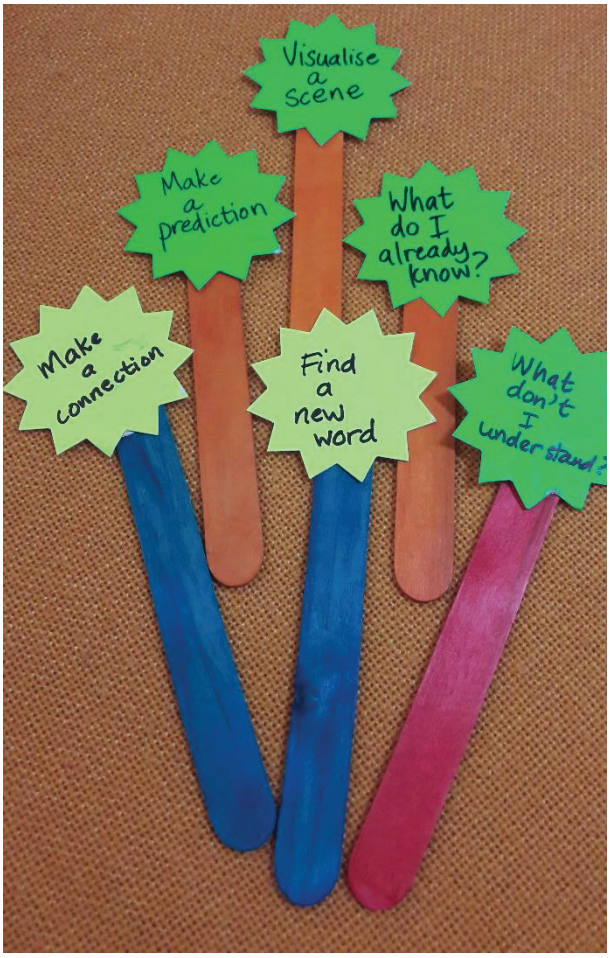
TERM	**BACKGROUND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE**
What is it?	Background knowledge refers to the everyday, common knowledge that children already have when they come to school. It is important for teachers to tap into and use the knowledge that children bring with them to school and build on it. Learners build up their knowledge continually. Schooling takes children beyond their everyday knowledge and helps them acquire more formal knowledge related to different content subjects, and increases their knowledge about the world, people, feelings, human intentions and events in general. The more children read, the more their background knowledge grows as books provide information about the world and people beyond the child's own world.
Why is it important?	The 21st century in which we live is referred to as a knowledge economy. It is thus important to have extensive general knowledge in the modern world. Most of the information in the world is stored and transmitted through the written word, so people who can read well potentially have access to lots of different sources of knowledge. Background knowledge influences reading comprehension and is also related to academic performance at school. The more children know about the world, people, places and things, the more their vocabularies grow and the better they do at school. The words learners know are indicative of their knowledge base – it is difficult to learn about new concepts and ideas without having the right words to talk about them. Even if learners do understand some concepts, not knowing

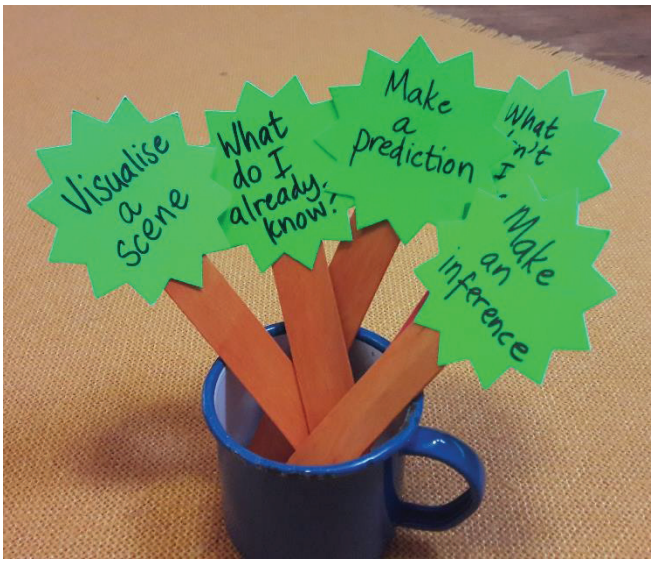
	the words for them can be limiting, and not having the language to communicate about concepts is a disadvantage.
When do I teach it?	Though children come to school with some general knowledge, it is important for teachers to continue building up this general knowledge. There are no limits to knowledge development. Teachers should create stimulating and interesting classroom environments from Grade R and continue throughout the Foundation Phase. Teachers should stimulate their learners' curiosity for new knowledge and build it up every day and every week of the year. Any topic that is dealt with in the classroom (e.g. our bodies, animals, fractions, the foods we eat, tolerance, etc.) provides an opportunity for expanding learners' knowledge of the world.
How do I teach it?	• Encourage the learners to develop a new hobby or interest each term. They must find a topic that interests them and find out as much as they can during the term about that topic, e.g. the solar system, soccer (or any kind of sport), cooking, cars (or any kind of transport), trains, lions (or any kind of animal), celebrities (movie, music or sports stars), dance, South Africa (or any other country), fashion, etc. • If your school has a library, make sure that your class gets to visit the library at least once a week so that learners can be encouraged to read books about topics that interest them. • Read many storybooks and information books with them. It is through books that children learn a lot about the world and about people. The new words that children learn through books encourage conceptual growth. • Use themes to build up vocabulary on things that are associated with a particular topic, e.g. healthy foods, the weather, transport, natural disasters, etc. Theme-based learning helps children form or understand new concepts and learn new words associated with those concepts. For example, if children learn about volcanoes, then they will also learn words associated with this topic (English/isiXhosa), such as *eruption/ugqabhuko-dubulo, molten rock, volcanic ash/uthuthu lwentaba-mlilo, gases/igesi, lava, earthquakes/inyikima,* etc. Learning words associated with a subject/theme helps learners broaden and deepen their knowledge. • Use rich teacher talk in your classroom – discuss topics with your learners, ask them open-ended questions when you read stories or information books that will encourage them to engage with the text and the topic. *What would you have done in this situation? / What else could the main character have done? / Has something like this ever happened to you? / Do you agree with the author's view? / Tell me what you think.* • Inspire in your learners a thirst for new knowledge through reading.

How to assess?	• Informally assess the learners' ability to activate their own background knowledge before and during reading by observing them, asking questions, and prompting and encouraging them to tap into their knowledge. • Informally assess learners' ability to remember new things that they found out after reading on a certain topic by asking them questions about it.
Resources	• A print-rich classroom that is stimulating and interesting, and fosters an enjoyment of learning. • A reading corner with different books (storybooks and information books) in the HL and the FAL that take learners beyond their known world. • A theme table that reflects the current theme with objects on the table related to the theme, bilingual labels for the objects, books relating to the theme, and relevant pictures.
How to identify cracks?	• Identify learners who are disengaged and do not show much interest in reading. Give them opportunities to discuss their interests and develop new interests. Having special interests or hobbies (e.g. sport, dancing, animals, space, collecting things, etc.) helps learners build knowledge about the world. • If there are learners in your class who are not performing well, find out what interests them or what their hobbies are and encourage them to use books and reading as a way to expand their interests or hobbies.
Reminder	Learning should be stimulating and interesting, so make sure that your classrooms are safe and interesting places in which learners can spend the school day. A lot of learning happens through fun, so classrooms should be happy learning places that stimulate learners' natural curiosity.

TERM	**COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES**
What is it?	Comprehension strategies are plans that readers consciously apply while reading in order to help better understand the text. The different components associated with reading comprehension can be developed through strategy instruction. Teaching comprehension strategies especially helps learners to develop their thinking skills during reading. See Figure 3
Why are they important?	Research has shown that if teachers explicitly explain, model and practise these strategies in class on a regular basis, then children learn how to read texts more attentively and understand them more deeply. This, in turn, can increase children's enjoyment of texts and make them want to read more readily.

	As previously described, there are many comprehension strategies that teachers can expose children to. The following sections will focus on and describe six common and useful comprehension strategies: **STRATEGY 1: Activating background knowledge** **STRATEGY 2: Making predictions** **STRATEGY 3: Making inferences/connections** **STRATEGY 4: Visualising** **STRATEGY 5: Identifying the main elements in a story** **STRATEGY 6: Monitoring comprehension and using fix-up strategies**
When do I teach them?	Comprehension strategies should be taught and modelled throughout the Foundation Phase, beginning in Grade R. You can start by using these strategies when you read stories aloud to learners, and then show them how to apply the strategies themselves when they can read texts on their own. By the time they reach Grade 3, learners should already be familiar with and be able to apply common comprehension strategies. Comprehension strategies should become a 'habit of mind' – something that learners do automatically, without realising that they are using strategies. The strategies can be applied during the ***Before reading***, ***During reading*** or ***After reading*** stages in any of the reading methodologies (e.g. Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, etc.).
How do I teach them?	Teach these strategies through what is called '**the gradual release model**'. This involves four basic steps: 1) The teacher gives the name of the strategy and **explains** what the strategy is. 2) The teacher **models** the strategy so that the learners can see how to apply it. 3) The teacher and learners **do the strategy together** while reading, with the teacher explaining how to apply it. Learners can practise it during Group Guided Reading and with each other during Paired Reading. 4) The learners **do the strategy on their own** with opportunities to practise using the strategy independently. The gradual release model is captured in the saying "*I do, we do together, you do on your own*". Teaching comprehension strategies is a very empowering tool to use in the classroom. It should become a 'habit of mind' for both teachers and learners and can be used every day in any lesson, during Teacher Read-Alouds, Shared Reading, Shared Writing, Group Guided Reading, Paired Reading and Independent Reading – and also during Mathematics and Life Skills lessons. It is best to teach one strategy at a time and use it all week so that the learners become familiar with it. Introduce the next strategy after that, but make sure that

	you *integrate* the use of the previous strategy incrementally into your daily literacy teaching, so that learners can see that all strategies can be used when they read. The more opportunities they are given to practise applying these strategies while they read, the better their chances of becoming strategic readers. Help learners who struggle to use these strategies and give them practise in using them, especially during Group Guided Reading.
How to assess?	The teacher can see informally *whether* the learners use these strategies and *how well* they use them during Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading. Have learners explain their thinking when they answer comprehension questions during Shared Reading or Group Guided Reading, as this reveals how they use reading strategies.
Resources	• Create a colourful poster with a list of the strategies and provide a brief explanation of each one. The teacher and the learners can refer to the strategy poster during Teacher Read-Alouds, Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, and Paired Reading. • During Shared Reading, let the learners focus on using a strategy and discuss it in small groups, so that learners can learn from one another. • Collect some ice cream sticks (or tongue depressors). Stick, or neatly write, a strategy label (e.g. making predictions / visualising) on each ice cream stick. Put all the strategy sticks into an empty container (like an old mug or cup, or a washed yoghurt cup). 

	During Shared Reading or Group Guided Reading pass the container around and ask each learner to close their eyes and take a strategy stick. While they read the story during Group Guided Reading, ask each learner to apply the strategy that they have where relevant, e.g. the learner who has the '*Make a prediction*' stick can make a prediction about what will happen next, before everyone turns the page to continue reading. 
How to identify cracks?	• Learner struggles to apply a strategy (e.g. make a prediction, monitor comprehension, etc.) • Learner struggles to answer questions about the text. Such learners need help in engaging more actively with the text; encourage them to apply comprehension strategies as these help them interact more deeply with the text.
Reminder	Comprehension strategies are devices that we apply *before, during* and *after* reading, they are not necessarily aspects that teachers need to assess formally in reading. However, it is important for teachers to help learners use them, especially learners who struggle with reading comprehension. Make it a 'habit of mind' to use all the strategies during ***Before reading, During reading*** or ***After reading*** in any of the reading methodologies.

COMPREHENSION STRATEGY 1: ACTIVATING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	
What is it?	Background knowledge (also known as prior knowledge, i.e. 'before' knowledge) refers to what children already know about a topic. To activate something means to turn on something or make something active. Thus, to activate background knowledge means to get the learners thinking about what they already know about something before they start reading or learning about it. Activating background knowledge can be done when teaching Languages, Mathematics, or Life Skills.
Why is it important?	Children learn best when they move from the known to the new/unknown, as the known forms a foundation on which new knowledge is built. Helping learners activate their background knowledge helps them build on what they already know. Activating their background knowledge also helps children engage with the text and get involved with the story from the beginning. Good readers always activate their prior knowledge when they read.
When do I teach it?	Comprehension strategies such as *activating background knowledge* should be taught and modelled throughout the Foundation Phase. Children should be familiar with and be able to apply comprehension strategies throughout the Foundation Phase. You can activate background knowledge during Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Teacher Read-Alouds, especially when introducing a story/text (**Before reading)**, and also in the middle of the story/text (**During reading**). Also encourage learners to use it during Paired Reading and Independent Reading.
How do I teach it?	This comprehension strategy can be applied especially during **Before reading** and **During reading.** Before reading a story with the learners, the teacher should always first connect the title and the topic to what the learners may already know about it. When you model it, press your finger to your head, as if you are pressing a memory button and say aloud: *Now, what do I already know about this? Mmm, let me think…*  You can activate background knowledge from words in the text or from the visuals. For example, if you are reading the *Vula Bula* book entitled *Gcinela ingomso* (Saving for tomorrow), you can do the following: • **Text**: Read the title. Ask: *What kind of things do we save for tomorrow?* (e.g. food, money) • **Words**: Ask: *Can you think of a word that is similar in a general way to 'tomorrow'?* (e.g. *the future*)

	• **Visuals**: Ask: *Do you know the names of the animals in the picture?* (ant, grasshopper). *What do you know about ants / grasshoppers?* When you ask the learners to activate their background knowledge, encourage them to press the 'memory button' on the heads and say: *Mmm, let me think …* Learners enjoy this and it makes the strategy fun to apply! Sometimes there might be a topic about which we know very little before we start reading. To reassure learners that this can be a normal situation, the teacher can say something like: *Mmm, now this is something about which I don't know very much. I wonder what new things we can learn together …* This shows learners that reading is a way of learning new things about our world.
How to assess?	Informally assess learners' ability, during **Before reading**, to answer questions related to the title and cover of a storybook. If other texts are used (e.g. without a cover page), ask questions about the title of the story, the heading used in the text or the visuals.
Resources	Create a colourful poster in which you list the strategies and provide a brief explanation of each one. Refer to this poster when you teach the strategy. You can use an icon like this when you teach the strategy. When we activate prior or background knowledge, it's as if we are pressing a button for our brains to turn on and to use the knowledge that is already in our brains. 
How to identify cracks?	Some learners may be shy and/or may not understand what they are expected to do. If learners find it difficult to apply this strategy, ask them questions that will help them talk about the subject.
Reminder	Comprehension strategies are intended to help learners engage with the text and to read it more deeply. Make strategy learning a fun activity so that learners will want to practise it and apply it when they read independently. This increases their feelings of self-efficacy and improves positive Reader Response.

