

HIAS OPEN RESOURCE

Approaches to reading in lessons

Supporting all readers in secondary schools

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Final version

Overview

This document contains...

Slides that could be used as part of a CPD sequence for teachers in school, supporting understanding of reading in secondary schools

Points to consider when using this resource

The resources in this series are intended as a companion piece to the DfE's series of training videos and guidance [*Supporting all readers in secondary school*](#), providing additional detail. This resource expands on ideas shared in video 9, [Reading in lessons](#) and provides links to research.

Classroom conditions for reading



Know students' reading skills

Familiarise yourself with the issues that struggling readers face – do they find decoding difficult or is it a question of comprehending what they read?



Create opportunities for both teacher and students to read aloud

Read with animation – sell the text
Listen for errors and difficulties when students read in order to support them



Positive and supportive classroom atmosphere

Low threat; zero tolerance of ridicule



Check understanding

Consider how and where to do this before reading. Don't assume that all have understood.



Strong voice

Anyone who reads aloud must read loudly enough to be heard around the room. Model using a louder voice.

Deciding how to read in the classroom

Teacher reads aloud

- Fluent, clear reading can help students to understand
- Weaker readers develop language comprehension
- Reading along to a fluent reader can help to connect words to meaning
- Class stays together

Students read independently

- Students have eyes-on-text practice – build experience and concentration
- More of a challenge for some students
- Raises expectations of independence and underlines the expectation of reading

Students need both

- **If teachers always read aloud**, students will learn that they do not need to read in order to learn. Opportunities to develop their reading competence through accessing subject-specific material will be missed.

- **If students always read**, either silently or aloud, they will miss out on hearing what subject-specific material, read well, sounds like. Some students will struggle to access the material and may miss key information.

Reading aloud as a teacher

- Read aloud at a greater volume than you would expect to speak normally in the classroom – project like an actor
- Aim for a reading speed of 120 – 150 wpm, not faster
- Be careful not to ‘throw away’ the ends of sentences or paragraphs
- Emphasise phrasing using brief pauses
- Modulate your voice to emphasise words – emphasising different words in the sentence may change the meaning
- Read expressively, clearly demonstrating the meaning of the text through your tone (eg changing to a quieter tone for information in brackets, or raising the pitch of your voice at the end of a question)
- Read through the whole before asking questions, repeating or allowing time for re-reading

Dramatising the phrasing

The **Galapagos** Islands || are an **archipelago** || or **group** of islands || that have been **created** || by **volcanoes**. ||| They are **found** || in the **Pacific Ocean**|| almost **1000km** || from the **coast** of **Ecuador** || in **South America**. ||| The islands are || at **either** side || of the **Equator** || which **means** that || they are in **both** || the **Southern** || and || the **Northern** || **Hemisphere**.

Some teachers are less confident in reading aloud, and if this is the case, a quick practice before reading in front of the class can make a difference. Focus on reading in chunks of meaning, pausing more frequently than you would normally do, and emphasising a key word within each phrase.

[Let's explore the Galápagos Islands - BBC Bitesize](#)

Your phrasing and prosody (expressive reading) supports listening comprehension and models the way that we want students to read – with fluency and understanding.

Approaches to student reading

	Pros	Cons
Round robin (reading around the class, following a clear path within the seating plan)	Simple and straightforward; requires minimal teacher prompting; many pupils involved	Can be stressful for struggling readers; flow is lost when a student loses their place or reads too quietly to be heard
Popcorn (students read a certain amount and then call on a peer to take over)	Less predictable for students than round robin; students need to stay on task to ensure they are ready to pick up the reading	Can be stressful for struggling readers (and can be used unkindly by classmates); frequency of changes of reader can make the reading experience fragmentary
Small group	Can be a supportive context when well-handled; each individual student reads aloud either more frequently or at greater length	Can make the classroom noisy and can mask off-task behaviour; pace can vary between groups; harder to notice gaps in understanding
Individual, silent	Each student reads the whole text; sets expectation of reading independently	Struggling readers lose out; students do not hear fluent readers; hard to gauge pace

HIAS English Team

Please contact Joanna Kenyon Joanna.Kenyon@hants.gov.uk for support with secondary reading, whole school literacy and English.

For further details on the full range of services available please contact us using the following email: htlcdev@hants.gov.uk

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