

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

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

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Guidance

Curriculum and  
Standards

# Primary

## National Strategy

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

Unit 2

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

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

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creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

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

Unit 2

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



## Defining terms

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

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

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

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

## Acknowledgements

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

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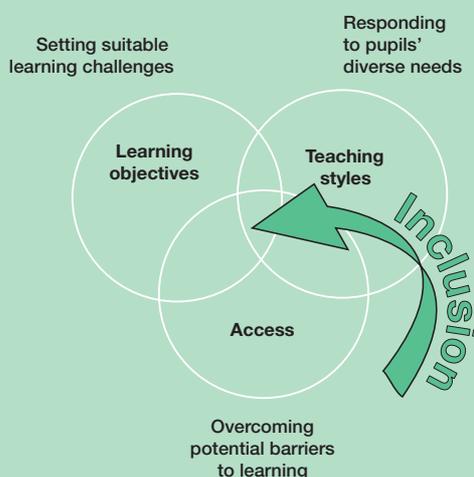
# Preface

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

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

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

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



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

# General introduction

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

The materials consist of the following:

## Introductory guide: supporting school improvement

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

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

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

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

## Professional development modules

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

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

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



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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Making contexts supportive for children learning EAL

## Building on previous experience

Activating prior knowledge

Using bilingual strategies

Creating shared experiences

see also Assessment for learning in Unit 1

see also Culturally familiar contexts for learning in Unit 3

## Scaffolding language and learning

Frames and prompts

The print environment

Modelling

Graphic organisers and other visual support

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

Use

# Developing cognitive and academic language

Reading comprehension

Writing

Speaking and listening

At text level:  
making texts cohesive

At word level:  
vocabulary extension

At sentence level:  
grammatical challenges for children learning EAL

Experiential learning

Exploratory talk

Guided talk for literacy

Barrier games

see also Exemplar whole-class teaching sequences in Unit 4

of ICT

## Section 1

# Making contexts supportive for children learning EAL

## Introduction

Making the learning contexts supportive for children learning EAL includes:

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

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

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

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



# Building on previous experience

Building on previous experience includes:

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





## Activating prior knowledge

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

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

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

### Strategies for activating prior knowledge include:



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



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

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

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

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





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

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



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



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





## Creating shared experiences

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





## Bilingual strategies

Bilingual strategies:

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

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

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

*Linguistic diversity is celebrated explicitly here.*

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

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

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

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

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



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

**before lessons**

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

**during lessons**

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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



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

# Scaffolding language and learning

## Scaffolding

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

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

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

### Scaffolding by adults

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

### Scaffolding through collaborative work

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

### Scaffolding through visual support

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



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

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

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

## Modelling

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

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

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



When modelling for children learning EAL teachers should model:

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



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

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

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

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

My uncle has mended our house in Kasanik.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



We're weighing things in mathematics.

Yes, we're learning about weight.



## Use of frames and prompts

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

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

## Use of graphic organisers and other visual aids

### What are graphic organisers?

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

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

They are particularly useful tools for EAL learners as they:

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



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

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

Purposes:

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

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

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

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

Purposes:

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

Structures typically identified are:

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



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

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

These graphic organisers can then be used:

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

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

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



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

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



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







## The print environment

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

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



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

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

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



# Section 2 Developing cognitive and academic language

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

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



# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



# Reading

Publications which are particularly useful are:

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



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

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

Practitioners and leadership teams should also refer to:

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

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

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

## Early Reading

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

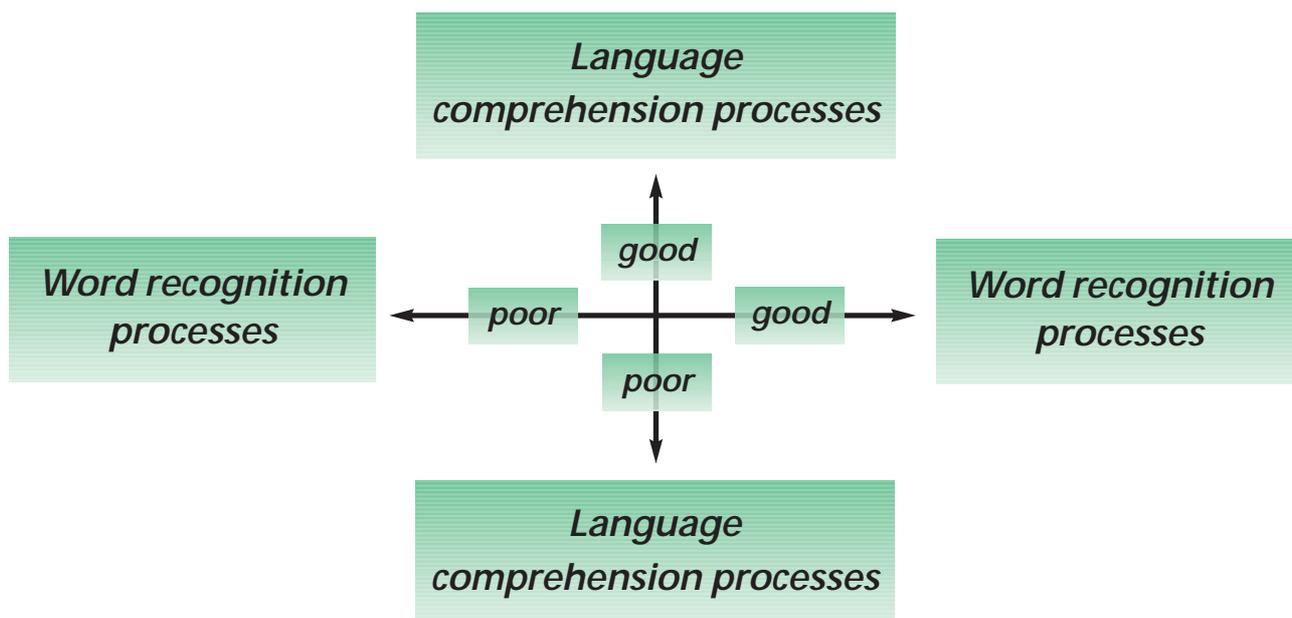
It is important that early phonic work is taught successfully within a language-rich curriculum. For young children, effective work draws on all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum to develop children's imagination and enrich their communication skills, particularly speaking and listening.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