COMPREHENSION STRATEGY 2: MAKING PREDICTIONS	
What is it?	To predict means to forecast or make an informed guess about what is going to happen next in a story or a text. An informed guess is not a wild guess; it is based on **knowledge in our head** and from **clues in the text**, thus, we have a reason on which to base our prediction.
Why is it important?	We unconsciously make predictions in our everyday lives – it is part of our set of thinking tools and it helps us make sense of our world, e.g. dark clouds are building up in the sky – we think (i.e. predict) that it might rain. It is thus helpful to make

	predictions while reading to help us make sense of the texts we read. Making predictions focuses the learners' attention on what they are going to read. This in turn engages them more deeply with the text. Learners become interested in seeing whether their predictions will be borne out in the story.
When do I teach it?	Comprehension strategies such as *making predictions* should be taught and modelled throughout the Foundation Phase. Children should be familiar with and be able to apply comprehension strategies throughout the Foundation Phase. Encourage predicting during Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Teacher Read-Alouds, especially when introducing a story/text (**Before reading)**, and also later in the story/text (**During reading**). Also encourage learners to use it during Paired Reading and Independent Reading.
How do I teach it?	This comprehension strategy can be applied **Before reading** and **During reading.** You can also check how accurate predictions were **after reading** a text. Before you start reading a story/text with the learners, always first discuss the title of the story/text and the pictures. Use these as a basis for making predictions: *Can we predict anything about the book from the title and the pictures? / What do you think is going to happen next? / How do you think the story might end?* **After reading** you can ask the learners to look back and think which of their predictions were confirmed by the events in the story or not. Sometimes writers introduce an unexpected twist in their stories which takes us by surprise! It is important to model prediction for the learners so that they can see how it works. Make sure the learners understand that their predictions don't have to be 'right'. There is always some uncertainty in making a prediction. To illustrate, let's use the same story as above: **Visual:** Look carefully at the cover of *Gcinela ingomso* again. • We see an ant and a grasshopper. Ask: *What is the grasshopper doing?* (The grasshopper is playing a guitar, singing and dancing.) *Now look at the ant – what is he doing?* (The ant is collecting things and working). • Now make a prediction: *The ant is serious and working, and the grasshopper is singing and making music. I predict that in this story the grasshopper is going to teach the ant how to play the guitar so that he can also sing and make music!* • Let's read on and see what happens in the story! • As you read the story, you and the learners will find out that the prediction was incorrect. • You can say something like: *Oh! It seems as if my prediction was wrong! The grasshopper is lazy. He is lying around or playing, and watching the ant working hard to collect food. The bird and the mole are impressed with the ant for working so hard to store food for a time when there won't be much food.*

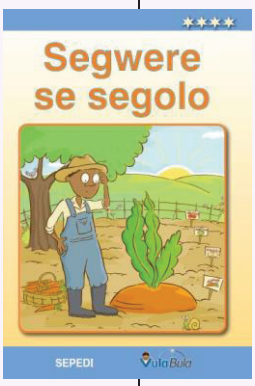
	• It's important to show learners that as readers we may make wrong predictions, and it's OK if this happens. Often our predictions change as we get new information, or we revise our original idea about something. This is normal and it's what good readers do all the time! • Based on what has been read so far, you can now change your prediction: *I have a new prediction: This is a hard-working little ant. My prediction now is that it is the ant who will maybe teach the lazy grasshopper a lesson about working hard.* As can be seen from the above example, the teacher models to the learners how to make predictions and how to check if they need to change their predictions while they read the story. By making predictions the reader invests more attention and energy in reading the text, and reads it more carefully, all of which can lead to deeper comprehension.
How to assess?	Assess learners' ability to make predictions by having them respond to questions such as: *What do you think this story is about? What will happen next? How do you think this story will end*? Their answers must show that they are not making wild guesses but that they are using their own knowledge together with the clues in the text to think about the story and justify their answers, e.g. *What do you think is going to happen next, Sipho? Why do you say so?*
Resources	Create a colourful poster in which you list the strategies and provide a brief explanation of each one. Refer to this poster when you teach the strategy. Because predictions look 'forward' into a story, you can make a flashcard with **Making predictions** printed on it and use a pointing icon like this when you teach the strategy. You are free to use your own icon for this strategy. Hold this flashcard up when you ask the learners to apply the strategy during reading. 
How to identify cracks?	Some learners may be shy and/or may not understand what they are expected to do. If learners find it difficult to apply this strategy, ask them questions that will help them talk about the subject.
Reminder	Teaching learners to make predictions is not about being right or wrong; it's about using clues in the text (title, words, pictures) together with our background knowledge to look forward into a text and make an informed guess about what *might* happen. This engages the learners' attention and helps them focus on the text while they read. We check the accuracy of our predictions *while* we read, and also *at the end*, and think about how we revised our predictions as we went along.

COMPREHENSION STRATEGY 3: MAKING INFERENCES / SEEING CONNECTIONS	
What is it?	To infer is to use information from the text to draw a conclusion about something that is not explicitly stated in the text. An **inference is a *connection* we make between two or more things**. A lot of information in texts is implied; it would make texts too long and boring if writers explained **all** the details. This means that readers need to 'read between the lines' and make links or connections between bits of information in the text, based on previous or background knowledge.
Why is it important?	• Like predictions, we unconsciously make connections between things in our everyday lives. It is part of our set of thinking tools and it helps us make sense of our world, e.g. we see lots of smoke coming out of a house – we think the house may be on fire and the people inside might be in danger (i.e. we make a connection between smoke and the dangers of fire). Making inferences or seeing connections is one of the most important thinking skills that we use while reading. • Showing learners how to connect the meanings in sentences and to use their background knowledge (knowledge about vocabulary, language, the world etc.) to make connections while they read helps them understand the text better. • Making these connections deepens comprehension and helps learners understand and respond to higher order questions. • Making connections is an empowering strategy that enables readers to read between the lines and read for deeper meaning. Learners enjoy reading more when they are able to make connections while they are reading, and this increases their Reader Response.
When do I teach it?	Comprehension strategies such as *making inferences or seeing connections* should be taught and modelled throughout the Foundation Phase. Children should be familiar with and be able to apply comprehension strategies throughout the Foundation Phase. This comprehension strategy can be applied at any time: **Before reading**, **During reading** and **After reading**. Also encourage learners to use it during Paired Reading and Individual Reading.
How do I teach it?	• Tell the learners about the strategy that you are going to teach them. Show them the flashcard that you have made for this strategy. • Explain what it means (making inferences/connections = to link or connect information in the story). When we make connections, we fill in the missing pieces. We can ask ourselves: *What is the writer NOT telling me? The writer wants me to fill in some information here. Now, what connection can I make?* For example: **The bag of mealies was very heavy. "Help me!" Sipho shouted.**

	We can ask ourselves: *Why did Sipho shout for help? What is the writer NOT telling me that I must add myself?* From our prior knowledge of the world we know that people ask for help if they can't manage to do something on their own. The writer doesn't tell us in words that Sipho can't carry the bag of mealies on his own, but between the first and second sentence we can make this connection. • Explain to the learners that they must use words or pictures in the text as well as their prior knowledge to see how they can connect information in the text, between what the writer says and what the writer leaves out. Show them how you make connections while you are reading, using clues in the text to make connections with knowledge in your head or using different clues in the text to make connections with another piece of text or a picture on the page. • We can make small connections (between nearby words) or larger connections (across sentences or paragraphs).
How to assess it?	Assess learners' ability to make inferences by asking questions that will lead them to seeing a link between bits of information in the text. You can use Group Guided Reading for this strategy as you have fewer learners in the group and you can observe them carefully while you read and constantly encourage them to make links. Asking them *Why* questions is especially useful for getting them to read at a deeper level.
Resources	Create a colourful poster in which you list the strategies and provide a brief explanation of each one. Refer to this poster when you teach the strategy. Because making inferences is about making connections and filling in the missing bits, you can make a flashcard with **Making inferences** printed on it and use a jigsaw puzzle picture like this when you teach the strategy. You are free to use your own icon for this strategy. Hold this flashcard up when you ask them to apply the strategy during reading. 
How to identify cracks?	All children make connections in their daily lives. However, they sometimes find it difficult to make connections when they read, and sometimes they are not even aware that they must 'fill in a gap'.
Reminder	Helping learners make inferences is one of the most important and powerful comprehension strategies that teachers can teach to their learners. This strategy can help learners become strategic readers: while reading, they engage with the text and start paying attention to clues in the text (words, pictures, connections between sentences) that aid meaning making. All readers (weak, average and good) experience growth when they learn to make connections while reading.

COMPREHENSION STRATEGY 4: VISUALISING	
What is it?	The English word *visualise* comes from *vision* which relates to seeing, so to ***visualise*** means to see something in our mind, or to make a mental picture in our head. We use words or picture clues in the text, knowledge in our heads and our thinking skills to form a picture in our mind of what we're reading about. We can use all our senses to make this picture. Our five senses are sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing.
Why is it important?	Visualisation activates our senses, helps us engage with something and also helps us remember something better. Good readers always visualise what the writer is writing about when they read. They activate their senses, and this helps them to connect with what they read. Visualising also helps to deepen understanding, and it helps learners remember what they read. One can better understand a text when one can make sense of it and construct a visual representation. By showing learners how to visualise a scene and create a mental picture, the teacher helps make the story come alive, and this helps the learners connect with the text and also shows learners that reading can be fun and enjoyable. Visualising something in a text also helps readers remember aspects of a story or text better.
When do I teach it?	Comprehension strategies such as *visualisation* should be taught and modelled throughout the Foundation Phase. Children should be familiar with and be able to apply comprehension strategies throughout the Foundation Phase. This comprehension strategy can be applied at any time during reading: **Before reading**, **During reading** and **After reading**. Also encourage learners to use it during Paired Reading and Individual Reading.
How do I teach it?	• Tell your learners about the strategy that you are going to teach them. Show them the flashcard that you have made for this strategy. • Explain what it means (creating a picture in our minds of what we read about). Explain to your learners that they can use any of their senses to create this mental picture. • When you model this strategy for them, select something from a story that is easy and fun to visualise. Use your voice and gestures to make it interesting and fun. • For example, if you are reading the *Vula Bula* story called *Jika* with the learners, show them the front cover with the picture of the merry-go-round on it. First activate their background knowledge by asking who has been on a merry-go-round and how it made them feel.

	• Now ask the learners to shut their eyes, and imagine that they are about to step onto a merry-go-round … someone is going to push it to make it go faster and faster. You can ask questions to help them visualise the scene: *Can you feel the wind on your face? What are you holding onto? What sounds are you hearing? What happens when it goes faster and faster? Are you enjoying it or are you feeling a bit scared? What makes you feel scared? Can you jump off or will you fall? etc.* Learners do not all need to answer. They can imagine the answer in their minds.  • Helping learners to visualise a scene can make them want to read more to find out about happens next. • Visualisation also helps readers remember things better. For example, with reference to the example above, learners can associate different kinds of feelings (excitement, happiness, anxiety, fear, feeling dizzy, feeling a sense of adventure, etc.) with going on a merry-go-round, and this will help them increase their vocabulary knowledge too.
How to assess?	You can informally assess learners' ability to visualise during Shared reading or Group Guided Reading by asking them to close their eyes and explain what they see in their mind when they think about a certain aspect of the story/text.
Resources	Create a colourful poster in which you list the strategies and provide a brief explanation of each one. Refer to this poster when you teach this visualisation strategy. This icon shows the mind about to create a mental picture. You can make a flashcard with **Visualising** printed on it and use an icon like this when you teach the strategy. You are free to use your own icon for this strategy. Hold up this flashcard when you ask learners to apply the strategy during reading. 
How to identify cracks?	Learners who are disengaged and do not share their visualisations usually find reading difficult, and may also be struggling with comprehension.
Reminder	There are no right or wrong ways to visualise. The aim is to stimulate the learners' imagination and engage them in the story.

COMPREHENSION STRATEGY 5: IDENTIFYING STORY ELEMENTS	
What is it	Most stories (also called narratives) are organised around a set of story elements referred to as the story structure. This comprises the following elements: 1) **setting** 2) **characters** 3) **problem** (the event or thing that 'gets the story going') 4) ways to solve the problem (called the **resolution** or the **solution**), and 5) the **theme** (also called '**the big idea**') These five elements contain the main points in a story.
Why is it important?	Knowing about story structure provides a framework that helps learners identify key information in a story that is relevant for understanding it. Explicit instruction of story structure helps learners to recall what happened in a story, sequence the events more easily, and summarise the story easily. It helps all readers improve their understanding. Teaching learners the main story elements and getting them to identify these elements whenever you read a story with them helps them to follow and understand the main concepts in a text.
When do I teach it?	Teaching learners to identify story elements is a strategy that can be taught and modelled throughout Foundation Phase, right from the beginning of Grade R. By the time they reach Grade 3, children should already be familiar with and be able to apply this comprehension strategy. The story structure strategy can be explained and modelled during Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading. Learners can practise identifying story structure elements during Paired Reading while the teacher is busy with Group Guided Reading. Learners can also do so on their own when they do Independent Reading.
How do I teach it?	You can make a **story 'glove'** out of cloth or cardboard to teach the main elements of a story (see next page). Each of the five fingers of the glove represents one of the story elements.  • Tell your learners about the strategy that you are going to teach them. Show them the story glove that you have made for this strategy. • Select a story that will illustrate the story elements nicely, e.g. *Segwere se segolo (The enormous carrot)* in the *Vula Bula* series. First read the story aloud to your learners in Shared Reading. • After reading the story, explain to the learners that you are going to teach them a useful strategy for understanding stories better, called **story elements** or **story structure**, using the story glove.

- Explain that identifying the main story elements or structure will help the learners remember the important ideas in a story and this will also help them summarise or retell the story well.
- Use the story glove to demonstrate how the story elements work:

1. **Setting:** Where and when does the story take place? On a farm / in a city / long ago? Sometimes 'when' is not clearly stated and all we are told is "once upon a time". We can usually tell the 'where' from the pictures and events in the story, e.g. in a jungle, in a village, by the sea, etc.
2. **Characters:** Who are the main characters? They can be people or, in children's stories, they can also be animals or even the Sun and the Wind in a story like *Vula Bula*'s *Moya le Letŝatŝi*.
3. **Problem:** What is the problem in the story? For example, the main character has to do something and someone obstructs him/her from doing it.
4. **Resolution:** The different events that happen form the heart of the story and represent the ways to solve the problem. For example, in *Segwere se segolo* the farmer cannot pull up the large carrot on his own (the problem), so he calls his wife, and when he and his wife cannot pull it up together, they call their son, and so on, until they have enough force to pull the carrot out (resolution).
5. **The big idea** or **theme:** What is the 'big idea' that the writer wants to share with the reader through this story? What can the reader learn from the story? What is its theme? There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer here, but the children must learn to use evidence from the story to support their answer. For example, one could say that the big idea in *Segwere se segolo* is that by working together, people can better overcome their difficulties than by trying to do something on their own.

- These elements contain the '**main points**' in a story. At the bottom of the glove you can add another element "**My favourite part**", where the learner says what they liked about the story to encourage reading for enjoyment.

	Every time the teacher reads a story collaboratively with the learners, s/he should help the learners identify the story elements together, then provide opportunities so they can do it independently, on their own, when they read. • The story glove helps the learners remember the main points of a story; also using the glove to identify the main elements of a story also becomes a fun activity for them. • It also teaches learners to critically evaluate a story and identify the 'big idea'. For example, different people may have different views of *Segwere se segolo* (the mouse certainly has his own interpretation, if you look closely at the pictures!). An alternative or additional big idea in this story could be: We must not think that small does not matter; we must not underestimate the power of small things. Sometimes small things that don't look important can make a difference in times of need. • The fifth element, the 'big idea', is the part that teachers unfortunately often ignore after reading a story, yet this is very important as it helps children see beyond the surface, literal events in a story. The big idea is what drives the author to want to share the story with us. Being able to talk about the big idea in a story helps learners develop critical thinking skills. Because a story may have different 'big ideas', and because not everyone will necessarily see the same 'big idea' in a story, learners need to be able to explain and justify their interpretation of the 'big idea', and listen with respect and tolerance to others who may have a different 'big idea'.
How to assess?	Assess the learners' ability to identify story elements by asking them to do the following: • retell the story (setting, characters, problem, sequence of events, main idea) • describe the characters • sequence the events of the story in the right order • identify the problem that 'gets the story going' • explain how the problem is resolved in the end • explain what they think the 'big idea' of the story is.
Resources	Create a colourful poster in which you list the strategies and provide a brief explanation of each one. Refer to this poster when you teach this strategy. • Make a story glove, using the five fingers to illustrate each element of the story, as shown in the picture above. • You can also make a flashcard with **Story elements** printed on it and use a glove or hand icon like this when you teach the strategy. • Hold the story glove or the flashcard up when you ask them to apply the strategy during reading. 

	• You can also make smaller, colourful cardboard story gloves. When learners get into pairs to read a story together in Paired Reading, they can use the glove to help them identify the story elements when they read. 
How to identify cracks?	Learner has problems recalling the main events in a story. Learner has problems identifying the main elements in a story. Weak readers have difficulty seeing what is important and what is less important. A weaker reader will often select a small, unimportant piece of information in the text in response to a comprehension question.
Reminder	This strategy is applicable to stories/narratives. It is not applicable to information texts.

