

Possible Approaches to Reading in Class

A balance of reading approaches forms part of a balanced curriculum. The summaries below aim to support teachers in choosing from a range of reading approaches according to pupils' needs and key learning. This is not a definitive list.

Guided Reading

Guided Reading is a grouped approach to reading in class. The model enables teachers to work with small groups of pupils to develop their reading skills, whilst other groups work independently. This method allows the teacher to tailor the teaching to the needs of the group. A range of texts can be used for different groups if required.

Key Learning: (the focused area of need)

Pros: learning personalised to need of pupils; encourages independent response to text; pupil talk enables metacognition and collaborative understanding of text

Cons: planning may be more time consuming if using range of texts (but probably worth it); pupils not in guided group need to work independently and may slip off task; teacher working with guided group can be interrupted by the need to manage behaviour and application

When could we use?

This approach can be used with any text and is useful when a small group of pupils need input that others do not. Pupils need to be familiar with the forms of independent tasks set for pupils not in guided group.

Modelled Reading To Think Aloud

Teacher reads aloud, modelling and demonstrating/annotating the thought processes of comprehension such as inference making and asking questions of texts

Key Learning: comprehension, inference, metacognition

Pros: thinking process is made explicit, supporting pupils in understanding the metacognition that sits behind comprehension

Cons: pupils need opportunities to apply these skills independently after teacher modelling if this approach is to be successful

When could we use?

Whole class, small group, individual. Useful as preparation to secure comprehension

Choral Reading

Reading in unison with a small group or whole class.

Key Learning: reading fluency, prosody, summary and synthesis, secure understanding

Pros: provides a model for fluent reading; pupils feel supported and less self-conscious; less skilled readers can receive practice prior to reading aloud in class

Cons: more difficult to hear individuals; slower coverage of text; reading can become slow and monotonous as pupils may focus on staying in time with others over expression

When could we use?

This approach is useful for pre-teaching key sections of texts before whole class reading or performance.

Silent Individual Reading

Pupils read silently in class or at home.

Key Learning: meaning making; internal reading voice; self-regulation strategies

Pros: quicker coverage; class time saved; pupils apply strategies independently (i.e. rereading when meaning breaks down); develops reading fluency at pupils' own pace; develops internal reading voice

Cons: difficult to assess; some pupils may struggle; pupils read at different speeds; some pupils may be unprepared for follow up tasks; managing silence (behaviour) can lead to pupils' associating silent reading with sanctions

When could we use?

When you need to get through a text with more speed; homework; application of strategies previously modelled and practised in class

Character Parts/Drama

Pupils take character roles, reading the dialogue/sections/part of script. Teacher or pupils may read narration. This works well as part of a dramatic reading/performance.

Key Learning: expression, intonation, character voice, making meaning, reading punctuation

Pros: can be an engaging way to access text; provides a more immersive experience of text; encourages pupils to distinguish between character roles; pupils are often more willing to read parts than sections of text

Cons: involves few pupils; pupils may be anxious to perform; can expose poor fluency; where character parts are confused by pupils, meaning can be altered

When could we use?

This works well as part of a dramatic reading/performance – Shakespeare for example, or roles within a narrative text with a number of characters

Prepared Reading

Pupils have the opportunity to prepare reading prior to performance. This may include annotating for prosody.

Key Learning: expression, intonation, character voice, making meaning, reading punctuation

Pros: pupils are prepared for reading and this may help with anxiety; pupils are likely to read text more effectively; prosody is considered, supporting pupils in making meaning

Cons: preparation time is needed

When could we use?

To support pupils who are reluctant to read aloud and to develop the fluency of all readers. To support dramatic reading and expression

Round Robin Reading

Traditional reading around the class where pupils read aloud one after the other.

Key Learning: text coverage/knowledge of text

Pros: number of pupils practise reading aloud; wide coverage of hearing pupils read to assess fluency; pupils hear reading aloud; pupils perceive as fair; little planning involved

Cons: some pupils reluctant to read aloud to whole class; exposes poor fluency; difficult to adapt text to pupils' needs; can be difficult for pupils to remain focused when not reading; oral reading slower than silent reading; lack of fluency makes the content and meaning of the text harder to grasp for pupils and can have a negative impact on enjoyment

When could we use?

This approach may work for small groups of fluent and confident readers.

Pupil Directed Reading

Reading around the class, but pupils nominate the next reader. Pupils can provide a number, with the teacher counting seats to the next pupil (in any direction).

Key Learning: text coverage/knowledge of text

Pros: number of pupils practise reading aloud; wide coverage of hearing pupils read to assess fluency; pupils hear reading aloud; pupils perceive as fair; little planning involved

Cons: some pupils reluctant to read aloud to whole class; exposes poor fluency; difficult to adapt text to pupils' needs; can be difficult for pupils to remain focused when not reading; oral reading slower than silent reading; lack of fluency makes the content and meaning of the text harder to grasp for pupils and can have a negative impact on enjoyment

When could we use?