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

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



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



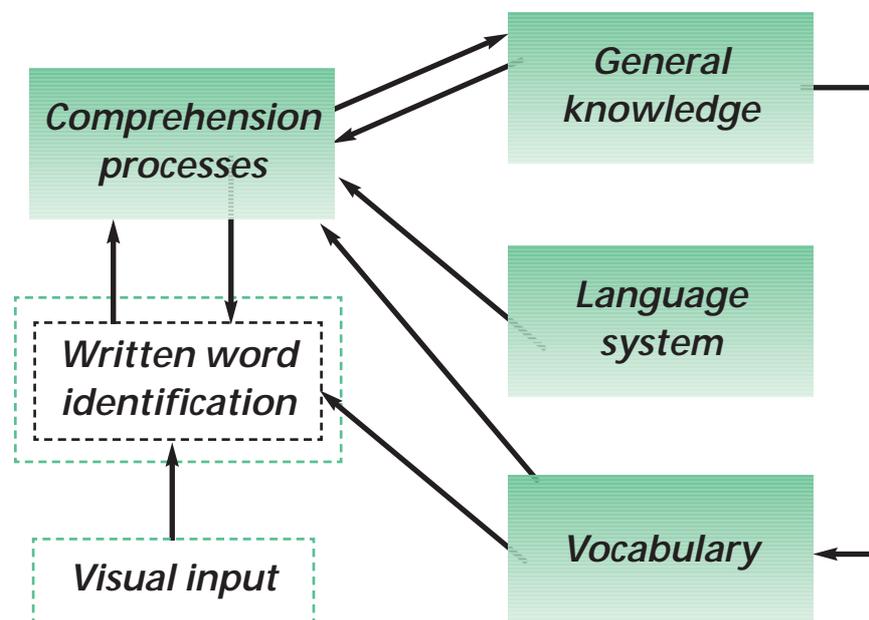
'Gough and Turner further make clear that word recognition is necessary, but not sufficient for reading because ability to pronounce printed words does not guarantee understanding of the text so represented. Furthermore, linguistic comprehension is likewise necessary, but not sufficient, for reading: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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## Challenges in reading for meaning

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

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

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





## What is reading comprehension?

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

### Comprehension – making meaning from texts

*understanding  
language systems*

*engaging with  
the text*



*making connections  
with existing  
knowledge*

*critically evaluating  
the text*

*reflecting on  
responses*

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

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

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



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

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

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

## Text selection

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

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



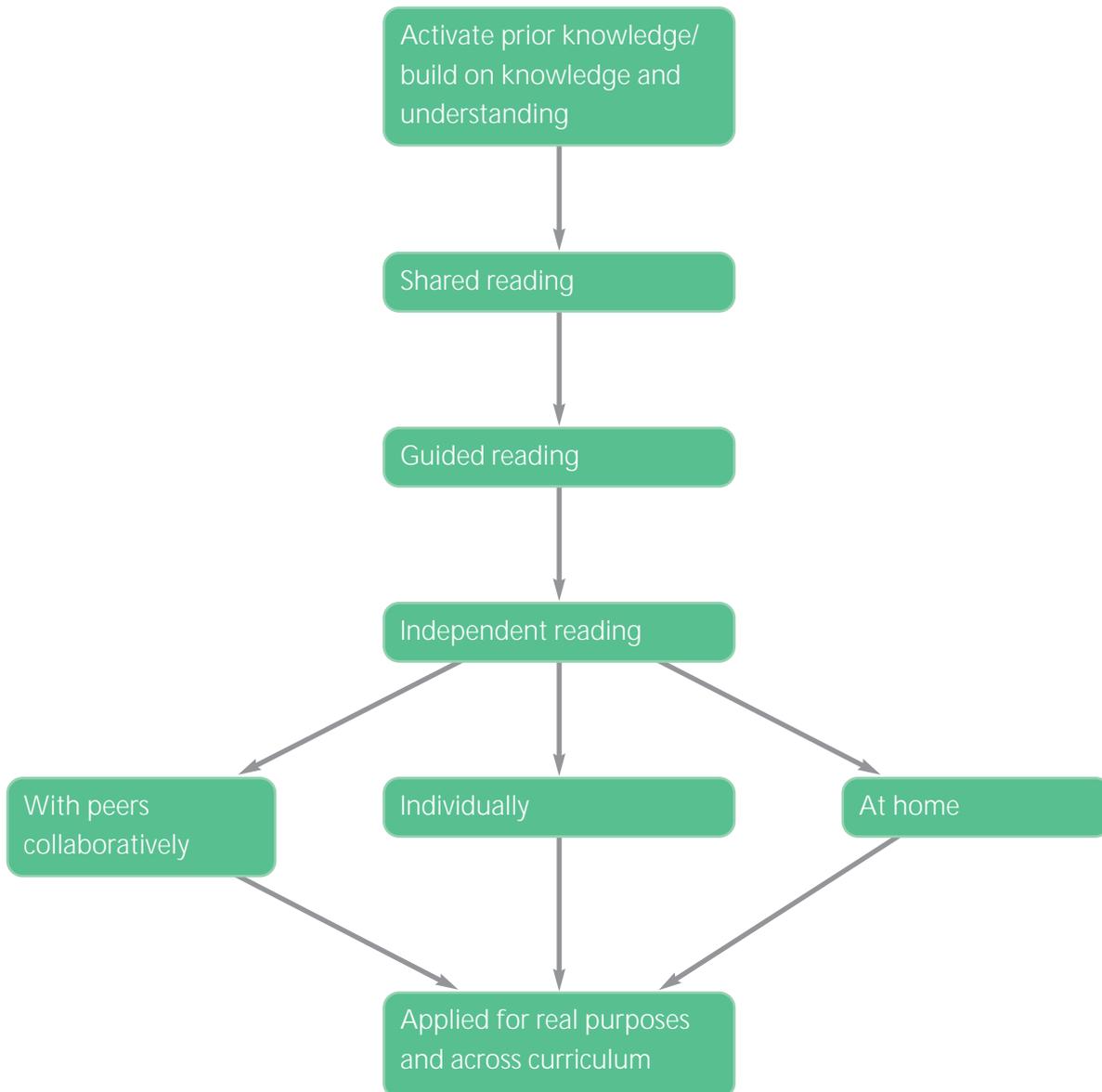
- Texts which reflect children's interests and experiences as well as texts which enhance and extend their experiences.
- Texts with familiar contexts (setting, cultural context, non-fiction linked to topic work) support the development of skills, particularly of deduction and inference, and confidence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