COMPREHENSION STRATEGY 6: MONITORING COMPREHENSION AND USING FIX-UP STRATEGIES	
What is it?	This refers to being aware of what is happening during reading, mentally checking for understanding and applying a reading strategy, if necessary, to better understand a text when one realises that the text (or a part of the text) does not make sense or is not well understand. Issues that may be causing the comprehension problem could be a word not understood, a sentence that is difficult to follow, or information in a paragraph that does not make sense. Research has found that good readers are immediately aware when they don't understand something that they're reading, and then they stop and re-read to try and figure out what is causing the comprehension problem. In contrast, weak readers will continue reading even if they don't understand the text, and they seldom re-read a section of text to try and solve the comprehension problem.
Why is it important?	Reading is all about comprehension. It is pointless reading without understanding, so readers must learn to become aware *when* and *why* comprehension becomes a problem, and what to do about it when it happens. Learners must be able to self-assess and understand how to apply reading strategies when necessary by asking themselves: *At what point don't I understand and what is causing the problem?*

	Learners must also learn how to 'fix' a comprehension problem, e.g. by re-reading or by making connections they might have missed the first time around. Monitoring comprehension helps learners better understand a story/text as a whole. This in turn helps them in answering the questions on the story/ text. Also, learners are more likely to enjoy what they are reading if they understand the text properly.
When do I teach it?	Comprehension strategies should be taught and modelled throughout the Foundation Phase. Children should be familiar with and be able to apply comprehension strategies throughout the Foundation Phase. It is best to teach this strategy after learners have been taught all the other strategies. They can then use all the strategies to help them monitor their comprehension and apply the strategies if they need to repair the comprehension problems. • Teachers can demonstrate this at any time during reading: **Before reading**, **During reading** and **After reading**. • It can be used in Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading. It is especially important for teachers to make sure that learners apply this strategy when they work together in Group Guided Reading as the teacher can then more easily identify readers who struggle to monitor their comprehension. • The teacher and the learners need to monitor comprehension throughout reading. • The teacher must also encourage the learners to use this strategy when they do Paired Reading and Independent Reading.
How do I teach it?	This is an extremely important strategy that will empower all readers. It involves two steps: (i) to pay attention to comprehension, and (ii) to fix-up or repair comprehension when it breaks down. Tell your learners about the strategy that you are going to teach them. Show them the flashcard that you have made for this strategy. You can use this icon to remind your learners to monitor comprehension.  Explain what it involves: to MONITOR means to check if I understand; if comprehension breaks down, then I STOP to repair or fix up the problem. Some learners are shy to admit that they have a comprehension problem or think that they will be regarded as being stupid if they admit that there is something that they don't understand. This is not true. Comprehension problems are common, and everyone experiences comprehension problems at some point while reading. It is important for teachers to reassure their learners that monitoring comprehension

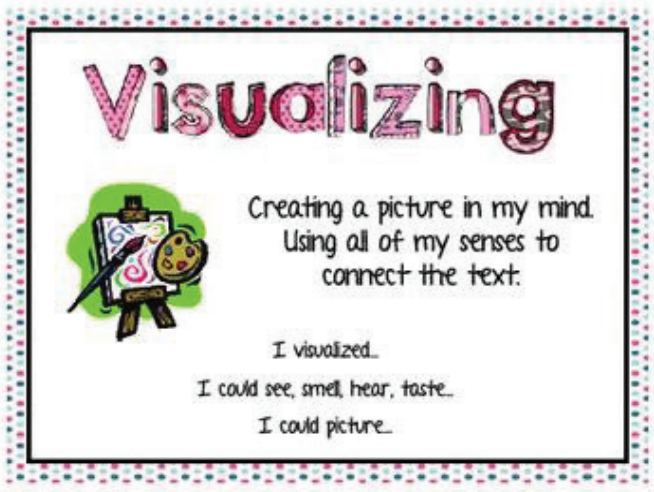
	problems is what **smart** readers do and that everyone must therefore behave like a smart reader while reading! Learners read to learn and gain information about the world, so it is essential to be equipped with a variety of skills to use if they do not understand. Some common fix-up strategies include the following: • re-reading the section of text that is not understood • identifying the part that is problematic (is it a word/phrase/sentence/ paragraph?) • going to the end of the sentence/paragraph to see if the meaning becomes clearer • asking the teacher to explain the meaning of an unknown word or else looking up the meaning of an unknown word in the dictionary (and writing it into the word book). Teach the learners that we often find tricky parts in a text that are difficult to understand, but that it is clever to do something about the problem rather than to go on reading without fixing-up the problem.
How to assess?	• Informally assess the learners' ability to identify **when** they have a problem understanding the text (do they put up their hands to ask a question about the text, or to ask the meaning of a word they don't understand?) • Informally assess the learners' ability to identify **what they think is causing the problem** (is there a word whose meaning they don't know? Is there a tricky sentence they don't understand? Did their attention wander while they were reading and should they re-read and pay attention?) • Informally assess the learners' comprehension of the text by asking questions **During reading** and **After reading.** If they cannot answer the questions, ask them to re-read sections of the text and explain what is causing a problem in their comprehension.
Resources	Create a colourful poster in which you list the strategies and provide a brief explanation of each one. Refer to this poster when you teach this strategy. Make a flashcard for this strategy and write **Monitoring and fixing-up** on it. You can use an icon like the example provided above when you teach the strategy.
How to identify cracks?	Learners who have problems answering comprehension questions are often learners who have not been taught how to monitor their understanding while reading. Many learners pretend to be reading because they are too shy or embarrassed to show that they don't understand what they read.
Reminder	Make your classroom a safe environment where learners can feel free to put up their hands and say *Teacher, I don't understand this part/this word* or *Please help*

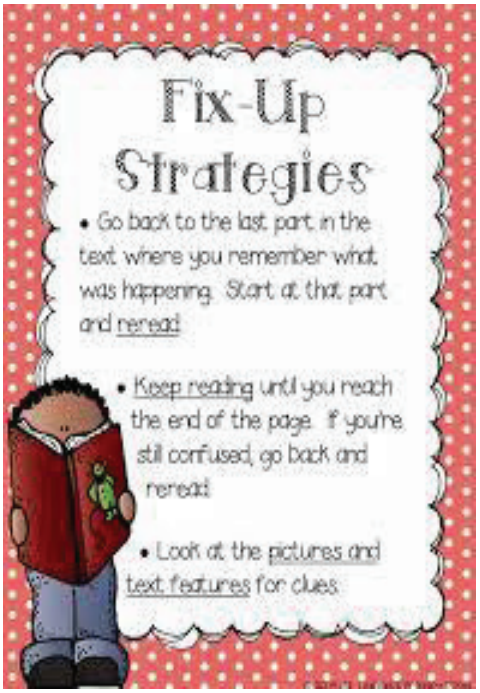
	me work this out. Praise them for putting up their hands as it shows that they are monitoring their comprehension.

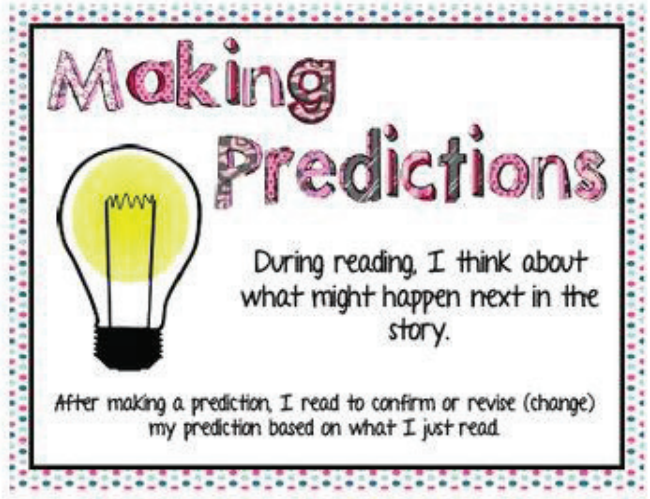
Table 3: A Summary of Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension

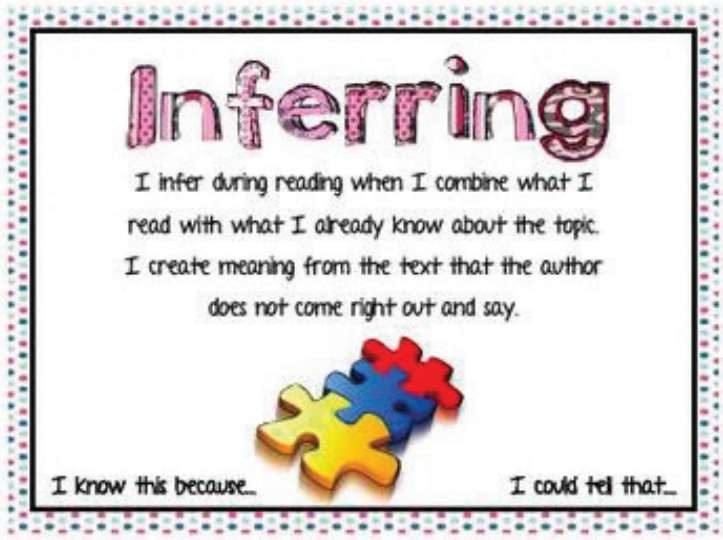
It is useful to make the **Strategy poster for reading comprehension** to display in your classroom. You can use icons with each strategy so that learners can identify the icon with the appropriate strategy. A summary of the main points associated with each strategy is provided below.	
1. Activating prior knowledge	Connecting the topic and the text to what you already know. *What do I already know about this topic?*
2. Making predictions	Making an informed guess about what the text is about or what will happen next, based on knowledge in your head and from clues in the text. *What is this text going to be about? What do I think will happen next?*
3. Making inferences	Using clues in the text to see links and make connections between information in the text and what is implied or suggested. *What is the author not telling me? What connection must I make myself?*
4. Visualising / making a picture in my head	Creating a picture in your head about something that is described in the text, using your senses. *If I close my eyes, what picture comes to my mind when I read this?*
5. Identifying main ideas in a story	Identifying the main elements of a text in terms of setting, characters, main problem, resolution to the problem (the different events that helped solve the main problem), and 'the big idea' conveyed. *I can use my fingers to identify the five story elements that occur in this story.*
6. Monitoring and using fix-up strategies	Being aware while reading as to whether you have understood what you are reading. If comprehension was not achieved, use a fix-up strategy to deal with the problem. **Where** *do I have a problem understanding this text, and* ***how*** *can I fix it?* • I can re-read the section of text that is not understood • I can identify the part that is problematic (is it a word/phrase/ sentence/paragraph?) • I can read to the end of the sentence/paragraph to see if the meaning becomes clearer • I can look up the meaning of an unknown word in the dictionary or ask the teacher.
Teachers can find many ideas for making strategy posters if they Google: *comprehension strategy posters*. Some sites also have posters that can be downloaded for free, as shown in the examples	

below. It must just be ensured that the strategy poster in the classroom is in the learners' home language.









These free posters were downloaded from www.teachjunkie.com
and https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/PreK-12

Alternatively, you can arrange the strategies into a strategy wheel. Put the strategy wheel in front of the class and give learners turns to come to the front to spin the wheel and see on which slot the arrow falls. The learner must then apply the strategy to which the arrow has turned. Their ability to apply the strategy appropriately to the text that you are reading with the class will enable you to assess their application of comprehension strategies during reading.

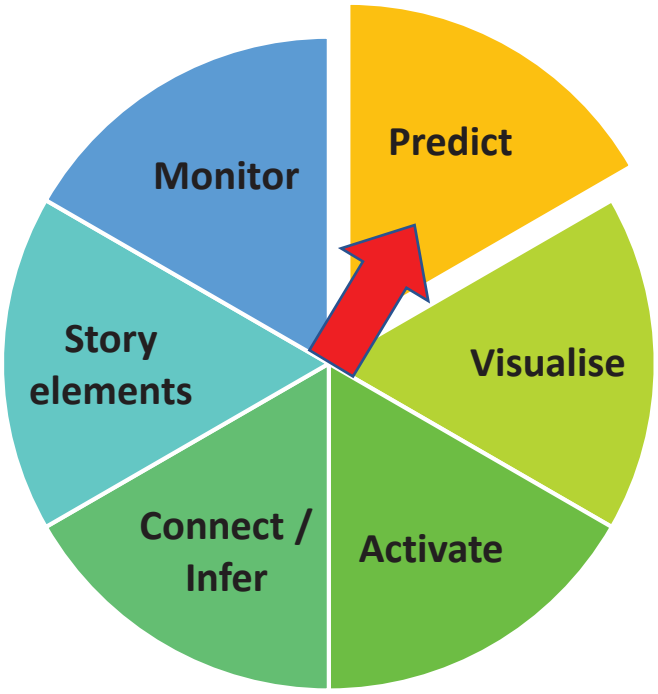


Figure 6: *Reading comprehension strategy wheel*

2.4 Reader response

As explained earlier, the **reader response** component relates to learners' feelings, attitudes, interests and motivation to read, often referred to as **affective factors**. These factors also relate to adult role models' socio-cultural practices with stories, reading and writing that serve as external motivators for children to become readers and writers. Affective factors attempt to explain why good readers like to read and what we can learn from this to help those who do not. People are likely to repeat an experience they feel positive about, and with which they identify and to avoid one which they have a negative attitude towards based on negative experiences. This is important because good readers like to read; the more they read, the more new knowledge, words and sentence structures they learn; the more they understand what they read; and the more they want to read. Enjoying reading, reading for pleasure and being motivated to read as well as acting out stories, retelling stories, writing to the author or character, drawing and analysing the author's point of view, are all important elements of reader response. It is important for teachers to nurture these aspects in their learners with enthusiasm and through positive role modelling. Positive responses to reading and books make learners want to read more, whereas learners will have a negative response to reading if they find it difficult, or unrelated to their lives and interests.

Through reading we can enjoy ourselves and be entertained, and we can gain access to information and learn new things. Reading broadens our horizons and can awaken possibilities in us; it can teach us about new places, people and things. These are positive responses to reading. The **reader response factor** is an aspect of reading that is often neglected. Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to it as **children's responses to reading are strongly linked to attitudes and motivation, and to *how much* reading they do**

Reader response aspects of reading are linked to **literacy as social practice, oral language proficiency, emergent literacy development, decoding and comprehension**. Research has shown how important it is for children to be exposed, immersed and socialised into positive literacy experiences and practice with reading and writing[32]. Decoding improves through practice and through having lots of opportunity to read. Learners are unlikely to read willingly if they struggle to decode well, and this can affect their attitude and motivation towards reading. If learners don't see reading as relevant to their lives, interesting or useful they may not engage with texts, and this will also affect their reading comprehension.

[32] Stephen Krashen: Power of Reading
Mem Fox: The Reading Magic
Elley Warwick: Book Floods
Jim Trelease: The Read-Aloud Handbook

The sub-components of reading response are shown in Figure 7 below. Each of the subcomponents is explained below and guidelines for how to nurture and develop these aspects are given. Guidelines are also given for how teachers can be on the lookout for cracks in reading response and fix them before they become gaps or chasms. Socio-cultural practices around reading, writing and books and the way children are socialised into becoming readers and writers create conditions for nurturing positive reader response.