This approach may be useful for short sections of text and for texts that have already been read or will be read again



Paired Reading

Students are paired; a stronger reader in terms of fluency (pupil A) with a struggling reader (Pupil B). Copies of the same text.

Pupil A reads text aloud while Pupil B follows silently. Pupil B corrects any errors while Pupil A is modelling prosody, accuracy, and fluency. Pupils switch roles.

After the passage has been read a second time, pupils discuss the content of the text and write a joint summary of the piece.

Key Learning: reading fluency, prosody, summary and synthesis, secure understanding; working with and listening to others

Pros: pupils have opportunities to hear and practise reading fluency; texts are re-read; opportunities to discuss and compare choices in intonation and prosody; smaller audience reduces anxiety; teachers can pair pupils effectively; text will be re-read; understanding has to be demonstrated in summary outcome; this is an opportunity for teachers to assess understanding

Cons: teachers may struggle to hear all pupils read; pairs of less fluent readers may need extra support; coverage of texts takes longer as re-reading is key to this approach

When could we use?

Once pupils are used to this approach, it can be used in a variety of contexts. As pupils are required to re-read, it is most useful for short extracts, such as poetry, an article, a section from a textbook, or a key moment in a novel.

Skim Reading Reports

One pupil is given a set time to skim a text (for example a news article) and quickly identify the gist. Make sure children are aware of what they might be skimming for. For example: subject (what is the article about?); tone (humorous, serious, persuasive etc.)

The pupil then creates a short 'skim report'. I.e. "This is a humorous news article. It is about a man who changed his name so that he could break a world record."

This is given to a partner who reads the article aloud and in full and discusses the accuracy of the skim report. Pupils can be asked to go back and scan for specific information.

Key Learning: skimming and scanning; summary and synthesis; secure understanding; working with and listening to others

Pros: develops skimming skills (and scanning if appropriate); encourages independent comprehension and understanding; supports pupils to focus on the big picture, rather than small details; develops summary and synthesis skills; supports pupils in focusing on what is most relevant in the text

Cons: unlikely that teachers will hear pupils read in this context; pairs of less fluent readers may need extra support; surface-level understanding of big picture of text may mean that detail is lost

When could we use?

With any short text/extract to develop skimming/summary skills; arguably more appropriate for non-fiction texts

Reciprocal Reading

Reciprocal reading is an approach to reading that focuses on jointly constructing the meaning of a text through dialogue, often in small groups with pupils taking on key roles. The four key roles are: predictor; questioner; clarifier; summariser

Key Learning: (reading comprehension: skills of prediction/inference; questioning; clarifying; summarising)

Pros: all pupils have clear roles and accountability; ideas are shared supporting joint understanding; skills are modelled, practised and applied; teachers can easily assess pupils' understanding; supports independence and collaborative talk; supports metacognition; once pupils are familiar with approach can be applied anywhere and skills will be taken into independent work

Cons: approach needs to be properly taught and modelled for it to be a success; relies on effective group work

When could we use? This approach is very adaptable when aiming to develop comprehension



Control the Game Reading (Teach Like a Champion)

Ask students to read aloud frequently but manage the process to ensure expressiveness, accountability and engagement. Teachers intersperse their own reading with the pupils' reading in order to model fluency. The focus is on reading with expression, occasionally asking for re-reads to reinforce when it is done well.

Doug Lemov's rules:

- Don't state duration of reading; keep unpredictable
- Keep durations short
- Keep the identity of the next reader unpredictable

Direct sections of the text appropriate to need

Key Learning: fluency/text coverage/knowledge of text

Pros: fluency of reading is modelled by teacher and pupils; teacher can adjust difficulty in reading; pupils need to focus as could be asked to read at any time

Cons: some pupils reluctant to read aloud to whole class; exposes poor fluency; oral reading slower than silent reading; unpredictability can cause anxiety for pupils with SpLD

When could we use?

This approach may be useful for short sections of text and for texts that have already been read or will be read again

Teacher Reading

Teachers model reading aloud with expression and appropriate prosody.

Key Learning: fluent reading and expression/text coverage

Pros: pupils are exposed to fluency and expressive reading; the meaning of the text is made clear.

Cons: difficult to assess pupils' listening and understanding; understanding can be assumed; fewer opportunities to develop pupils' fluency and meaning making.

When could we use?

This approach may be useful for short sections of text and to model how to read fluently

References

- *Teaching Literacy in the Visible Learning Classroom, Grades 6-12*, Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (20 Jul 2017)
- *Teach Like a Champion*, Doug Lemov