### Vocabulary development

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



## A teaching sequence for reading





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



## Activating prior knowledge

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

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

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

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

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



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

## Shared reading

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

Shared reading provides:

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



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

### Guided reading

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



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



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

### Independent reading

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



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



### Using syntactic strategies

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

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

Strategies for teaching the use of syntactic cues include:

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



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

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

### Scaffolding reading comprehension

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

#### Use of frames, prompts and props

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

**ICT for EAL**

In the responsibility of the school leadership team to ensure that ICT is used appropriately and imaginatively to meet the diverse needs of bilingual learners, children working together in an interactive digital world to work together through the curriculum as well as learn the curriculum through English.

**ICT supports learning and teaching**

Access to the curriculum (presenting content in different ways)

Developing shared experiences (writing, speaking, listening, reading)

Language development (writing, reading)

- Creating shared experiences and content for writing, speaking, listening, reading through interactive whiteboards, multimedia, interactive digital resources for supporting learning across the curriculum
- Using ICT to support small group responses and protocols for problem solving, mathematics, literacy, cross-curricular projects and interactive whiteboards
- Using interactive whiteboards
- Teaching and learning of writing on screen, interactive whiteboards, multimedia, interactive whiteboards, multimedia, interactive whiteboards to support interactive learning, writing, reading and multimedia work
- Using ICT to support understanding of text, literacy, reading and writing

**Assessment for learning**

Observation, recording of language use and learning collected by observation, recording of children, video, audio, recording, recording on interactive whiteboards

**Partnerships beyond the classroom**

Using digital, video and audio, in the collection of activities and events

1. at school
2. in the community

Use of interactive whiteboards and software to support learning and teaching in the classroom



### Planned opportunities for speaking and listening

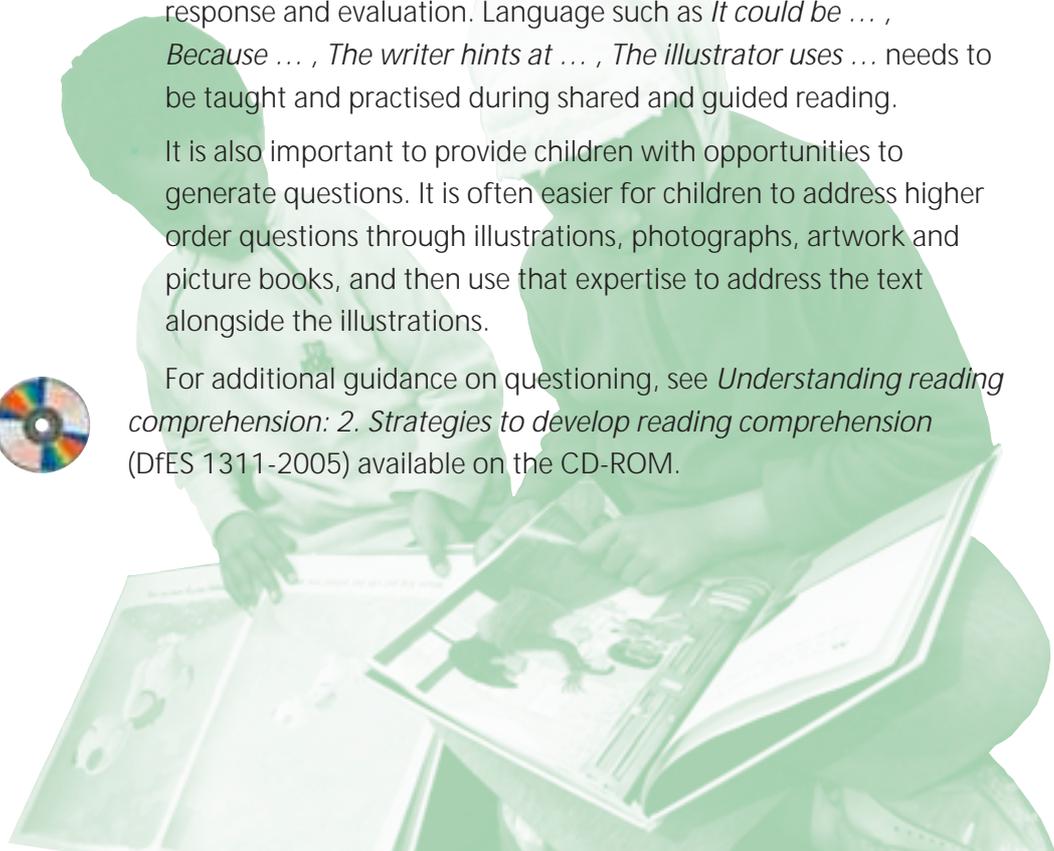
- Use of partner talk during shared, guided and independent reading to provide opportunities to rehearse language as well as sharing, evaluating and reflecting on understanding of the text.
- Creating shared experiences through drama and role-play which contributes to the development of understanding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