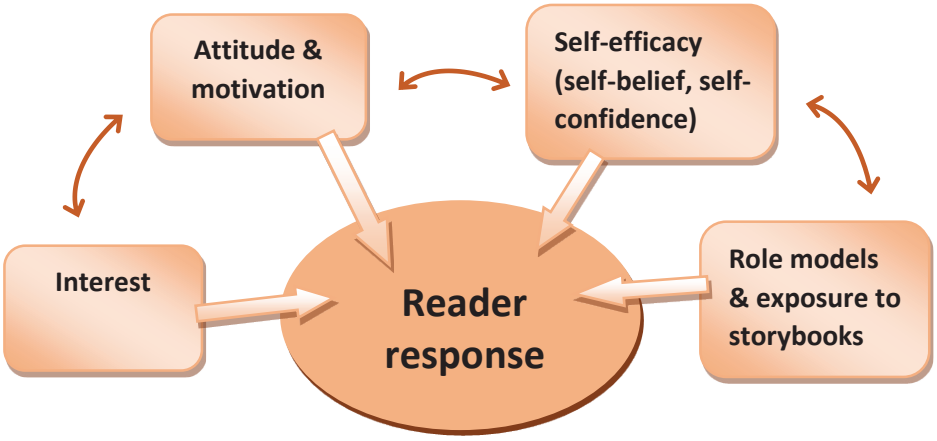


Figure 7 : *Components of reader response*

TERM	INTEREST
What is it	Learners need to be interested in reading, and see it as something that they can do, something that is enjoyable and useful to them.
Why is it important?	If learners see reading as interesting, they are more likely to read. The more they read, the better they become at reading, and the larger their vocabulary and general knowledge becomes.
When do I teach it?	Encouraging learners to take an interest in books and reading can start in the preschool years. Grade R teachers should nurture this interest early and teachers can continue building on it throughout the Foundation Phase.
How do I teach it?	• Remind learners of the wonderful benefits that reading provides – through reading we can travel the world, reading gives us access to information, reading opens up new worlds and possibilities to us. • Encourage learners to form book clubs at your school. • Talk to your learners about books in their HL, and about authors, writers, journalists and poets in the HL. If you come across pictures or articles of writers in newspapers or magazines, bring them to class and share the information with your learners.

	• Have a column on your chalkboard with the title: *Why I like reading*. Every morning, before you start the literacy session, ask one or two learners why they like reading or what they like about reading, and write their answers on the chalkboard. Do this for about 10 days. Your learners will soon start to engage with the topic with interest!
Resources	A print-rich classroom that includes a reading corner stimulates interest in books and reading.
How to identify cracks?	• Look out for learners in your class who struggle with reading – their interest in reading may be low because they are struggling. Try to improve their reading skills. • Look out for learners in your class who can read but who don't seem interested in doing it. Find out what their interests are and see if you can find books for them to read about their interests.
Remember	It is easy to stimulate young minds and get them enthusiastic about reading – don't miss the opportunity!

TERM	**ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION**
What is it	Learners need to be constantly encouraged and motivated to read and to perceive reading as something positive and enjoyable.
Why is it important?	If learners see reading and books as something positive, they will want to read more. The more they read, the better they become, and the more they learn through reading.
When to teach it?	Building positive attitudes to books and reading, and motivating learners to read, are especially important during the Foundation Phase. It can start in Grade 1 and continue throughout primary school. Research indicates that if we 'catch' children early and turn them into strong and enthusiastic readers who read for pleasure in the primary school, then they tend to remain lifelong readers.
How to teach it?	• Create enjoyable storybook reading sessions during Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Teacher Read-Alouds. Make them something that your class really looks forward to and enjoys! • Foundation Phase teachers should enjoy reading and be enthusiastic about it. Through sharing storybooks and information books with their learners – having interesting discussions about people and events in stories, and learning new things through information books – teachers motivate children to read and

	instil in them a love of and excitement for reading, developing in them positive responses to reading that stay with them for the rest of their lives. • Find out where your local community library is and encourage your learners and their parents to become members of the library. This will give them a sense of membership to a community of readers beyond their classroom. • It is also important to encourage learners who are good readers to continue reading. Make sure they have access to books that are a bit more challenging for their skill level. If they only read easy books, they will soon become bored.
Resources	If children have easy access to books they will be more motivated to read them. Create an attractive book corner in your classroom where children will want to go to take out a book and read.
How to identify cracks?	Look out for learners who don't show much interest in books or motivation to readily engage in reading. Are there perhaps problems in the home that trouble the child? Are they struggling with their decoding? Show your learners that you care about them.
Remember	It is easier to motivate young children to read than motivating teenagers to read. If teachers and schools develop the habit of reading in primary school, the chances are better that learners will read in high school.

TERM	**SELF-EFFICACY**
What is it?	Self-efficacy refers to a learner's belief in his/her ability to do something. It also includes feelings of self-confidence. The psychologist, Carol Dweck, has shown in her extensive research that the belief that abilities can be developed through hard work, dedication and persistence (a 'growth mindset') can influence performance and success in school – and also in life generally. In contrast, if learners believe that talent and being 'clever' influences performance (a 'fixed mindset'), then they don't work as hard, they give up more easily, and they are overcome by feelings of failure. Learners with a fixed mindset have poorer chances of succeeding in school and in life generally.
Why is it important?	Learners' sense of efficacy can affect their motivation, how much effort they put into learning, and their willingness to persist despite difficulties. If children perceive reading to be difficult or boring they may think that it is not worth the effort and will give up trying to master it.
When to teach it?	Teachers should encourage and build up learners' feelings of self-efficacy throughout the Foundation Phase.

How do I teach it?	• Remind learners that reading improves with effort and practice. This gives them a sense of control over their learning. • It is important to identify learners who struggle with reading and to help them become better at it. Help learners understand that your support and guidance, together with their own efforts and willingness to practise reading, will help them to become skilled readers. • Develop a growth mindset in learners. Remind them that everyone can become a good reader, but reading needs practice. They need to persist with their reading and make an effort to master it so that they can become skilled readers. As learners become better at reading, their self-efficacy improves and their self-confidence grows, this in turn will motivate them to read more – and the more they read, the better they become at it, and the more their vocabulary, language and background knowledge grows.
Resources	• A print-rich environment • Reading corners • Libraries
How to identify cracks	• Learners who show a lack of confidence. • Learners who avoid books and reading, and do not engage with books on their own accord.
Remember	Ensure that there is lots of individual support, attention and encouragement for learners during reading. Give easier books to weaker readers to build up their confidence and efficacy in being able to read.

TERM	**ROLE MODELS AND EXPOSURE TO STORYBOOKS**
What is it?	Children need to be exposed to positive reading role models so they have an example of what a reader should be and can try to imitate this behaviour. Principals and teachers need to create a culture of reading at their schools so that children can see on a daily basis that reading is important, that books are valued, that being a good reader is a desirable thing, and that learning about the world through books is a normal part of learning. This is especially important for children who come from homes where there are few books or literacy practices.
Why is it important?	Children learn from those around them. Simply telling children that reading is important is not enough; they need to see adults in their environment reading and valuing books so that they imitate this positive behaviour with books in their own lives.

When to do it?	Teachers should be reading role models throughout the Foundation Phase. This is especially important during Teacher Read-Alouds, Shared Reading, and Group Guided Reading. Teachers should also strive to be enthusiastic, independent readers themselves.
How to do it?	• The teacher should commit to becoming a reader and joining a local library. Being a card-carrying member of a library shows that the teacher values books and reading. If you as the teacher are reading an interesting book, bring it to class and share it with the learners. Let them see that books play an important role in your life. In this way, you role model the importance of books and reading. • Become knowledgeable about children's books and writers in the learners' HL, and discuss them with the learners. • Make reading sessions enjoyable. During every Teacher Read-Aloud, Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm for reading should be evident. • Allow learners opportunities to discuss and share a book they are interested in. In this way they serve as role models for their peers and stimulate reading amongst themselves. • Schools should also be reading role models. Discuss with fellow colleagues in the Foundation Phase, with the HOD and with the principal how a culture of reading can be created at the school. Try and think of a new reading theme for the school each term. For example, if it's World Cup soccer season, then encourage learners to read about soccer that term and find out as much about it as they can (when did it start, how many teams take part, what are the rules, who are the best players in the world, which players do they admire, etc.).
Resources	Create a print-rich classroom. Make a comfortable Reading Corner. Have interesting posters on the walls about books and writers. Keep dictionaries visible in your classroom. The visibility of all these print resources sends a message to learners that books are important and valued in your classroom.
How to identify cracks	If adults are not reading role models and do not show much interest in books and reading, then it is highly unlikely that the learners will do so. This is one aspect of reading that shows cracks in the teacher and the school, and not the learners! • As a teacher, reflect honestly on your own attitudes and motivations about books and reading. • How much do you know about books/newspapers/magazines/writers in your HL? • How can you become a better role model of reading in your HL? • What can the school do to impart a more positive attitude about books and reading to learners?

Remember	Reading teachers must be knowledgeable about reading, must know about books in their HL, and must be readers themselves. One would not be able to coach soccer if one didn't know much about the game and showed little interest in it, and this is the same when it comes to coaching learners to be readers.

Many children experience reading as difficult; they see little purpose in it and they get no pleasure from it. Such children have a negative response to reading that can affect them for the rest of their lives. If they don't like it, they won't read voluntarily. Children who do not read much do not become good readers and they lose out on all the benefits of reading.

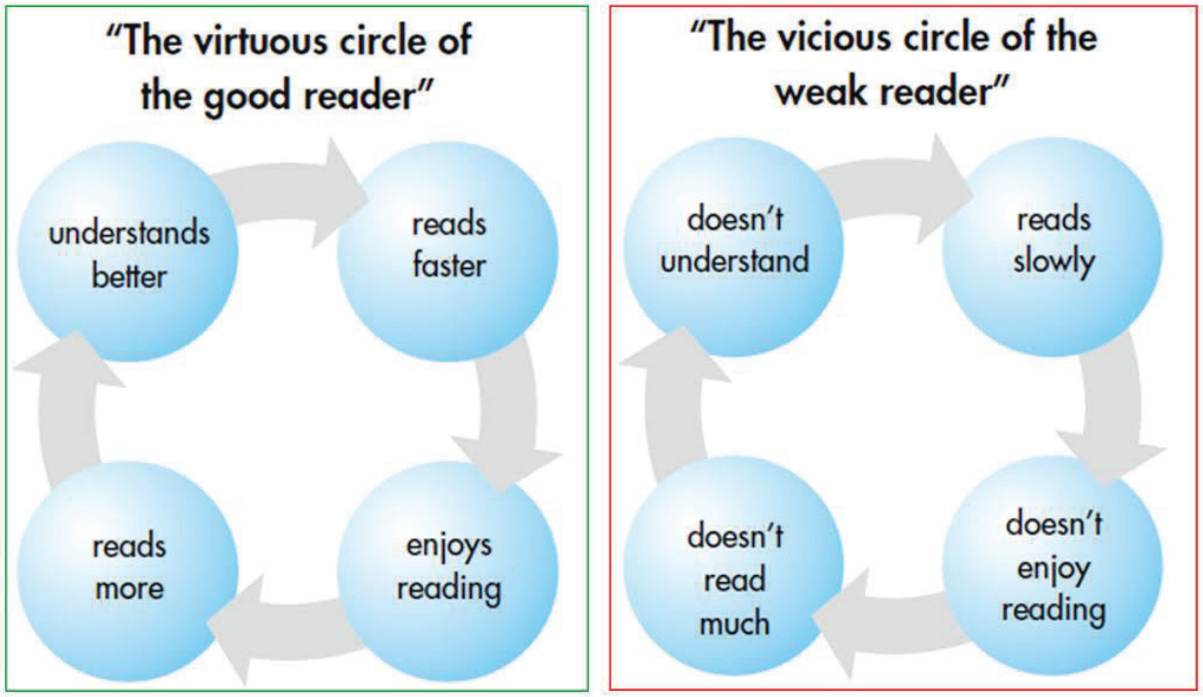


Figure 8: *The virtuous circle of reading vs the vicious circle of reading*

SECTION 3: HOW TO USE THE READING METHODOLOGIES

SECTION 3 unpacks the six core reading methodologies.

The balanced approach to reading

CAPS adopts a balanced approach to reading. This means that all the different components of reading are developed, and that different methods are used to teach and develop reading. In all, six different methodologies are prescribed in CAPS, as shown in Figure 9 below. *Phonics Instruction* is in a different colour as it forms the basis for reading at the alphabetic and word level. The other methodologies are in blue as they are used for modelling and practising reading in extended texts.

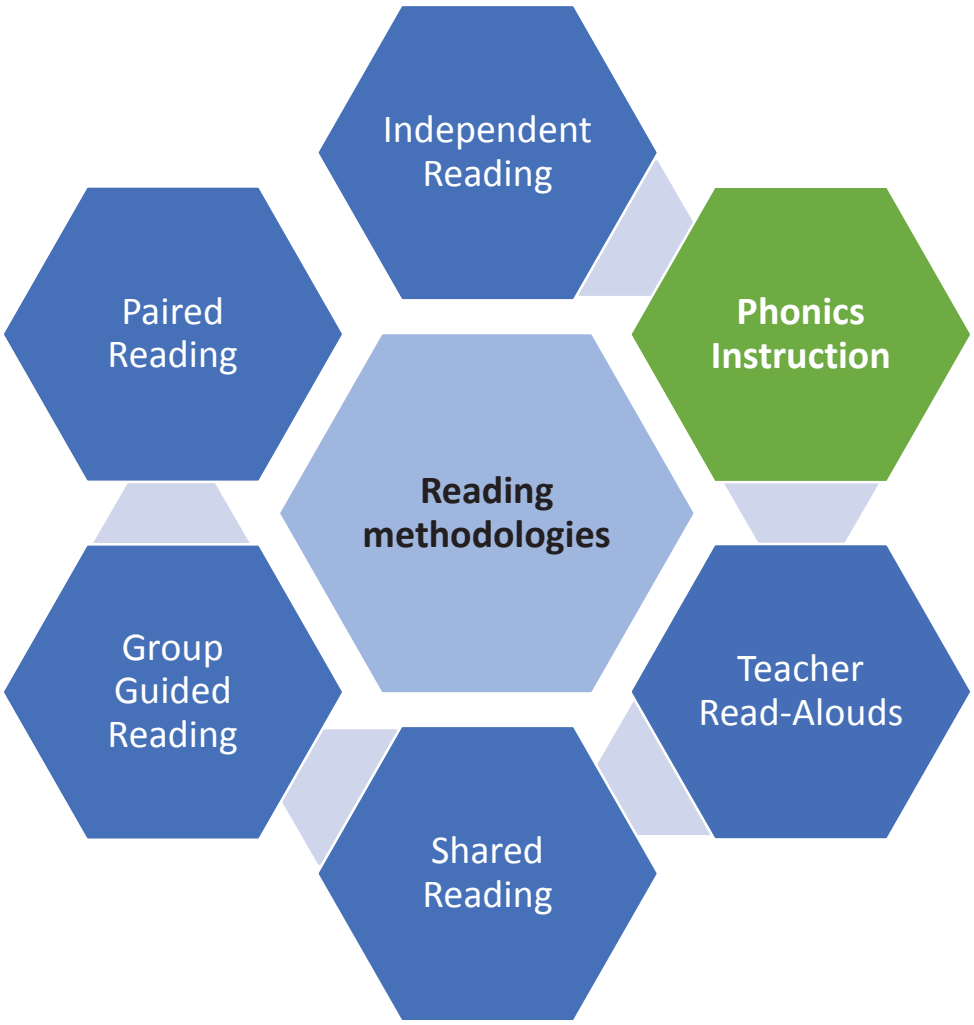


Figure 9: *The six different methodologies for teaching reading in a balanced reading approach*

Teacher Read-Alouds

The teacher reads a text (fiction and non-fiction) to the whole class at least three times a week (3 x 10 minutes). The text is usually at a level above that which the learners can read on their own. The text should reflect rich language and literature.

Shared Reading

Grade R-3 teachers model reading by using a Big Book or any enlarged text or shared text with the whole class at least three times a week (3 x 15 minutes). The text is also usually at a level above that which the learners can read on their own, which is why it is modelled and read by the teacher with the learners participating where possible.

Group Guided Reading (GGR)

Grade 1 to 3 learners read texts to their teacher that are at their reading level in small same-ability reading groups (6-8 learners). At least two reading group sessions are conducted in a day (2 x 15 minutes of reading under teacher supervision).

Paired Reading and Independent Reading

Both paired and independent reading should be given time and encouraged. Grade R to 3 learners should be free to look at and read books (fiction and non-fiction) in class in a pair or on their own. The texts can be at their level or slightly above their level to challenge them.

Phonics Instruction

Teachers should spend at least 15 minutes a day, every day (five times a week), explicitly teaching learners how the alphabetic code works, i.e. teaching letter sound relations, phonological, phonemic and syllable awareness, blending and segmenting, word reading, spelling and fluency.

