

HIAS OPEN RESOURCE

Further active reading strategies for comprehension

Supporting all readers in secondary schools

Joanna Kenyon
May 2025
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 8, [Teaching reading comprehension](#) and provides links to research.

Think-Alouds – modelling the thinking behind the reading

A *think-aloud* is a way of capturing understanding of text, articulating ideas, questions, clarification of vocabulary, predictions while reading. This modelling approach supports children to understand the thought processes of a confident reader.

Davey, B. (1983). *Think Aloud: Modeling the Cognitive Processes of Reading Comprehension. Journal of Reading, 27(1), 44-47*

■ General Think Aloud Scenarios:

- Teacher models think aloud; students listen.
- Teacher thinks aloud; students assist.
- Students think aloud as large group; teacher and other students monitor and assist.
- Students think aloud in small groups while teacher and other students monitor and help.
- Individual students think aloud in forum or Fishbowl; other students help.
- Students think aloud individually; compare with others.
- Teacher or students think aloud orally, in writing, on an overhead, with Post-it Notes, or in a journal; then share.

-Wilhelm, J. (2001). *Improving comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies*. New York: Scholastic.

Annotations to show thought processes in a *think-aloud* approach

Teachers should demonstrate the kind of disciplinary thinking and annotation that is required for the subject – students' notes are often poor and do not support comprehension unless this process is modelled for them by an expert.

Annotations to show thought processes in a think-aloud approach

Peru: development fact file

Gross national income	\$11 295	(2016)
Infant mortality	19 per 1000 population	(2015)
Doctors	1.1 per 1000 population	(2013)
Access to clean water	91% urban, 69% rural	(2015)
Access to sanitation	82% urban, 53% rural	(2015)
Internet access	40% - v low	(2014)

Peru is a middle income country which ranks 77th out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index. According to government statistics about 30% of the population live below the national poverty line. In rural areas, where food insecurity is a constant problem, 50% of the population are considered poor. People born in Lima, the capital city, can expect to live almost 20 years longer than those in rural areas. In remote rural villages, many people live in huts which lack even the most basic facilities and have no modern technology.

Road developments – an important part of the development process

The Peruvian government have given the go ahead for the construction of a number of new roads in the Amazon. The roads will connect major settlements and create opportunities for development in parts of rural Peru. The economic benefits of the road developments will be significant and the newly developed links with Brazil will create trade corridors. The Wall Street Journal reported that the new road developments will create exciting new travel opportunities and open up new areas to tourism. It is thought that tourism is a suitable way to develop the area because it will bring considerable economic benefits with limited environmental impacts. Supporters of the road programme claim that the economic gains will outweigh any negative impacts and, since the roads pass through protected reserves and National Parks, environmental damage will be kept to a minimum. Conservation groups are concerned about the effects on the environment and indigenous communities but agree that protected areas may be less at risk from deforestation.

Annotations:

- GNI** – above \$1000 but below \$12000
- above the middle** → not that poor
- near the top of this group?**
- high - not safe**
- huge gap**
- impact of poverty in country areas**
- Andes** → **Rainforest**
- hard to get to** → Peru
- sewage? water? electricity?**
- jobs? manufacturing? resources?**
- trade + tourism**
- because people can get there!**
- remote Amazon tribes – little contact with the outside world**
- government control means development will be careful?**
- not everyone agrees**
- tourists want to see the country in its natural state** → preserve environment → better than deforestation?
- not easy to build** → link up remote areas
- rainforest** → can't travel through easily now
- no internet** → information options → like going back in time?
- rural** → not a good food supply
- big difference between city and countryside** → much poorer outside cities

This example demonstrates the *think-aloud* process aimed at securing initial understanding using the pre-released material from an AQA Geography GCSE paper (2018). A more subject specific approach would be even more beneficial.

Accessed online
[june-2018-paper-3-prerelease-materials-aqa-gcse-geo.pdf](https://www.aqa.org.uk/materials-aqa-gcse-geo.pdf)

A *think-aloud* annotation approach can also reveal to the teacher the **misconceptions** held by the student.

This example includes the commentary made by a group of secondary school literacy leaders when asked to *think-aloud* around a maths problem aimed at Year 6 pupils.

Explicit modelling of a maths-specific approach to thinking about a problem-solving question is clearly needed here!

Is she prepping for lockdown? — that's not a balanced diet — why does she want so much soup?

all the same soup? — Miriam buys 19 tins of soup. All the tins cost the same price.

heavy! — She goes to the shop with just one note, and comes home with the tins and the change in coins. On the way home she drops the change. She looks carefully and she thinks she picks it all up. — using cash not card — a child — oh no! She's got so much to carry

poor thing — When she gets home she gives £2.23 change to her mother. — Is she going to be in trouble?

Do you think that Miriam picked up all the change that she dropped?

Why couldn't her mother go to the shop?

Is Miriam a young carer?

Are they both malnourished on soup diet?

Modelling inferences



Inferential reading is a complex process and involves bringing in background knowledge and knowledge of the world as well as making connections between pieces of information within the text.



Inference-making is at the heart of making meaning and is an area where struggling readers often find the most difficulty, meaning that their understanding of a text is limited.



Inference questions on the KS2 reading paper tend to include some of the most challenging questions and this domain of reading often appears as an area of struggle for those pupils who have not met or who have just met the expected standard in reading.



Emphasising inference and deep understanding in reading of any text is therefore key to developing comprehension at KS3 across all subjects.



Teachers can effectively model the inference-making process through think-aloud modelling.

Inference sums: additional scaffolds to support students in making inferences

Henry Mayhew (1812-1887) was a leading social reformer who investigated prisons and the lives of the poor in the nineteenth century.

Henry Mayhew visits a prison

The next moment a stream of some dozen or two prisoners poured from the cells, carrying their coats on their arms, and drew themselves up in two files across the centre corridor. Then we heard the warder cry, "Cleaners, face! - Cooks, face! - Bakers, face!" whereupon the men wheeled round with almost military precision, and retired, some to wash the entrance passages and offices, others to help in the kitchen, and others in the bakehouse.



Mayhew was a leading social reformer

+

Social reformers try to improve society and right wrongs

=

Mayhew is an idealist and has strong values/opinions/ideas about the right way to do things

Mayhew investigated prisons and the lives of the poor in c19th

+

The poor had hard lives with little support from the state in c19th

=

Prisons likely to be quite harsh in c19th if anything like treatment of the poor

Information stated explicitly in the text

Background knowledge

Inferences

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

Upcoming Courses

Keep up-to-date with our learning opportunities for each subject through our Upcoming Course pages linked below. To browse the full catalogue of learning offers, visit our new Learning Zone. Full details of how to access the site to make a booking are provided [here](#).

- [English](#)
- [Maths](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Geography](#)
- [RE](#)
- [History](#)
- [Leadership](#)
- [Computing](#)
- [Art](#)
- [D&T](#)
- [Assessment](#)
- [Support Staff](#)
- [SEN](#)
- [TED](#)
- [MFL](#)

Terms and conditions

Terms of use

This file is for personal or classroom use only. By using it, you agree that you will not copy or reproduce this file except for your own personal, non-commercial use. HIAS have the right to modify the terms of this agreement at any time; the modification will be effective immediately and shall replace all prior agreements.

You are welcome to:

- download this resource
- save this resource on your computer
- print as many copies as you would like to use in your school
- amend this electronic resource so long as you acknowledge its source and do not share as your own work.

You may not:

- claim this resource as your own
- sell or in any way profit from this resource
- store or distribute this resource on any other website or another location where others are able to electronically retrieve it
- email this resource to anyone outside your school or transmit it in any other fashion.