### Questioning

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



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





### Constructing images as a strategy to support meaning

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

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



### Collaborative reading strategies

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



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

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

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



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



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



# Writing

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

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

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

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

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

## Early writing



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



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

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

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

## Writing at text level

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

### Cohesion in texts

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

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

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





- using one short word to refer back to a longer word or group of words previously mentioned, e.g. *Giovanni thought the world was flat. That was what everyone thought in those days;*
- using pronouns to refer to something previously mentioned in the text, e.g. *The crowd were ecstatic. They cheered loudly;*
- using pronouns to refer to something about to be mentioned, e.g. *Once she had finished the sentence she was writing, the teacher looked up;*
- by the use of the definite article with something mentioned previously which can now be taken for granted, e.g. *The strange creature stared back.*

These devices make texts predictable and therefore easier to read. Teachers should explore them with children through shared reading and demonstrate them during shared writing.

Activities which support children to understand and use a wide range of cohesive devices can be found in *Developing Early Writing* (DfEE 0055/2001) and *Grammar for Writing* (DfEE 0107/2000). For further suggestions see the text reconstruction activities below.

### Text reconstruction activities

Text reconstruction activities are extremely useful collaborative activities which support the development of grammatical knowledge and text level knowledge of how writers shape and frame whole texts for different purposes and how they make their writing coherent and cohesive. They are particularly useful when children learning EAL work collaboratively with more expert peers and with children who share their first language.

These activities also support the development of syntactic cueing by developing a child's ear for the patterns of written language, in the same way as hearing stories read aloud and story retelling activities.

Three examples are described below. In the first children listen to the whole text, discuss it and then write it. In the second example they read the text and then recite it aloud. In the third example they physically manipulate chunks of texts to create the whole.



### Dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1990)

First the teacher reads, at normal or near normal speed, a text which may be related to any curriculum area. During this first hearing the children listen without writing anything down.

During subsequent readings by the teacher (once or twice more) the children each write down as much as they can.

In pairs, the children discuss what they have managed to get down on paper and try to make a shared version of the text which is as complete as possible.

Each pair then joins with another pair to form a group of four and again continue to pool their information. They should *not* be encouraged to use their own words as the aim is for the group to arrive at as accurate a copy of the original text as possible.

Finally, the children compare their reconstructed text with the original, discussing any differences.

The benefits of Dictogloss as a collaborative speaking and listening activity for EAL learners are as follows.

- It can be used as a way of presenting new factual information across the curriculum.
- It encourages careful listening.
- It engages children in talk about language as well as content.
- It encourages children to work collaboratively.
- It provides the opportunity to practise orally using the language modelled by the written text.
- It makes children notice language they do not understand.
- It encourages them to try out unknown or unfamiliar language.
- It facilitates the acquisition of new language through the process of trying it out and collaboratively talking about meaning.
- The complexity of the text may be varied according to the age and needs of the children.



### Vanishing cloze

'Write up on the board a short passage (three or four sentences or even shorter for beginners) based on something students are familiar with. Students read it aloud together. Erase one word from anywhere in the text. Students read it again, putting back the missing word. Erase another word and repeat the process. Continue until all the words are removed, so that the students are now "reading" from memory. These repeated readings are especially helpful if the text contains a tricky grammatical structure or subject-specific vocabulary that the students are currently learning, since it provides a context for repetition that is both fun and challenging.'

Extract from Pauline Gibbons (2002) *Scaffolding language and learning*, reproduced here with permission from Heinemann.

**This activity can be made more challenging by using a longer text and by erasing phrases rather than individual words.**



### Detectives

A group of children are given a text 'torn' into fragments. It could be a letter or message as in the example below. The fragments may be paragraphs, sentences or individual words and phrases. The children are detectives who have to reconstruct the text in order to find clues. They need to think of all possibilities so some ambiguities that need to be discussed should be built into the activity as in the example below.

Teachers should model thinking aloud about grammatical conventions and asking themselves, *Does this make sense?* At the end of the activity children should reflect on how they used what they know about grammar in English to help them during the activity.



### Example of a 'Detectives' activity

Cut up and jumble the words.

At	precisely	twelve	minutes	past	one,
I'll be	standing	under	the clock	on	the wall
in	the library.	I'll be	carrying	a	brown
umbrella	under	my	arm.	So that	
I'll	recognise	you,	wear	a red	jacket
over	something	white	.		

Say to the children:

*You are a group of detectives. You have found a note torn into pieces. You are going to work collaboratively.*

- *Assemble the pieces so you can read the message.*
- *Identify all possibilities.*
- *Discuss and decide how to record these possibilities.*
- *Prepare to report back to the detective superintendent.*