Table 4: Reading Methodologies Fact Sheet

READING METHODOLOGIES	Grades R to 3				Grades 1 to 3
	Teacher Read-Alouds	**Shared Reading**	**Paired Reading**	**Independent Reading**	**Group Guided Reading (GGR)**
When to use each reading methodology	Take place during Listening & Speaking time (at least 3 x 10 minute sessions per week).	Takes place during Reading time (at least 3 x 15 minute sessions per week).	Takes place during Group Guided Reading. While the teacher is working with the reading group on the mat or at a table, other learners read together in pairs.	Takes place when individual learners finish their work early or during a dedicated reading time e.g. Drop All and Read.	Takes place every day - Monday to Friday. Two groups read with the teacher each day for 15 minutes per group (30 minutes altogether).
What is the purpose?	Promotes enjoyment of reading and develops vocabulary.	Teacher models reading for children (e.g. how to read fluently, how to use decoding and comprehension strategies).	Reading in pairs helps learners to develop confidence and fluency in reading.	Independent reading enables learners to read on their own, texts of their choice in class and at home.	In same ability groups, learners practise reading texts at their reading level, with teacher support.
What's happening?	Teacher reads aloud a text above the reading level of the class; learners listen attentively and respond to questions.	Teacher reads a Big Book or enlarged or shared text, which is at or slightly above the reading level of the learners, with the whole class.	Learners sit close to each other, usually with a single text (reader, reading card, etc.) and read aloud to each other.	Learners read the text aloud or silently on their own in class and read library books at home too.	Teacher monitors whether each child can: • read fluently, • apply word attack skills to recognise unfamiliar words, • read for meaning and understanding.

READING METHODOLOGY	TEACHER READ-ALOUDS
What is it?	Teacher Read-Aloud is a vital component of a balanced reading programme. It is a whole class activity where the teacher reads a text aloud to the children. It develops a whole range of language skills (including those of reading) in a meaningful context. The Read-Aloud text should be above the reading level of the learners.
Why is it important?	The Teacher Read-Aloud methodology aims: • to develop vocabulary and comprehension skills through think-alouds and questioning • to grow a love and enjoyment of reading • to model skilled reading • to create opportunities for learners to experience the pleasure that skilled reading brings. Teacher Read-Alouds are a good time for both incidental and explicit vocabulary learning. Selecting 2-3 key vocabulary words to teach before reading helps learners to understand the story the first time they hear it.
When is it done?	Teacher Read-Alouds can be done at the beginning or at the end of the day. They can also be done during Life Skills and Mathematics lessons. There are many stories/texts that cover life skills topics and mathematical concepts.
How to do Teacher Read-Alouds	**Before reading: Introduce the text** • Prepare the story for reading, activate background knowledge and don't ask too many questions. It is important not to interrupt the flow of the story. • If the text is a storybook, discuss the title and cover and ask questions related to the title and cover so that the learners can predict what the story will be about. • For other texts discuss the title and visuals. **During reading: Read the text aloud** • Read the text with expression, at a good pace, using different voices for different characters. • Keep eye contact with the learners. • Use pauses to make the story meaningful. • Show learners the pictures. **After reading: Discuss the text in depth** The teacher can use the text for listening comprehension, dramatisation, vocabulary and sentence work, and whole class shared writing (explained below). Teacher Read-Alouds should take about 10 minutes and be done at

	least three times a week. The same text can be used over 2-3 sessions if the story is long. NOTE: Teacher Read-Alouds are not the same as Shared Reading. They are about building a love for reading, promoting reading for enjoyment, and having fun!
How to assess?	You don't assess the learners. They assess you! If they listened and if they enjoyed the story/text, then you read well!
Resources	• Library books • Fiction (stories) • Poems • Non-fiction texts • Newspaper or magazine articles (these should be simplified to be accessible to the level of the learners) NOTE: NO graded readers!
How to identify cracks?	Children who are easily distracted, do not respond to the text, or give responses that are not related to the text.
Remember	You can re-read the text in Group Guided Reading sessions with more advanced readers.

READING METHODOLOGY	**SHARED READING**
What is it?	Shared Reading is a whole class activity where the teacher shares an enlarged text such as a story from a Big Book with the children. The teacher models oral reading skills such as fluency, reading with expression and intonation.
Why is it important?	• Shared Reading brings together all learners with different abilities in a reading activity that is led by the teacher. It helps children learn the habits of reading a printed text (book handling, directionality, picture walks, observing punctuation marks) and to gain confidence to read on their own. • Shared Reading texts are used to develop all language components (listening and speaking, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, language usage and writing). They provide opportunities for the teacher to integrate all the components of reading, namely emergent reading, decoding, comprehension and reader response. • The concept of Shared Writing follows Shared Reading and is similar in that the teacher models how to write a word or sentence on the board and the learners copy the written text. The teachers may also use a Writing frame to

	demonstrate how learners can compose their own text using short simple sentences and punctuation based on the Shared Reading text.
When is it done?	Shared Reading usually happens in the first 15 minutes of the Reading and Writing focus time on **three days** in the week in the HL in Grades R to 3.
How to do Shared Reading	During shared reading sessions, learners should ideally come to the front of the classroom, preferably sitting on a mat. Rotate learners at each session so that all learners have a turn to sit in the front, to be closer to the shared text. 1. The first session focuses on the enjoyment and first 'look' at the text, with the children giving personal responses to the text, and the teacher reading the text. 2. In the next session, the same text is used and the focus shifts to more involvement in the reading as the learners join in reading with the teacher. 3. In the third and subsequent sessions, the focus on the reading text is to develop vocabulary, comprehension, decoding skills and language (grammar, punctuation etc.). 4. Shared Reading should inform Shared Writing activities which include decoding skills (phonics and vocabulary development), language usage skills and creative writing (e.g. use writing frames to compose new texts, write new titles for the text, write descriptions of the setting or characters, etc.). NOTE: The text used must be mediated before, during and after reading as during Teacher Read-Alouds above.
How to assess?	Have the learners: • respond to questions before, during and after reading the text • retell parts of the story • sequence events in the story (use picture cards, sentence strips, etc.) • read words (use flashcards) • demonstrate their understanding of new words • complete writing frames about, or in response to, the story.
Resources	• Whole shared texts (e.g. stories in the DBE Workbook) • Big Books • Enlarged copies of non-fiction texts with large font • Poems • Songs • Learner's own writing • Advertisements • Pamphlets

How to identify cracks?	• Learners who are reluctant to re-read the text with the teacher. • Learners who never respond to questions about the text, or who give responses that are not related to the text – this could indicate that they did not understand the story, despite reading it with the teacher. • Learners who are distracted or whose attention constantly wanders during shared reading sessions.
Remember	You can re-read the text in the Group Guided Reading session.

READING METHODOLOGY	**GROUP GUIDED READING**
What is it?	This is a **same-ability group reading teaching strategy** where all children in the group read the same text suited to their reading level under the direction of the teacher. This is typically done in a small group on the mat, or at a separate table or dedicated space, away from the rest of the class.
Why is it important?	• Group Guided Reading gives learners an opportunity to practise reading a text on their own with the support of the teacher. • It also gives the teacher the opportunity to observe reading behaviours, to assess the reading proficiency level of each individual learner in the group, and to identify learners with reading problems and help to remediate them. • Reading within a group is the bridge towards independent reading.
When is it done?	It should take place every day (Monday to Friday) in Grades 1 to 3 with at least two groups during the HL reading time. Make sure that struggling readers never miss their turn and, if possible, give them more turns during the week.
How to do Group Guided Reading?	• Divide the whole class into different reading ability groups (using a baseline assessment, e.g. EGRA) with each group having 6 to 8 learners. • Give each group a different name (e.g. wild animals, different types of cars, different fruits/chocolates/drinks, etc.). • Display a daily schedule on the classroom wall, showing the different groups and their times in the week. • The teacher selects an appropriate text that is at the instructional level of each group of learners. Each learner must have a copy of the printed text, preferably graded readers. • In the first session the teacher discusses the title, cover and illustrations, and engages the learners in discussions related to the text. Learners in the group are then given an opportunity to read the text silently on their own, while the teacher moves around the group, giving each learner a turn to read a

	page aloud. The teacher gives support with word recognition and decoding and oral reading fluency (e.g. with accuracy and intonation), and models reading where necessary. • In subsequent sessions, each learner continues to have a turn to read a part of the text aloud. If it is a longer text, each learner should read at least 1-2 pages aloud. The teacher poses 1-2 questions to see if the reader has understood the text. This is followed by the learners reading the text in pairs and independently in class and at home (contextual factors). • Learners can be moved from one group to another in the course of the year as they make progress.
How to assess?	• Check each learner's understanding of the text (setting, characters, main ideas, making predictions and inferences, etc.). • Check learners' understanding of new or unfamiliar words and sight word recognition fluency. The reading can be supplemented with 'look-and-say' flashcard words.
Resources	• Graded readers • Photocopies of any fiction or non-fiction text • Articles from newspapers and magazines • Reading cards
How to identify cracks?	• Look out for learners who continue to struggle and who start losing interest. • Look out for advanced learners who are getting bored and who need more challenging texts and/or tasks. • Look out for learners who cannot read fluently: who isolate each word during reading, make many errors, re-read the same sentence, read very slowly, lack confidence, or can hardly be heard.
Remember	Teach decoding skills (words broken down into sounds and longer words broken down into syllables). Give learners flashcards to practise new words. Re-read the story with struggling readers.

READING METHODOLOGY	**PAIRED READING**
What is it?	Paired reading is when learners read a book or a printed text with a peer during class reading lessons (usually while the teacher is busy with Group Guided Reading).

Why is it important?	Paired Reading provides learners with reading practice and encourages reading for enjoyment. Paired reading is also very important for building oral reading fluency (ORF) – a result of lots of practice. It adds another level of support for children in a safe environment.
When is it done?	While the teacher is busy with Group Guided Reading, some of the learners can do paired reading.
How to do Paired Reading	• Allocate learners in pairs. • Pairs can be matched by same ability. • Pairs can be matched by mixed ability. • Demonstrate how to read in a pair in front of the whole class and explain what is expected from the reading pair (read with your 'inside' voice, take turns, don't laugh at each other, be supportive of each other, how to choose their own books from the reading corner).
Resources	• DBE Workbook • Graded readers • Library books • Reading cards • Children's magazines • Comics • Learners' own writing
How to identify cracks?	• Learners who avoid books and reading, and who don't take out books voluntarily. • Learners who are easily distracted and who disrupt others. • Learners who pretend to be reading. • Learners who do not read with stamina, and who don't pay attention to details in the text.
Remember	You may have to have one-on-one reading sessions with struggling readers.

READING METHODOLOGY	**INDEPENDENT READING**
What is it?	Independent reading is when learners read texts by themselves in the classroom (in the reading corner) or in the school library, or on their own during the school day or at home.
Why is it important?	Independent Reading provides learners with reading practice and encourages reading for enjoyment. It offers learners opportunities to practise silent reading.

<table>
<tr><td>When is it done?</td><td>During Group Guided Reading time, before school starts in the morning, at the library, during Drop All And Read time, during classwork activities when the learner has finished the task, at home.</td></tr>
<tr><td>How to do Independent Reading?</td><td>

Demonstrate to learners how to choose books.
Give learners opportunities to choose their own books. (Do not prescribe but you can recommend books.)
Create a climate for reading that is quiet and considerate of others.
Teachers are encouraged to read for enjoyment themselves (during Drop All And Read time).
Teachers are encouraged to monitor independent reading but there is no formal assessment.
If possible, learners should be encouraged to also read library books, readers and the DBE Workbook independently at home.
Teachers are encouraged to record the number of books read by each learner on a reading record sheet, for example:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">Teacher's Reading Record Sheet: Grade 3</th></tr>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Learners' names</th><td colspan="5">Number of books read from February to November</td></tr>
<tr><th>Term 1</th><th>Term 2</th><th>Term 3</th><th>Term 4</th><th>Total</th></tr>
<tr><td>Phindi</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>10</td><td>10</td><td>39</td></tr>
<tr><td>Thabo</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>Shaisha</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>34</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donald</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>27</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources</td><td>

DBE Workbook
Graded readers
Library books (fiction and non-fiction)
Reading cards
Children's magazines
Comics

</td></tr>
<tr><td>How to identify cracks?</td><td>

Learners who avoid books and reading.
Learners who do not take out books voluntarily.
Learners who are easily distracted and who disrupt others during Paired or Independent reading.
Learners who do not read with stamina, and who do not pay attention to detail in the text.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Remember</td><td>You may have to have one-on-one reading sessions with struggling readers.</td></tr>
</table>

SECTION 4: THE STAGES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

Section 4 focuses on the five stages of reading development:

1. The early emergent reader
2. The emergent reader
3. The developing reader
4. The early fluent reader
5. The fluent reader

The Framework speaks to five stages of reading development which start in Early Childhood Development (ECD), beginning with the early emergent reader, and which end with the fluent reader by the end of the Foundation Phase.

STAGE 1: Early emergent readers (Grade R) display reading-like behaviour in the way they handle books and 'tell the story' from the pictures or memory (the way it was told or read to them). They have a sense of the beginning and end of the book. They like to look at books and have books read to them. Early emergent readers should be read to every day in order to develop a love for reading, their phonological awareness, vocabulary, listening comprehension skills and general reading skills.

Table 5: **STAGE 1: EARLY EMERGENT READERS (GRADE R)**

Texts for early emergent readers should have:	**What kinds of texts are suitable for early emergent readers?**
• Large, bright, bold illustrations • Very few printed words in large bold font • Strong picture support • Carefully controlled text • Repetitive patterns • Controlled, repeated vocabulary • Natural language • Large print and font • Wide letter spacing • Familiar concepts • Limited text on a page	• Picture storybooks • Picture cards • Conversation posters • Small picture storybooks with illustrations only • Small picture storybooks with illustrations and some printed words • Big Books with lots of illustrations and no printed text • Big Books with lots of illustrations and some printed text (short sentences and rhymes, poems) • DBE Workbook
Reminder: *The Grade R teacher should have a set of at least 4 Big Books for whole class Shared Reading, stories, poems, songs to be used for Teacher Read-Alouds and a library box with at least 50 appropriate titles for reading for enjoyment.*	

STAGE 2: Emergent readers (Grade 1) are just beginning to grasp the basic concepts of books and print (e.g. directionality: text runs from left to right, and from top to bottom). They are acquiring a command of the alphabet with the ability to recognise and name upper- and lower-case letters. They are also developing phonological awareness skills, such as recognising syllables, and rhyme. Emergent readers are beginning to learn phonological and phonemic awareness, especially with vowels and consonants at the beginning of words, and are able to read short two and three syllable words, as well as a number of short high-frequency words.

Table 6: **STAGE 2: EMERGENT READERS (GRADE 1)**	
Texts for emergent readers should have:	**What kinds of texts are suitable for emergent readers?**
• Strong picture support • Carefully controlled text • Repetitive patterns • Controlled, repeated vocabulary • Natural language • Large print and font • Wide letter spacing • Familiar concepts • Limited text on a page	• Picture cards • Conversation posters • Small picture story books with illustrations only • Small picture story books with illustrations and some printed words • Big Books with lots of illustrations and some printed text (short sentences and rhymes, poems) • DBE Workbook
Reminder: *The Grade 1 teacher should have a set of at least 4 Big Books, Graded Readers (at least 3 levels with 3 to 4 titles per level and 10 copies per title), texts for use during Teacher Read-Alouds, and a library box with at least 50 appropriate titles for reading for enjoyment.*	

STAGE 3: Developing readers (Grade 1 and 2) have an understanding of the alphabet, phonological awareness, and early phonics. They can read sentences in connected texts. They are developing a much better grasp of word-attack skills and comprehension strategies. They can recognise different types of text, particularly fiction and non-fiction, and recognise that reading has a variety of purposes.