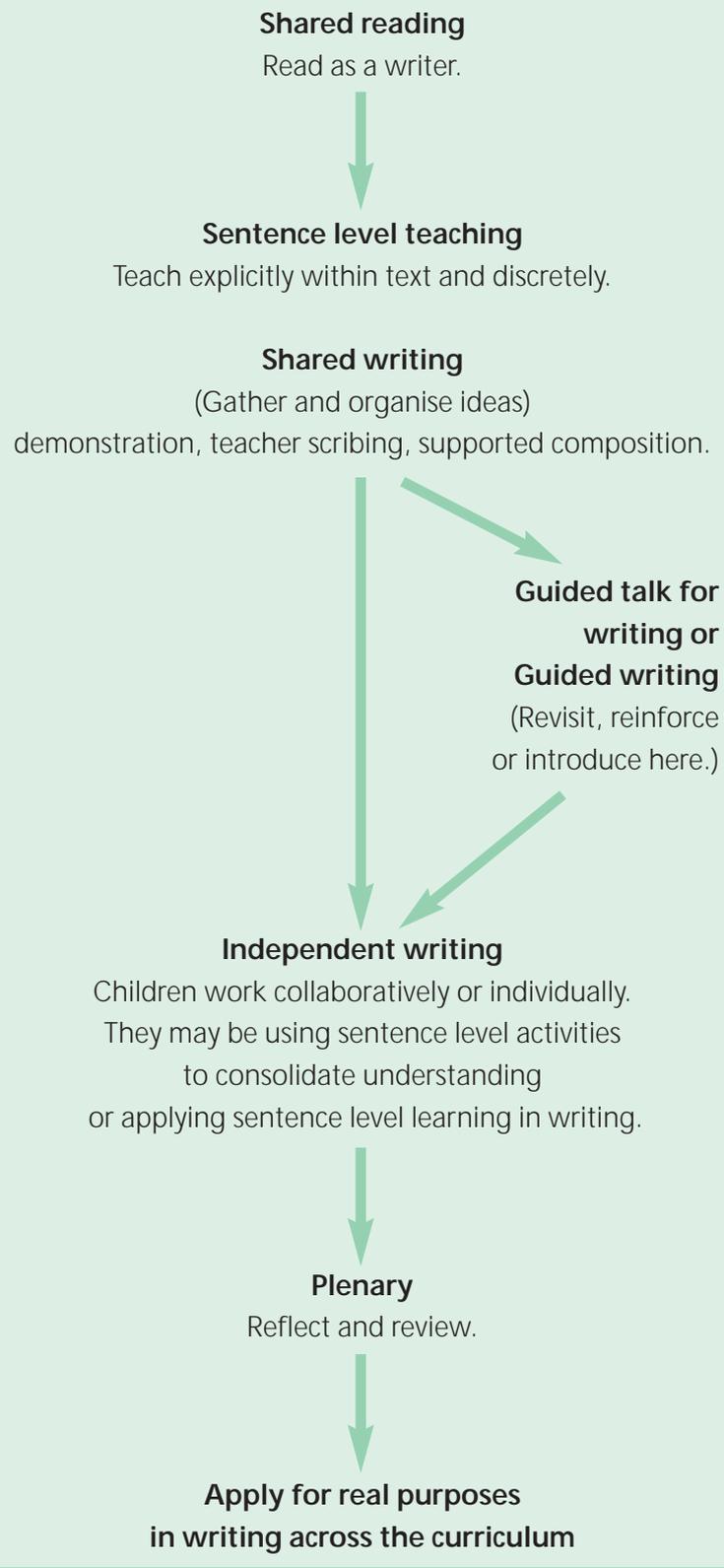




## A teaching sequence for writing

Continue to explore writers' use of the grammatical form in shared reading across the curriculum.

Reinforce in guided reading.



Reinforce and apply during speaking and listening lessons as appropriate.



### Writing at sentence level

It is important that sentence level work is grounded in exploration and investigation of written texts, applied in shared writing and supported in guided group work where possible.



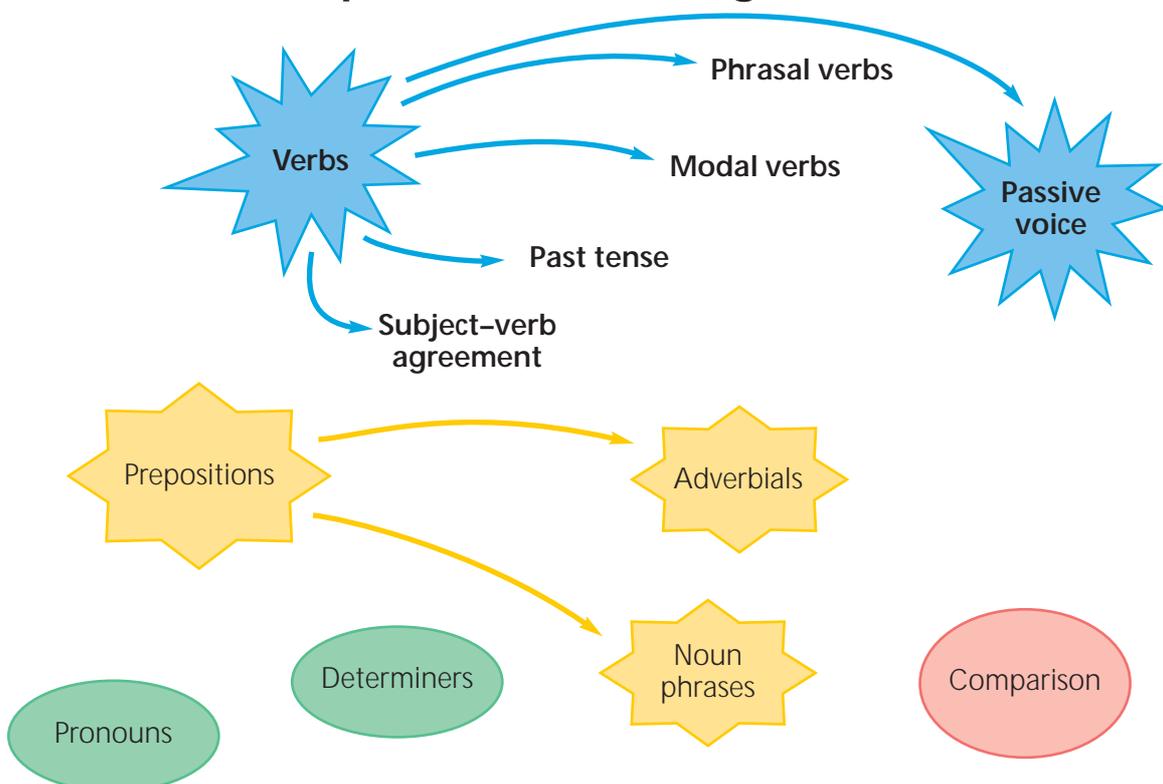
#### *Developing Early Writing*

(DfEE 0055/2001) and *Grammar for Writing* (DfEE 0107/2000) provide guidance and a wealth of valuable practical strategies which support all children, including those learning EAL, to achieve their writing targets. These exemplar teaching units address the level objectives and the relevant strand in the Primary Framework (2006).

Many aspects of grammar at sentence level likely to present particular challenges for children learning EAL, and highlighted by Lynne Cameron, are covered extremely well in both publications. Teachers and practitioners should use the generic sentence level activities in these publications as they can be adapted to address all the sentence level issues for EAL learners described below.

The grid on page 65 in this unit provides guidance on which of the teaching units in *Developing Early Writing* (DEW) and *Grammar for Writing* (GfW) provide opportunities to focus on the aspects of grammar that present children learning EAL with particular challenges.

## Grammatical features presenting particular challenges for EAL learners





## Verbs

### Subject–verb agreement

Omitting the final 's' in the third person singular form of the simple present tense (verb stem + s) is a very common error for children learning EAL. This tense is a feature of the report text type and is used to describe routines and behaviour or habits.



Ask the children to work in pairs and tell each other about a routine such as their daily journey to school. Model the use of the simple present tense by telling the children about your journey.

Pairs join another pair and each child describes their partner's daily journey to school, e.g. *Spreza walks to school; Ali's brother usually brings him.*

### Past tense

The most frequently used verbs in English are all irregular: *to be, to have, to go, to get.*

Use of irregular past tenses is subject to significant errors by children learning EAL, and when the past tense is irregular the past participle will be too, e.g. *write, wrote, written; go, went, gone.*

#### Strategies



- Use generic sentence level activities from *Developing Early Writing* and *Grammar for Writing* to focus on past tense verbs in sentences and texts.

### Use of modal verbs

The following, together with their negative forms, are the modal verbs: *may, might, can, could, will, would, shall, should, must, ought to.*

They are all used with the infinitive form of the verb. Modal verbs allow children to express degrees of probability, possibility, certainty, necessity, obligation and willingness. They enable children to predict, speculate and make deductions.

Children learning EAL experience difficulty using these verbs accurately and appropriately in positive and negative statements and in questions.



## Strategies



- Speaking and listening sessions which address group discussion and interaction objectives and exploratory talk sessions across the curriculum provide opportunities for the use of this language. (See Unit 4 of these materials.)
- Collaborative investigative, practical or problem-solving contexts such as finding all possibilities in mathematics, investigating the properties of magnets in science or discussing important questions in philosophy all provide opportunities for teachers to model and children to practise the use of modal verbs to discuss probability, possibility, certainty and so on.
- Providing opportunities to formulate questions in these contexts will facilitate practice with interrogative forms.



Prepare sentence starters:

*I might/could/must*

and endings such as:

*... become an airline pilot.*

*... go to Bangladesh next year.*

*... learn to spell ten key words for homework.*

*... spell them all correctly in a test.*

*... score a goal tomorrow.*

*... watch TV tonight.*

Ask children to discuss and complete sentences using the appropriate modal verb.

Extension: Make up similar sentences using *you* or the name of another child, e.g. *Arif must score a goal tomorrow.*

Prepare activities where children place prepared sentence endings on a continuum according to how possible or probable they are or according to the degree of necessity or obligation involved:

*may – should – must*

*We may eat snacks at playtime. We should walk along the corridor. We must arrive at school before 9 o'clock.*

## Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs can present a range of difficulties for children learning EAL. These may be verbs with prepositions (*I agree with you, She asked for a pencil*), verbs with adverbs (*The car broke down, When he grew up*) or verbs with adverbs and prepositions (*I won't put up with bad behaviour*).



These verbs are used more often in spoken language than in written language where they can often be replaced by more formal or academic verbs; *put up with* can be replaced by *tolerate*; *put in* by *insert* and so on.

Sometimes the meaning can be guessed from the meaning of the parts but more often than not this is impossible and, in the case of verbs with an object, the adverbs can be found before or after the object (*Clean up this mess*, *Clean this mess up*).

### Strategies



- Teachers and practitioners should model the use of these verbs, ensure that children are exposed to them repeatedly, and provide opportunities for their use in meaningful spoken contexts in order to support learners to use them accurately in their spoken and written English.
- Speaking and listening lessons provide opportunities to hear and practise using phrasal verbs.
  - Giving instructions which are precise often involves the use of phrasal verbs and verbs with prepositions. Useful contexts include scientific and mathematical investigations, design and technology activities, PE and barrier games.
  - Drama and dialogue in narrative provide opportunities to use phrasal verbs in conversational contexts.



### Prepositions

In her research Lynne Cameron found evidence of EAL learners omitting prepositions or using them incorrectly. Prepositions are used in different positions in languages where word order is different from that found in English. In the South Asian languages spoken by many minority communities in this country the word order is subject–object–verb rather than subject–verb–object. Prepositions in these languages are really ‘post’-positions – *book table on is*. They may be used differently or, in some cases, not used at all in the bilingual child’s first language.

Prepositions signal an extremely wide range of meanings and the same preposition can be used in many different ways including figuratively, e.g. *She was in tears*, and in mathematical use, e.g. *divide by*.

They can consist of one, two or three words (e.g. *at*, *ahead of*, *in front of*).