Table 7: **STAGE 3: DEVELOPING READERS (GRADE 1 and GRADE 2)**	
Texts for developing readers should have:	**What kinds of texts are suitable for developing readers?**
• increasingly more lines of print per page • new vocabulary	• conversation posters with words • other enlarged texts e.g. poems, songs, rhymes (home-made or commercially produced)

• more complex sentence structures • less dependency on repetitive patterns and pictures • familiar topics but greater depth	• short 'fun' books with 1-2 sentences on a page for the reading corner • labels for classroom items • alphabet and phonics charts or friezes • children's picture dictionaries • flashcard words • sentence strips • decodable texts • picture cards with words • graded readers (both fiction and non-fiction texts) • library books • Big Books with 3-4 short texts (fiction and non-fiction) • DBE Workbook
Reminder: *The Grade 2 class should have a set of at least 5-6 Big Books, Graded Readers (at least 4 levels with 3 to 4 titles per level and 10 copies per title), texts for use during Teacher Read-Alouds, and a library box with at least 50 appropriate titles for reading for enjoyment.*	

STAGE 4: Early fluent readers (Grade 2 and 3) demonstrate reading that is more automatic, with more energy devoted to comprehension than decoding. They are reading sounds more like natural speech. Readers are approaching independence in comprehending text. These readers are experiencing a greater variety of text and are able to read a variety of genres. Independence often varies with the type of text being read. They are beginning to monitor their comprehension.

Table 8: **STAGE 4: EARLY FLUENT READERS (GRADE 2 and GRADE 3)**	
Texts for early fluent readers should have:	**What kind of texts are suitable for early fluent readers?**
• more pages • longer sentences • more text per page • richer vocabulary • greater variation in sentence patterns • less reliance on pictures • more formal and descriptive language • more genres	• flashcard words • sentence strips • graded readers (both fiction and non-fiction texts) • library books • Big Books with 4-5 lengthy texts (fiction and non-fiction) per book • DBE workbook

STAGE 5: Fluent readers (Grade 3) have achieved a level of proficiency where reading becomes a learning tool: a means of learning about the world. Fluent readers successfully apply their reading skills to access information and knowledge independently. Their reading is virtually error-free, automatic and is done with expression and proper pauses. Their energy is devoted to understanding, and they have a good command and use of the various comprehension strategies. They can also monitor their comprehension effectively.

Fluent readers read a wide range of text types and do so independently. They will continue to refine and develop their reading skills as they encounter more difficult reading materials. For the most part, they are capable of improving their reading skills and ability to select texts independently through increased practice.

Table 9: **STAGE 5: FLUENT READERS (GRADE 3)**

Texts for fluent readers should have:	**What kind of texts are suitable for fluent readers?**
• more pages • longer and more complex sentences • more text per page • variety of genres • less familiar, more varied topics • challenging vocabulary • varied writing styles • more description	• flashcard words • paragraph strips • graded readers (both fiction and non-fiction texts) • library books • Big Books with 5-6 lengthy texts (fiction and non-fiction) per book • DBE Workbook
Reminder: *The Grade 3 class should have a set of at least 6-7 Big Books, Graded Readers (at least five levels with 5 to 6 titles per level and 10 copies per title), texts for use during Teacher Read-Alouds, and a library box with at least 50 appropriate titles for reading for enjoyment.*	

SECTION 5: CLASSROOM READING INSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

Section 5 focuses on the language components, daily routines and timetabling.

5.1 How to integrate all the language components in a lesson

The CAPS encourages the implementation of a **Balanced Language Approach (BLA)** to teach reading and the other language components, namely Listening and Speaking, Phonological Awareness and Phonics, Handwriting, Writing, Thinking and Reasoning, and Language Usage and Structure, in an integrated way during the Reading and Writing focus time. The diagram below indicates the language components that should be taught in an integrated way and, where possible, explicitly too.

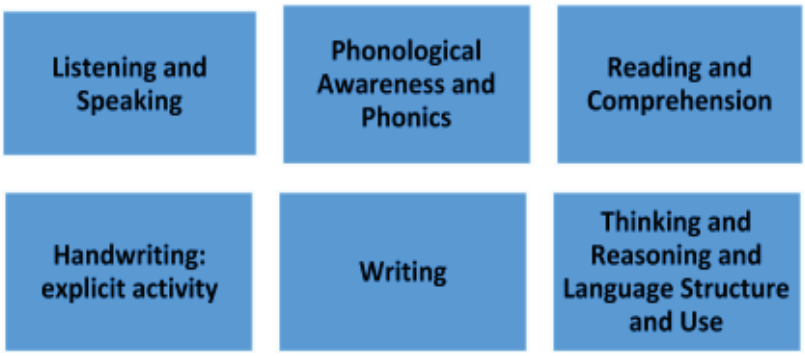


Figure 10: *Home Language components*

A HL lesson using CAPS includes all these components, which are integrated in such a way that they form a coherent whole. The Listening and Speaking, Handwriting, Writing and Language Usage components are explored in detail below.

LANGUAGE COMPONENT	LISTENING AND SPEAKING
What is it?	Listening involves listening to stories told and read aloud, listening to instructions, and listening during interactions such as classroom discussions. Speaking can take place during classroom interaction, for example, during discussion and when responding to questions and texts. It can also be part of more formal activities such as oral presentations, drama, storytelling by learners, and giving a recount of a story or their own experiences. Listening and speaking complement one another, but they are two different skills, which must be taught. Listening and speaking are core to language development and acquisition. Listening and speaking cut across reading and writing lessons, and all other subjects in the curriculum.

Why is it important?	Listening to oral texts and texts read aloud is core to language development. It provides learners with rich exposure to the language, which enables them to develop vocabulary and concepts, knowledge of language structures and the structure of different texts. Speaking provides practice in using language and gives learners opportunities to communicate and express themselves effectively.
When to do it?	It happens throughout the school day in all lessons. However, focused listening and speaking activities (see below) should take place during the language lesson, for 15 minutes at least 3 times a week.
How to do it?	Listening and speaking activities are often whole class oral activities at the beginning of the school day, usually in the morning, including for example, greetings, the attendance register, the date, discussion about the weather, learners' birthdays, and personal news. However, listening and speaking must also be taught explicitly. Focused activities in the language lessons include listening to a story told or read, retelling a story, listening to and following instructions, singing songs and performing role-plays, show-and-tell, and discussion of a topic related to a theme. These activities can be done as a whole class, in groups or in pairs. Listening and speaking activities are also taught in an integrated way in the Life Skills Study Areas (Beginning Knowledge and Performing Arts).
How to assess it?	Listening and speaking skills can be assessed, both formally and informally, through observation. For formal assessment, it is helpful to provide a rubric to ensure that the assessment is focused, objective and fair. Listening can also be assessed through writing, for example, learners can respond to a story that they have listened to.
Resources	• conversation posters • DBE Workbook • library books (fiction and non-fiction) • readers • anthology of stories, poems, songs, play scripts • real objects, masks, puppets
How to identify cracks?	• Learners who lack confidence and cannot verbalise their thoughts related to a personal experience, the weather, topical events or a story that is told or read to the class. • Learners who do not follow and respond to instructions. • Learners who do not participate in discussions.
Remember	All learners, irrespective of their language proficiency in the LoLT, must be given adequate opportunity and support to develop their Home Language further.

LANGUAGE COMPONENT	HANDWRITING
What is it?	Handwriting refers to the technical aspect of writing. The primary focus is directionality, letter formation, layout and the presentation of work. In Grade R and Grade 1 there is a strong link between teaching children to form letters and to recognise them, i.e. handwriting and developing phonemic awareness and letter-sound relationships are integrated. Teachers often beneficially teach single letter-sound relationships and (letter) handwriting together. For example, learners have to be able to recognise the shape of the letter and the sound it makes in order to write it.
Why is it important?	Clear handwriting is a necessary skill that must be learnt in order to communicate well in writing. Research shows that teaching learners to form letters properly, and giving them sufficient practice to automatise this process, improves learners' creative writing skills. Writing letters and words strengthens learners' phonemic awareness because learners have to think about the sound and relate it to the shape of the letter(s).
When to do it?	Handwriting lessons must be done for 15 minutes on four days of the week.
How to teach it?	In Grade R, the focus is on emergent writing, for example, there is a writing corner in the classroom with writing tools (crayons, thick kokis, paper, card, etc.) and learners are encouraged to try out writing for their own purposes, for example, practise writing their names. During these activities, learners are developing the ability to handle tools which are necessary for handwriting and they are using their existing knowledge to form letters. The focus in terms of skills in Grade R is on developing fine motor skills, hand-eye co-ordination (tracing, threading etc.) and directionality. Gross motor skills are also important in terms of posture and crossing the midline which supports directionality. The links between aspects such as fine motor skills or hand-eye co-ordination and handwriting highlight the need to plan for different stages of development as learners will only be able to achieve particular handwriting skills, once certain fine motor and perceptual skills have developed. In addition, learners are encouraged to trace letters while sounding, and drawing letter shapes in the air whilst practising the phonemes learnt. The teaching of these aspects of handwriting is more explicit in Grade 1 with more formal attention to letter formation. By mid-Grade 2, learners should be able to produce clear, neat, accurately printed letters, and transcribe words and sentences in print script. By the end of Grade 2, learners should have be introduced to letter formations in a joined

	(cursive) script. Towards the end of Grade 3, learners should be able to write words and sentences in a joined script. A joined script is more efficient than print script as it increases speed.
How to assess it?	When assessing learners' handwriting, focus on pencil grip and posture, directionality, letter formation, alignment of letters in words and alignment and spacing of words in sentences, as well as transcription of words and sentences. Teachers should observe learners during handwriting practice and assist them where necessary to use the correct pencil grip, form letters correctly, place their books in the correct position and sit in the correct position.
Resources	• blank paper • sand trays • thick wax crayons • unlined (blank) exercise books/jotters • lined exercise books • HB pencils (of different thickness) • writing strips • the chalkboard should be set up with lines for handwriting
How to identify cracks?	• Learners who have problems with directionality • Learners who don't use the correct starting point. • Learners who reverse letters (e.g. **b** and **d**). • Learners who have not mastered the correct pencil grip.
Remember	• When demonstrating how to form a letter, the teacher should face the same direction as the learners (i.e. have her back to the learners if standing in front of the class). • Teachers should attend to the needs of left-handed learners, for example, demonstrate the correct pencil grip, position of paper, posture and seating for left-handers. Left-handed scissors should be provided for the development of fine-motor skills. • Teachers can use a play-based approach to teach directionality skills and practise writing letters demonstrating starting point and end point in Grades R and 1. Reversals with letter formation is not necessarily a sign of a more serious problem in the early grades, but can be indicative of the learner's stage of development.

LANGUAGE COMPONENT	WRITING
What is it?	Writing is a medium of human communication that represents language and emotion with signs and symbols. It is done for a variety of purposes, for example, to tell someone about what has happened (recount), to tell someone how to do something (instructions), to inform people about a topic (information report) and to tell a story (narrative). Writing and reading are two sides of the literacy coin. Writing is an **encoding** process, in which the writer constructs a message into a form that can be communicated to other people. When people read the message, they have to decode what has been written. In this document, the term '**writing**' refers to the creative and informative writing done by learners. Writing is an essential life skill and is vital for education. Writing provides us with a permanent record of what we have learned and helps us to remember it. Writing also helps us to plan and manage our lives, for example, a simple 'to do' list or shopping list.
Why is it important?	In the school curriculum, creative writing is a vehicle for developing learners' imagination and creativity. It is necessary for demonstrating their understanding of what they have learned and to sequence their thoughts in a coherent and logical manner. As learners move up the grades, it becomes increasingly important in measuring learners' achievement in all their subjects, and if learners cannot write well, this will jeopardise their success.
When to do it?	An hour a week is dedicated to writing from Grades 1 to 3. The types of written texts need to be modelled first during Shared Reading and Shared Writing, which should take learners through the steps in the writing process. This should then be followed up with independent writing.
How to do it?	Refer to CAPS to identify the type of writing to be taught (e.g. a recount of an event). Learners should be exposed to a recount during Shared Reading. Draw their attention to its structure (e.g. first, then, next) and language features (e.g. past tense). Then develop a recount with the learners as part of Shared Writing, which will serve as a model. A writing frame is an important element of this. Learners are then given an opportunity to write a similar text on their own, in pairs or in a small group. During group, paired and independent writing, learners should go through the steps in the writing process (plan, draft, revise, edit, proofread, publish). It is important that you explicitly teach the writing process. This helps learners to take responsibility for their own writing. At the publishing stage, it is important to display learners' writing. This can be done by rotating learners' writing.

	Independent writing takes place when learners use drawings and single words to write their own texts in early Grade 1. By the end of Grade 1, learners should be able to write at least three simple sentences, and by Grade 2 at least five sentences. By the end of Grade 3, learners should be able to write at least 8-10 sentences on a topic.
How to assess it?	• In the early stages of writing (Grades R and 1), writing may involve drawing and writing captions, and writing simple sentences. • Once learners begin writing texts (towards the end of Grade 1 / beginning of Grade 2), attention should be given to the organisation of the text, and the language used (e.g. a recount should be in the past tense). • Also assess whether appropriate vocabulary has been used and mechanical aspects of writing (spelling, spacing of words, punctuation, etc.) are correct. • It is very important that feedback includes a response to the **ideas** in the writing and not just the form.
Resources	• description of different text types used in the Foundation Phase, their structure and language features (this resource for teachers can be found on pages 90-92 of the EFAL FP CAPS) • writing frames • Big Books illustrating different types of text • DBE Workbook • vocabulary charts • word wall • personal word book • blank paper and classwork books
How to identify cracks?	• Learners who cannot write words and simple sentences on their own. • Learners who have very messy handwriting. • Learners who do not use punctuation. • Learners who make many spelling and grammatical mistakes.
Remember	Model writing of words and sentences during whole class Shared Writing sessions. Support individual learners in small group writing sessions. The use of writing frames is encouraged.

LANGUAGE COMPONENT	LANGUAGE USAGE
What is it?	Language usage refers to points of grammar and morphology, syntax, style, word choices, and the way in which a word or phrase is normally and correctly used. Language usage focuses on the rules of grammar to be used in a particular language. Language is defined by its own language usage structures and conventions.
Why is it important?	A knowledge of grammar and language usage is essential for learners to be able to communicate effectively in both speech and writing. It also plays a role in reading (e.g. a good knowledge of punctuation enables one to read more fluently).
When to do it?	Language usage skills are integrated with Listening and Speaking, and Reading and Writing activities.
How to do it?	Language usage skills are taught in context during Listening and Speaking, and Reading and Writing activities. In some cases, the teacher might find it useful to teach grammar more explicitly in short lessons.
How to assess it?	Language usage is assessed during Listening and Speaking, and Reading and Writing activities, both orally and in a written format.
Resources	• Big Book • readers • DBE Workbook • punctuation cards (symbol and meaning, e.g. **?** - question mark) • classwork book • worksheets
How to identify cracks?	• Learners who are unable to use correct tenses in spoken language, and who confuse tenses in their writing. • Learners who do not use punctuation in written language. • Learners who have difficulty with word order, sentence and paragraph structure.
Remember	Model the use of tenses in spoken language and focus on common punctuation marks in printed texts during reading lessons. Draw learners' attention to the way language is used. Lots of practice in sentence writing will improve learners' writing.

5.2 Timetabling and daily routines for reading instruction

Schools offering an African language as the LoLT will use **7 hours for Home Language** and **3 hours for FAL** in Grades 1 and 2. In Grade 3 the time allocation for **Home Language is 7 hours** and **4 hours for FAL**. The timetable must be in accordance with the CAPS and incorporate the following from Monday to Friday: Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, Phonics, Shared Writing, Independent Writing, Handwriting, Language Usage, vocabulary and spelling activities, as well as Listening and Speaking.

Reading and Writing focus time: During the language lesson there should be a dedicated Reading and Writing focus time which allows the teacher to do Shared Reading followed by Group Guided Reading with two groups every day. During the Group Guided Reading session (small group reading with the teacher), the rest of the class should be engaged with consolidation activities such as phonics, spelling, language usage and writing, written comprehension, and paired or independent reading activities.

GRADE 1 Home Language (HL) Weekly Routine: maximum time 7 hours

- The learning programme follows the same routine every week. This makes it easy for teachers and learners to follow.
- Learners can prepare for the next activity once they know the routine.
- The routine is based on the CAPS maximum time for HL (7 hours per week).
- The routine should be displayed in the classroom.