Functions include showing:

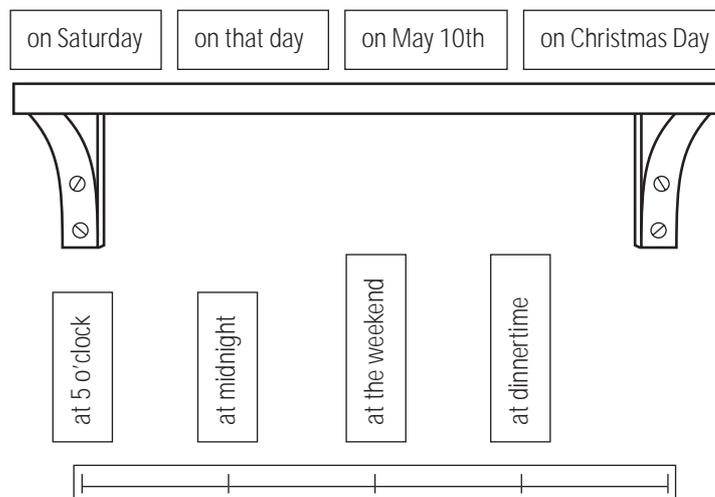
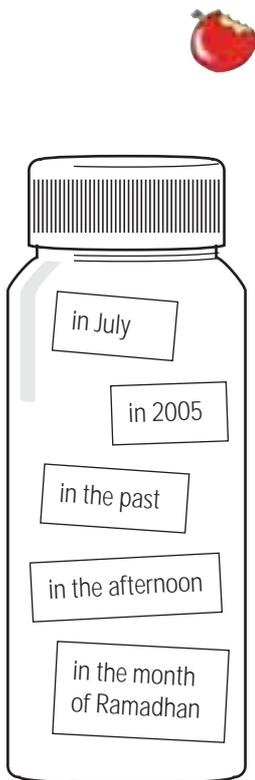
- relationships, usually in space or time: *the temple on the hill, the programme starts at seven o'clock;*
- causes and reasons: *out of kindness, he was punished for it;*
- manner: *I went by train;*
- addition: *with;*
- similarity: *like, etc.*

Prepositions for time are metaphors for space. When we say *in June, on Friday* or *at midnight* we are conceptualising June as a container, Friday as a shelf, and midnight as a position on a line.

Prepositions are used in adjectival phrases where they add detail to nouns, e.g. (The boy) *in the park*. They are also used in adverbial phrases, e.g. (He went) *to find his friend*.

Strategies

- Devise barrier games which support children to develop spatial prepositions and prepositional phrases to describe position in progressively finer detail.
- Use visual representations of a container, a shelf and a time line to collect and display examples of prepositions which show temporal relationships, as in the example below.





## Adverbials

Adverbials add detail about place (where?), time and frequency (when? how long? how often?), manner (how? like what? with whom?) and cause or reason (why?). Time connectives in chronological texts are adverbs.

Sometimes they provide clues about the author's viewpoint, e.g. *She couldn't really expect it.*

They may be single words, phrases or clauses.

Depending on the type of adverb, they can be found:

- at the beginning of sentences: *With a heavy heart, Samira turned around and headed for home;*
- in the middle: *Feroz reluctantly decided to leave;*
- at the end of sentences:
  - *Kemal decided to leave promptly (adverb);*
  - *Samira headed for home with a heavy heart (adverbial phrase);*
  - *She headed for home as soon as she heard the news (adverbial clause);*
- as part of the noun phrase: *The highly praised new film;*
- inside the verb: *She had often wondered who lived there.*

EAL learners tend to use adverbials more often at the end of sentences, and provide less information through adverbials than monolingual peers working at the same level.



Strategies for developing the range of adverbials:

- During oral personal recount sessions or news telling, use prompt cards to remind children to include detail about when, where, why, how, etc.
- Give the children a simple sentence (subject and verb), e.g. *The lion roared* and ask each child in turn to provide some further detail. Use the following prompts: *where, when, how, why, how often?* Initially children will provide single word adverbs but after a while they will start to use adverbial phrases.
- Create time lines to sequence adverbs used as time connectives, e.g. *first, next, after that, finally.*
- Plot adverbs of degree or frequency on a continuum.



Strategies for investigating mobility of adverbials:

- Use generic sentence level activities such as 'Improve' and 'Construct', focusing particularly on adding adverbial phrases and investigating their mobility.

## Determiners

Determiners include many of the most frequent English words, e.g. *a, the, this, that, some*. When used as determiners these words are followed by a noun though not necessarily immediately: *a big, red, shiny, new car*. Most bilingual pupils in schools in this country speak a first language which does not use articles as determiners in the way that English does. However, if practitioners are careful to introduce the indefinite article when labelling objects right from the early stages this does not present a difficulty for long. Use of *the* for the particular, e.g. *the red one* and for plurals, e.g. *the cars* is also easily learned. *This* or *those* and possessive pronouns such as *your* and *my* also show that one particular one of its kind is being referred to.



Children also need to learn that the definite article is not used with names but is used with other proper nouns such as *Indian Ocean* (and usually with *ocean* and *sea* unless we are talking about one of many oceans or seas without naming it).

Sometimes articles are omitted in the interests of brevity, from titles, headlines, slogans, bullets, notes and jottings, e.g. *Causes of decay*; *Dangerous dog bites toddler*.

EAL learners sometimes use articles with names, e.g. *The Mr Malik*. Errors may also occur where nouns are uncountable, e.g. *the air, some butter, the evidence*. These nouns are called mass nouns in *Grammar for Writing*. Many abstract nominalisations (nouns formed from other parts of speech) are uncountable, e.g. *happiness, decay, information*. Errors such as this are common: *The boy looked in a amazement*.

Some nouns are countable in some contexts and uncountable in others, e.g. *hair* and *hairs*. Uncountable nouns which are countable in the bilingual child's first language can lead to errors such as *He is wearing a blue trouser*.

Errors may also occur in the spoken and written language of children learning EAL where countable nouns do not need an article in a particular context, such as church/mosque or town in *going to mosque/church/town*, while other similar-seeming nouns do, such as library or village.

Errors become more likely the more abstract and academic the language becomes and this is borne out by Lynne Cameron's research. She found more errors with articles in the level 5 scripts of EAL learners than in the level 3 scripts, and more errors with articles in the writing of high-achieving EAL learners at Key Stage 4.