Table 10: **GRADE 1 WEEKLY ROUTINE**

MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Morning oral		Morning oral		Morning oral		Morning oral		Morning oral	
Phonics	15	Phonics	15	Phonics	15	Phonics	15	Phonics	15
Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30
Handwriting	30	Writing	15	Handwriting	30	Writing	15	Writing	15
Shared Reading	15	Shared Reading	15	Shared Reading	15	Listening & Speaking	30	Listening & Speaking	15
Story-telling		Teacher Read-Aloud		Story-telling		Teacher Read-Aloud		Story-telling	
Total	**90**	**Total**	**75**	**Total**	**90**	**Total**	**90**	**Total**	**75**

* *Story-telling and Teacher Read-Aloud sessions: 10 minutes per day x 3 days utilise Home Language and Life Skills time allocation*

GRADE 2 Home Language (HL) Weekly Routine: maximum time 7 hours

- The learning programme follows the same routine every week.
  This makes it easy for teachers and learners to follow.
- Learners can prepare for the next activity once they know the routine.
- The routine is based on the CAPS maximum time for HL (7 hours per week).
- The routine should be displayed in the classroom.

Table 11: **GRADE 2 WEEKLY ROUTINE**

MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Morning oral		Morning oral		Morning oral		Morning oral		Morning oral	
Phonics	15	Phonics	15	Phonics	15	Phonics	15	Phonics	15
Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30	Group Guided Reading	30
Handwriting	30	Writing	30	Handwriting	15	Writing	15	Writing	15
Shared Reading	15	Shared Reading	15	Shared Reading	15	Listening & Speaking	30	Listening & Speaking	15
Teacher Read-Aloud		Story-telling		Teacher Read-Aloud		Teacher Read-Aloud		Story-telling	
Total	**90**	**Total**	**90**	**Total**	**75**	**Total**	**90**	**Total**	**75**

* *Story-telling and Teacher Read-Aloud sessions: 10 minutes per day x 3 days utilise Home Language and Life Skills time allocation*

GRADE 3 Home Language (HL) Weekly Routine: maximum time 7 hours

- The learning programme follows the same routine every week.
  This makes it easy for teachers and learners to follow.
- Learners can prepare for the next activity once they know the routine.
- The routine is based on the CAPS maximum time for HL (7 hours per week).
- The routine should be displayed in the classroom.

Table 12: **GRADE 3 WEEKLY ROUTINE**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning oral Story-telling	Morning oral Teacher Read-Aloud	Morning oral Teacher Read-Aloud	Listening & Speaking 30 • Morning oral • Story-telling	Listening & Speaking 15 • Morning oral • Teacher Read-Aloud
Phonics 10	Phonics 10	Phonics 10	Phonics 10	Phonics 20
Shared Reading 15	Shared Reading 15	Shared Reading 15		Shared Reading 15
Group Guided Reading 30	Group Guided Reading 30	Group Guided Reading 30	Group Guided Reading 30	Group Guided Reading 30
Handwriting 30	Writing 30	Handwriting 15	Writing 15	Writing 15
Total 85	**Total 85**	**Total 70**	**Total 85**	**Total 95**

* *Story-telling and Teacher Read-Aloud sessions: 10 minutes per day x 3 days utilise Home Language and Life Skills time allocation*

SECTION 6: THE ENABLERS THAT IMPACT EFFECTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Section 6 focuses on the enablers and support plan for struggling readers.

6.1 The enablers

The Framework has identified the following enablers which will impact on the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase. Figure 11 below gives an overview of the enablers:

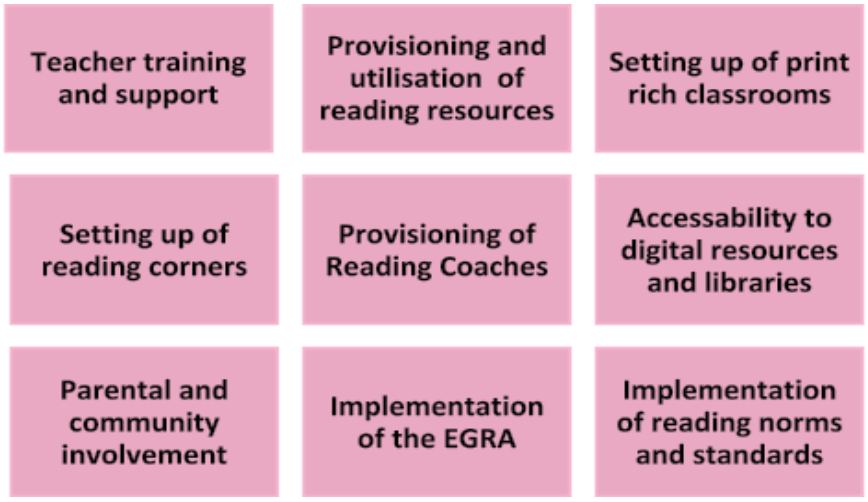


Figure 11: *Enablers that impact on reading instruction*

Table 13: **THE ENABLERS**		
Enabler	**What is it?**	**Why is it important?**
Teacher Training and Support	This refers to the training teachers should receive regarding the teaching of reading (the reading components and methodologies) in the Foundation Phase.	Effective teacher training programmes and ongoing support from all stakeholders will impact on reading outcomes in the early grades.
Provision of Reading Resources	Reading resources for Grades R to 3 include Big Books, graded readers, storybooks, phonics programmes, conversation posters and DBE Workbooks.	Teachers will be able to use a variety of reading resources to teach reading in accordance with the reading methodologies prescribed in CAPS. They will be able to select appropriate reading materials: • Texts at the right level

		• Texts that are interesting and motivating for individual learners (boys and girls, different developmental stages) • High quality children's literature in home and additional languages • Non-fiction texts in home and additional languages.
Developing Children's Motivation and Reading Habits	This means providing opportunities for children to choose, handle, and engage freely with books and other texts in class and at school during reading sessions such as library periods and Drop All And Read time.	Children must: • have frequent, regular and extended opportunities to handle and engage with texts • experience reading for enjoyment • take books and other reading resources home to read in their own time.
Setting up of Print-Rich Classrooms	A print-rich classroom is a classroom that has displays of theme posters, phonics charts, vocabulary charts, wordlists, word-walls, learners' writing, and a classroom library or Reading Corner (see below).	A print-rich classroom exposes children to printed texts (letters, words, captions, sentences) which will enable them to read freely on their own. It will also give them exposure to various kinds of printed texts which will help them widen their interests and knowledge. as well as expand their literacy skills.
Setting up of Reading Corners	A reading corner is a dedicated space in the classroom where teachers display storybooks, picture cards, reading cards and children's comics. If there is space, there can be a mat there where a few learners can sit and read.	The reading corner is a welcoming space where children can pick up any book that suits their interest and read freely, independently and in pairs.
Provisioning of Reading Coaches	A reading coach is a professional literacy trainer and mentor who offers classroom-based support to teachers with regard to the teaching of reading.	Literacy trainers help teachers improve instruction by implementing new teaching strategies. Teachers need classroom-based support to translate their teacher training during workshops into classroom practice. The role of the reading coach is to support teachers in delivering effective reading lessons.

Enabler	What is it?	Why is it important?
Accessibility to ICT and Libraries	• ICT resources include smartboards, books on tablets and laptops. • Libraries: this includes access to a classroom library, trolley library, mobile library, the school library or a public library.	Allows access to a wide variety of literacy materials. Experience with ICT resources will expose learners to reading printed texts through electronic media. Access to libraries will encourage children to read independently in the classroom, school and home.
Parental and Community Involvement	Parents and the local community are important role-players who can offer support to promote a reading culture in schools by attending school reading events, volunteering to help as library assistants, and by participating in Reading Clubs, etc.	Parents and community members should be involved with promoting a reading culture e.g. telling stories, asking children what they learned at school, checking homework, asking children to read to them, and taking them to the library.
Implementation of the EGRA	The EGRA is a diagnostic reading assessment that is used to assess the learners' reading proficiency in different areas, e.g. letter sound recognition, word reading, passage reading and comprehension.	The EGRA is effective in identifying learners who are not at grade level (e.g. those with poor phonological awareness in Grades R and 1, poor letter-sound knowledge in Grade 1, and poor oral reading fluency and comprehension in Grades 2 and 3. This enables teachers to measure the impact of their teaching, to put learners in appropriate ability groups for Group Guided Reading, and provide extra support for struggling readers.
Implementation of Reading Norms and Standards	Reading norms and standards are benchmarks for the teacher and the learner (such as ORF levels).	Reading norms and standards enable and assist teachers to: • compare their learners' performance against an evidence-based standard of performance • evaluate the impact of their teaching • set goals for achievement so that learners reach the required benchmarks by the end of the grade • identify learners who have fallen far behind.

6.2 Factors to consider when drawing up a support plan for struggling learners

Now that you have a better understanding of the different components of reading and how to teach them so that learners can make meaning of written texts on their own, we will take a brief look at how teachers in the Foundation Phase can help learners who struggle to read.

6.2.1 Foundation Phase support plan

It is important for schools to build a culture of professional caring, responsive teaching and inclusivity. Recognising and accepting learner diversity is an important aspect of responsive teaching. Learners are different. Not all learners learn at the same pace or in the same way. However, all learners have the right to education and to becoming literate, even if some find it challenging and do so more slowly. Part of this culture of professional caring includes helping learners who struggle to read. These are learners who need extra help, over and above the help you give them in the classroom generally, and more specifically in Group Guided Reading. It also includes learners who are repeating a grade and who are older than their grade age.

It is important to have a plan that is jointly decided by all the Foundation Phase teachers, that everyone is aware of, and that states what the procedures at the school are for learners who struggle with reading or learning. The belief that all children CAN learn if given the right opportunity and care should underpin your support plan. Below are four steps to keep in mind for setting up a support plan for struggling learners in the Foundation Phase.

6.2.2 The importance of early detection

All the teachers in the Foundation Phase should be alert to reading or learning problems and discuss their concerns with their colleagues and the HOD so that intervention action can be taken as soon as possible.

Why is the early detection of reading or learning problems important?

Research shows that the earlier we intervene, the better the chances of remediation are; catching up later is more difficult, takes longer and impacts negatively on the child's self-esteem, confidence and interest in reading.

How do we identify problems?

There are different ways of identifying reading and writing problems.

- Use of baseline assessments at the beginning of the year: Make sure that your baseline assessments are well designed and can pick up how learners are performing in different aspects of reading, for example:

- phonological and phonemic awareness
- phonics (letter-sound knowledge, and the ability to blend and segment sounds and syllables)
- word reading
- oral reading fluency (ORF)
- comprehension (with literal and inferential questions)
- handwriting and writing.

- Observations in class and during breaks: Observation is an integral part of assessment and should be a daily means of evaluating learner ability and the learning process. Besides the obvious signs of struggling to read, are there children who also have problems concentrating, are easily distracted, are withdrawn and quiet, or are aggressive and disrupt other children? These are all signs of children not coping at some or other level.

- Observations during Group Guided Reading: Working with learners in smaller groups during GGR provides you with an ideal opportunity to pick up which learners are struggling with reading and where. If they find it difficult to catch up in GGR and if they don't make progress, then you can be sure that they probably need extra attention. Keeping a notebook during GGR helps you keep track of your learners, especially those who are struggling to keep up with the pace of teaching and learning in their group.

- Parental input: Sometimes parents will tell you something about the child that can help you build up a picture of what is going on in the child's life.

- Previous year's report: This will give you an indication of the learner's performance level and/or behaviour. A discussion with the previous year's teachers who have worked with the learner can also provide useful information.

6.2.3 Targeting areas of greatest need

Once a child has been identified as struggling with reading, the next important step is to target the area of greatest need. For example, if a Grade 1 learner is repeating, try to establish what s/he already knows and where the difficulties lie. In which components of the baseline assessment does the child do OK or badly? Does s/he know the letters of the alphabet, their sounds and can write them, but has problems reading words? If so, then the area of greatest need is not letter-sounds but rather the ability to *blend* sounds and sound out sequences of letters to make words. If, however, the child is still struggling with letter-sounds, then the area of greatest need is going back to phonics basics.

If a Grade 3 child can decode but does so rather slowly and has problems with comprehension, then the area of greatest need is improving ORF and building comprehension strategies.

After identifying the struggling learner and the area of greatest need, the next critical step is deciding on a support plan with suitable interventions that will address the targeted needs.

6.2.4 Planning an intervention

An intervention is a plan of action taken to address specific reading or learning problems that learners have. It usually lasts for a specific period of time (i.e. extra sessions during a 6-week period or for a term). Learners are typically put in small groups, pairs or receive one-on-one attention, depending on their needs. The class teacher should work with these learners *outside* of classroom time, or during classroom time, while the rest of the class are busy with their usual activities.

NOTE: Research shows that **struggling learners do not manage to catch up in classroom time.** They need additional attention and time. Below are a few tips to help you plan your intervention.

How long should the intervention be?

Research shows that 'a little, but often' (e.g. 15 minutes x three times a week) is more effective than one long session once a week (45 minutes x once a week).

When can you fit it in?

- 15 minutes before/after school each day
- during breaks

How should the intervention be carried out?

- one-on-one (note that learners who really struggle often benefit first from one-on-one attention for a few lessons before they are put in a small group)
- in pairs
- in small groups.

What criteria inform the grouping?

- Initially, intense one-on-one intervention is necessary to enrich the intervention, especially for learners who have fallen far behind their peers.
- Pair work can be introduced once there are gains in skills and ability.
- Once the basic skills have been mastered, the learner can be part of a small group intervention.

- Ideally, a small group should be between 4 to 6 learners. More than this diffuses the quality of the intervention as the teacher has to attend to too many children all requiring focused and concentrated support.

Who can be called on to assist – in the classroom before and/or during and/or after school?

- teacher assistants
- parents / grandparents / volunteer mothers
- unemployed but relatively educated youth in the community.

6.2.5 Be systematic and plan well beforehand

The intervention must be systematic and well planned. For example:

- The intervention must re-introduce the learning in a developmental and progressive manner (not random activities), in line with what has been taught but which the learner has not yet assimilated or internalised.
- Teach the targeted areas of greatest need. Take into account where the learner is 'now', and go back to where the breakdown is; from there, build up knowledge and skills progressively, filling in gaps in knowledge and understanding. For example, if the learner can't read words in a sentence, maybe s/he has problems with phonological and phonemic awareness and letter-sound knowledge. If so, go back to basic phonics. However, if the learner knows letter-sounds but has problems with reading words in a list or in a sentence, then focus on developing blending and segmenting skills and provide opportunities for the learner to practise word attack strategies.
- If a learner is repeating a grade, find out where exactly the learner has problems, and tackle those one by one. Vary the learning so that the intervention is not just a repetition of what went unlearnt the year before.
- Teach for mastery: make sure that the learner has acquired the necessary skill before moving on to the next step. For example, if a learner struggles with letter-sound knowledge, focus on phonics and work through all the letters systematically, making sure that s/he knows the letters already dealt with and can blend and segment them, before revising new ones.

Record keeping and tracking

It is important to keep track of the learners' progress during the intervention otherwise you have no reliable way of knowing whether your intervention is helping the learner or not.

- Use assessment data: Test the learners before the intervention starts so that you know where they are at (or use the baseline results), monitor progress during the intervention,

and then assess the learners at the end of the intervention period. It is important to check skill level after the intervention to see how successful the intervention has been.

- Build the learners' growth mindset (see "Self-Efficacy" section in the component on Reader Response). Success relies on hard work, so praise them for their *effort* and *perseverance*. Celebrate their successes. Even a little gold star on the forehead can boost the confidence of a young learner!
- Build up a profile of each learner and keep the information in separate files. Get information from the sources mentioned above. Describe aspects such as the child's home background situation, emotions, behaviour, attitudes to reading/learning, etc. Also note small successes, e.g. *For the first time Sipho could name all the letter-sounds quickly and correctly (4th week of intervention). He smiled afterwards and seemed more confident. His concentration seems to have improved and he is starting to participate more in class.*
- If a learner is not making progress, try to identify what is wrong. Is the intervention not targeted at the right level? Does the learner need one-on-one attention rather than work in a group? Is a longer intervention needed? Find out if something is happening in the learner's home? Is a referral necessary?

Important tips and questions for reflection

- Be consistent, encouraging and patient. Why is this desirable?
- Build self-sufficiency through explicitly teaching the learners strategies that they can use to overcome an obstacle, e.g. word attack skills. How else can this be done?
- Build a growth mindset. Make sure that the learners understand the link between effort, perseverance and achieving a goal. How can this be done?
- Build quick wins: gain the learners' trust and promote their confidence. How can this be done?
- Build motivation to read, to make an effort, and to learn. How can this be done?

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
agglutinative	When words are made up of sequences of prefix(es) and/or suffix(es) attached to the root of a word.
conjunctive	When one orthographic word corresponds to one morphologically rich word. For example: *Ndibabona abantwana* (I see the children) – instead of it being written as '*Ndi ba bona abantwana'*). The Nguni languages are mostly written conjunctively.
disjunctive	When some morphological agreement is written separately. For example: *Ke a ba bona bana* (I see the children) – instead of it being written as '*Keababona bana'*). The Sotho languages, Xitsonga and Tshivenḓa are mostly written disjunctively.
digraph	When the phoneme is represented by a two letter grapheme. For example, '*sh*' in the word *'ishumi'* is one sound but it is represented by two letters. This is a digraph. The two letters must be decoded simultaneously in reading.
grapheme	A way of writing down a phoneme. Graphemes can be made up from one letter e.g. '*s*', two letters e.g. '*sh*', or three letters e.g. '*tsh*'.
morpheme	The smallest meaningful unit within a word. In English, the word '*cat'* is a single meaning that can't be broken down into smaller meanings. The word '*cats'* is made up of two morphemes {cat}+{s} with the '-s' in this word indicating the plural form (there is more than one cat). The same way *dikatse* is made up of {di}+{katse} or *iikati* is made up of {ii}+{kati}.
morphology	The study of meaningful units of language – the understanding that a single letter or group of letters can represent meaning (e.g. 'un' in 'unhappy' means 'not').
oral reading fluency (ORF)	The ability to read aloud with accuracy, at a steady pace, with intonation and comprehension. ORF assessment is usually a timed task, to see how many words a child can read correctly in a minute (wcpm). The text should be grade appropriate and is followed by a few comprehension questions to ensure the child is comprehending while decoding.
orthography	A set of conventions for writing a language, including norms of spelling.
opaque/deep orthography	When the relationship between the letter and the sound it represents is not direct (e.g. the sound 'ou' in English is pronounced in three different ways in the words 'r*ou*gh', 'th*ou*gh' and 'c*ou*gh'). English and French are languages with opaque orthographies.

transparent/ shallow orthography	There is a direct relationship between the letter and the sound it represents. For example the letter 'u' in African languages is always pronounced as /u/. All African languages have transparent orthographies.
phoneme	The smallest unit of sound, for example the sound 'm'. It has no meaning by itself but phonemes together make up syllables and words. Changing one phoneme with another can change the meaning of a word, e.g. /g/ as in *game, got* vs /l/ as in *lame, lot*.
phonemic awareness	Phonemic awareness falls under phonological awareness but refers to the specific ability to focus on and manipulate single sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
phonics	The teaching of which sounds match to specific letters and letter combinations of the alphabet. An understanding of the written representation of oral sounds and letter combinations.
phonological awareness	Phonological awareness is the umbrella term that includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language – parts such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes.
trigraph	When the phoneme is represented by a three-letter grapheme. For example, 'tlh' in the word '*tlhapi*' is one sound but it is represented by three letters. The three letters must be decoded simultaneously in reading.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The DBE wishes to place on record its sincere gratitude to:

- **Prof Elizabeth (Lilli) Pretorius:** University of South Africa
- **Prof Brian Ramadiro:** Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development University of Fort Hare
- **Ms Xolisa Guzula:** University of Cape Town
- **Ms Jenny Katz:** Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy
- **Ms Siân Rees:** Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy
- **Ms Sarah Murray:** Rhodes University
- **Ms Tracy Probert:** Rhodes University
- **Ms Catherine Ngwane:** Room to Read
- **Ms Vanessa Francis:** Room to Read
- **Provincial and district African language specialists**
- Ms Jenny Katz, Editor
- Ms Siphiwe Shikwambane and Ms Yvonne Motsepe: Administrative and logistical support
- Mr Kamogelo Makgoga : Design and Layout
- Ms Chintha Maharaj (Chief Education Specialist, GET Curriculum): Project Leader

REFERENCES

Abadzi, H. 2017. Turning a molehill into a mountain? How reading curricula are failing the poor worldwide. Prospects DOI 10.1007/s11125-017-9394-9

Acha, J, Laka, I & Perea M. (2010). Reading development in agglutinative languages: Evidence form beginning, intermediate and adult Basque readers. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 105, 359-375.

Adams, M. 1990. Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Alcock, KJ, Ngorosho, D, Deus, C & Jukes, MCH. 2010. We don't have language at our house: Disentangling the relationship between phonological awareness, schooling and literacy. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 80(1): 55-76. (Kiswahili)

DOI:IO.I348/000709909X42441 I

Bialystok, E. 2009. Bilingualism: The good, the bad, and the indifferent. Bilingualism: Language and Cognition 12(1): 3-11.

Biancarosa, G & Shanley L. 2016. What s fluency? In KD Cummings & Y Petscher (eds). The fluency construct. Amsterdam: Springer Sciences.

Bissex,G. (1984). The child as teacher. In H.Goelman, A.A. Oberg, and F.Smith (Eds) *Awakening to literacy*, Portsmouth, NH and Oxford: Heinemann.

Bloch, C. (1997). *Chloe's story: first steps into literacy.* Kenwyn: Juta.

Block, CC & Pressley, M. (Eds.) 2002. Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices. New York: Guilford.

Bock, Z (2016). Multimodality, creativity and children's meaning-making: Drawings, writings, imaginings. In Linguistics Plus, Vol. 49, 2016, 1-21 doi: 10.5842/49-0-669

Brown, A.L., Palinscar, A.S. & Armbruster, B.B. 1984. Instructing comprehension fostering activities in interactive learning situations. In H. Mandl, NL Stein & T. Trabasso (eds), Learning and comprehension of text, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp.255-286.

Cain, K. 2010. Reading development and difficulties. Chichester: BPS Blackwell.

Cambria, J. and Guthrie, J.T. 2010. Motivating and engaging students in reading. NERA Journal 46(1): 16-29.

Castles, A, Rastle, K. and Nation, K. 2018. Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 19 (1): 5-51.

Chall, JS, Jacobs VA & Baldwin, LE. 1990. The reading crisis: Why poor children fall behind. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Christenson SL & Thurlow ML. 2004. School dropouts: Prevention, considerations, interventions, and challenges. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13: 36–39. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.01301010.x

Clay, M. (1972). *Reading: the patterning of complex behaviour*. Auckland: Heinemann educational. (Chaps 4 & 5, p25-47)

Cummins, J. 2008. BICS and CALP; Empirical and theoretical status of the distinction. In N. Hornberger (Ed.) Encyclopedia of Language and Education. Boston, Mass: Springer.

Cunningham, AE & Stanovich, KE. 2001. What reading does for the mind. Journal of Direct Instruction. Summer: 137-149.

Dehaene, S. 2009. Reading in the brain: The new science of how we read. London: Penguin Books.

DeStefano, J. (RTI) 2012. Opportunity: A Guide to Education Project Design Based on a Comprehensive Literature and Project Review. EQUIP2 State-of-the-Art Knowledge in Education Series.

Dickinson, D.K. and Tabors, P.O. 2001. Beginning literacy with language: Young children learning at home and school. Baltimore: Brookes.

Dweck, C. 2015. The secret to raising smart kids. Scientific American, 23 (5).

Elbro, C., & Buch-Iversen, I. 2013. Activation of background knowledge for inference making: Effects on reading comprehension. Scientific Studies of Reading, 17: 435–452. doi:10.1080/10888438.2013.774005

Farkas, G. & Beron, K. 2004. The detailed age trajectory of oral vocabulary knowledge: Differences by class and race. Social Science Research 33(3): 464-497. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2003.08.001

Guthrie, JT, Laurel, A, Hoa, W, Wigfield, A, Tonks, SM, Humenick, NM, & Littles, E. 2007. Reading motivation and reading comprehension growth in the later elementary years. Contemporary Educational Psychology 32: 282–313.

Hall, N. (1987). The Emergence of Literacy. London. Hodder and Stoughton

Hart, B. & Risley T. 2003. The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3. American Educator 22: 4-9.

Hasbrouck, J. & Tindal, G.A. 2006. Oral reading fluency norms: A valuable assessment tool for reading teachers. The Reading Teacher, 59(7): 636–644.

Helman, LA & Burns, MK. 2008. What does oral language have to do with it? Helping young English-language learners acquire a sight word vocabulary. The Reading Teacher, 62(1): 14–19.

Hernandez, DJ. 2011. The Double Jeopardy: How third grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation. Baltimore, MD. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Hoover, WA & Gough, PB. 1990. The simple view of reading. Reading and Writing, 2: 127-160.

Howie, S., Combrinck, C., Tshele, M., McLeod Palane, N., & Mokoena, G., 2017. PIRLS 2016: South African Highlights Repor, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Johnson, E.R. 2012. Academic language and academic vocabulary. Sacramento, CA.: Achievement for All Publishers.

Kamhi-Stein,LD. 2003. Reading in Two Languages: How attitudes toward Home Language and beliefs about reading affect the behaviors of 'underprepared' L2 College readers. TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 37(1): 35-71.

Kim Y-SG, Boyle HN, Zuilkowski SS, & Nakamura P. 2016. Landscape Report on Early Grade Literacy. Washington, D.C.: USAID.

Kim Y-SG, Hansol, L & Zuilkowski, SS. 2019. Impact of Literacy Interventions on Reading Skills in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Meta-Analysis. Child Development, 1-23.

Klapwijk, N. & van der Walt, C. 2011. Measuring reading strategy knowledge transfer: Motivation for teachers to implement reading strategy instruction. Per Linguam 27 (2): 25 – 40.

Krashen, S. (1993). *The Power of Reading.* Englewood CO: Libraries unlimited. USA

Lervåg, A, Hulme, C, & Melby-Lervåg, M. 2017. Unpicking the developmental relationship between oral language skills and reading comprehension: It's simple, but complex. Child Development. Advance online publication. doi:10.1111/cdev.12861

Lipka, O. & L.S. Siegel. 2007. The development of reading skills in children with English as second language. Scientific Studies of Reading 11(2): 105–131.

McCormick, S. 1992. Disabled readers' erroneous responses to inferential comprehension questions: description and analysis. Reading Research Quarterly 27:55-77.

McIlwraith, H. (ed.) 2013. Multilingual Education in Africa: Lessons from the Juba Language-in- Education Conference. London: British Council.

McNamara, D.S. (ed.) 2007. Reading comprehension strategies. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

McNamara, D.S & McDaniel, M.A. 2004. Suppressing irrelevant information: Knowledge activation or inhibition? Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 30: 465–482. doi:10.1037/02787393.30.2.465

Melby-Lervåg M & Lervåg A. 2011. Cross-linguistic transfer of oral language, decoding, phonological awareness and reading comprehension: a meta-analysis of the correlational evidence. Journal of Research in Reading, 34 (1): 114–135. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j. 1467-9817.2010.01477.x.

Mem Fox (2008). *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever*. Marina Books, Australia

Mtatse, N. & Combrinck, C. 2018. Dialects matter: The influence of dialects and codeswitching on the literacy and numeracy achievements of isiXhosa Grade 1 learners in the Western Cape. Journal of Education, 72: 21-37. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i72a02

Mullis, I, O. Martin, M, Foy & Hooper, M. 2017. PIRLS 2016 International Results in Reading. TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Boston.

National Reading Panel. 2000. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

NEEDU. 2013. NEEDU National Report 2012: The State of Literacy Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Phase. National Education and Evaluation Development Unit. Department of Basic Education, Pretoria.

Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development. (no date) Isandi zesiXhosa.

Neuman, S.B. 1999. Books make a difference: a study of access to literacy. Reading Research Quarterly, 34: 286-311.

Ntuli, D., & Pretorius, E.J. 2005. Laying foundations for academic language competence: The effects of storybook reading on Zulu language, literacy and discourse development. Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies 23(1): 91-109.

Oakhill, J., Hartt, J., & Samols, D. 2005. Levels of comprehension monitoring and working memory in good and poor comprehenders. Reading and Writing, 18, 657–686.

Oakhill, J., Cain, K. and Ebro, C. 2015. Understanding and teaching reading comprehension. London: Routledge. doi:10.1007/s11145-005-3355-z

Orwenjo, DO, Njoroge, MC & Ndung'u, RW. (eds) 2014. Multilingualism and Education in Africa: The State of the State of the Art. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Piper, B., & Zuilkowski, S. S. 2015. Assessing reading fluency in Kenya: Oral or silent assessment? International Review of Education, 61(2): 153-171.

Pretorius, EJ. 2005. What do students do when they read to learn? Lessons from five case studies. South African Journal of Higher Education 19 (4):790-812.

Pretorius, EJ & Lephalala, MMK. 2011. Reading comprehension in high poverty schools: How should it be taught and how well does it work? Per Linguam 27(2):1-24.

Pretorius, EJ & Klapwijk, NM. 2016. Reading comprehension in South African schools: Are teachers getting it, and getting it right? Per Linguam 32(1): 1-20.

Probert, T.N., 2019, 'A comparison of the early reading strategies of isiXhosa and Setswana first language learners', South African Journal of Childhood Education 9(1): a643. https://doi.org/

Rees, SA. 2016. Morphological awareness in readers of isiXhosa. Unpublished MA dissertation, Rhodes, University, Grahamstown.

Rhymer, KN, Dittmer, KI., Skinner, CH & Jackson, B. 2000. Effectiveness of a multicomponent treatment for improving mathematical fluency. School Psychology Quarterly 15(1):40-51.

Schaefer, M. & Kotze, J. 2019. Early reading skills related to Grade 1 English Second Language literacy in rural South African schools. South African Journal of Childhood Education 9(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.644

Scheepers, R.A. 2016. The importance of vocabulary at tertiary level. Journal for Language Teaching, 50(1): 53 – 77.

Siedenberg, M. 2017. Language at the speed of sight. New York: Basic Books.

Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S. & Griffin, P. 1998. Preventing reading difficulties in young children. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.87

Stæhr, LS. 2008. Vocabulary size and the skills of listening, reading and writing. Language Learning Journal 36(2): 139-152.

Sulzby & Teale, W.H (Eds) (1986). *Emergent Literacy: Writing and Reading*. New Jersey: Ablex publishing company

Trelease, J. (2013) *The Read-Aloud Handbook:* Seventh Edition 7th Edition. Penguine Books

UNESCO & UNICEF Institute of Statistics. 2014. All children in school by 2015: Global initiative on out-of-school children, regional report, West and Central Africa. West and Central Africa: UNICEF Regional Office.UNESCO

Vasilyeva, M. & Waterfall, H. 2011. Variability in language development: Relation to socioeconomic status and environmental input. In Handbook of early literacy research, Volume 3. Neuman, SB & DK Dickinson(eds), New York: The Guilford Press, pp36-48.

Vauras, M, Kinnunen, R. & Kuusela, L. 1994. Development of text-processing skills in high-, average-, and low-achieving primary school children. Journal of Reading Behavior 26:361-389.

Venkat, H. 2019. Measuring and improving Foundation Phase number outcomes. Paper presented at Early Learning Workshop, ReSep, Stellenbosch 4-5 July 2019.

Vivas, E. 1996. Effects of story reading on language. Language Learning, 46: 189-216.

Wilsenach, C. 2015. Receptive vocabulary and early literacy skills in bilingual Northern Sotho-English bilinguals. Reading and Writing 6(1), Art.#77, 11 pages.

Wilsenach, C. 2019. Phonological awareness and reading in Northern Sotho - Understanding the contribution of phonemes and syllables in Grade 3 reading attainment. South African Journal of Childhood Education 9(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.647

Wolf, M. 2008. Proust and the squid. Cambridge: Icon Books.

Zenex Foundation. July 2018. ZenLit Overview Report.

Published by the Department of Basic Education

222 Struben Street

Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001

Telephone: 012 357 3000 Fax: 012 323 0601

ISBN: 000-0-0000-0000-0

website
www.education.gov.za

facebook
www.facebook.com/BasicEd

twitter
www.twitter.com/dbe_sa