'My use of the definite and indefinite articles was somewhat chaotic, and in places my idiomatic expressions, phrases and sentence construction were somewhat skewed ... It was painful for me to realise that oral fluency did not mean good writing, and that "nuts and bolts" were as important as the building they discreetly held together.

'I became my own teacher. I read English writing closely, studied grammar, rewrote sentences I had read until they approximated the original, memorised striking expressions and picked friends' brains on points of grammar, especially those elusive definite and indefinite articles.'

Lord Bhikhu Parekh chaired the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain in 2000. Here he is referring to his doctoral thesis – it was suggested that he publish after tidying up the English.

Source: *Gujarat Samachar/Asian Voice*,  
'British Gujeratis: Trials and Triumphs',  
July 2005 (Asian Business Publications Ltd)



### Strategies

- Introduce and write nouns with the appropriate article, i.e. *a*, *an*, *the*.
- Teach use of *the* for the particular, e.g. *the red one*, and for plurals, e.g. *the cars*.
- Investigate texts to draw out conventions about when a noun has to have a determiner, e.g. when it is singular, when it is countable and when it is a common noun.
- Draw attention to the use of determiners in the full range of contexts during shared and guided reading and writing.
- Use objectives in the Primary Literacy Framework, 2006 which focus on nouns and provide opportunities to continue to develop knowledge and understanding of the use of determiners.
- Play shopping games using picture clues which include singular, plural and uncountable nouns. Children work in pairs asking for such things as an orange, some bread or milk, or some apples. Their partner asks how many or how much as appropriate.

- Use and adapt the 'Detectives' text reconstruction activity where children work collaboratively to piece together messages torn into small pieces. Make sure determiners provide vital clues as to which nouns could and could not follow. (See section on text cohesion, pages 49–50.)

## Pronouns

Pronouns stand in place of nouns or noun phrases. In the early stages children learning EAL may not always use pronouns to refer back as confidently as their peers. They may make this kind of mistake in their writing: *Elephants are huge. It has a trunk.*

Pronouns such as *each, every, either, each other, one another, the other* and *both*, which are used to show distribution, reciprocity or quantity, are another aspect generally handled less confidently by children learning EAL.

Pronouns play an important role in creating text cohesion. Used judiciously to refer back, they improve the fluency of writing.

The pronouns *who, whose, that* and *which* are important as they enable children to use relative clauses to vary their writing.

### Strategies



- Teach children in upper Key Stage 2 the term 'relative pronouns' for talking about *who, whose, that* and *which*. Being able to talk about relative pronouns as a group is useful when learning how writing can be made more fluent by omitting them from relative clauses: *the man who was cleaning his car ... ; the man cleaning his car ...*
- Use or adapt generic sentence level activities to focus on pronouns.

## Comparison

Because comparison is expressed very differently in South Asian languages, EAL learners who are speakers of those languages may need support to gain control over this aspect of language.

Lynne Cameron came across this error in the script of an EAL learner who was clearly trying to apply rules from his first language: *his best of all friend*. Superlatives in South Asian languages are formed in the following way: literally *his all of best friend is ...*. *Farooq is taller than Emmanuel* would be expressed (literally) as *Farooq, Emmanuel from tall is*.

Children learning EAL need to learn when to use *-er* or *-est* endings, the conventions for when to use *more* (adjective) *than* or *most* (adjective) and the exceptions to the rule.

Children also need to be able to show comparison to the same degree: *as big as*; and to a lesser degree: *this is not so big, this is less heavy, this is the least interesting* and so on.

Children need to be able to use this language confidently for many purposes across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics.



### Strategies



- Use practical visual contexts in mathematics as opportunities for EAL learners to orally practise using the language of comparison.
- Devise barrier games which provide opportunities for children to practise using the language of comparison to give instructions, ask questions or describe pictures, diagrams or models.



Ask children to work in pairs or small groups to compare and evaluate three similar things against an agreed criterion. This provides opportunities for higher, lower and equivalent comparisons to be made.

Use poems, models, recipes, paintings or short stories. Model the target language, for example as follows.

- This recipe will be tast**ier** than that one.
- This model is the strong**est**.
- Is this story **more** or **less** interesting than that one?
- You may think one painting is the **most** beautiful of the three.

### Noun phrases

Lynne Cameron found that children learning EAL used more single-word subjects than children who spoke English as a first language.

Children need support to expand nouns with:

- adjectives: *the tall, dark-haired girl*;
- adjectival phrases: *the tall girl with the long dark hair*;
- relative clauses (finite): *the tall girl who had long dark hair*;
- non-finite clauses: *the tall girl walking along the road*;
- using non-finite clauses as subjects.

### Passive voice

Children learning EAL benefit particularly from explicit teaching of the ways in which writers create the impersonality characteristic of academic texts. Using passive rather than active verbs is one of the key ways, and understanding how the use of passive voice can conceal the agent in a sentence is crucial for the development of academic writing.



**Opportunities for sentence level language development for children learning EAL**

within or compatible with the teaching units in:

- NLS *Developing Early Writing* (DEW)
- NLS *Grammar for Writing* (GfW)

and the teaching sequences in:

- *Speaking, listening, learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2* (SLL)  
(Speaking strand: Spk; Group discussion and interaction strand: Grp)

Grammatical subject	RY	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Subject-verb agreement			Units 13, 15 and B DEW	Units 9 and 14 GfW	Units 20 and 21 GfW	Unit 33 GfW	
Past tense verbs		Term 1 Spk SLL	Units 10, 12, D and H DEW	Units 1, 2 and 14 GfW	Unit 21 GfW		
Modal verbs		Term 1 Grp SLL	Unit I DEW	Term 3 Grp SLL	Unit 31 GfW	Unit 37 GfW Term 1 Grp SLL	Unit 51 GfW
Phrasal verbs		Term 1 Grp SLL	Term 2 Grp SLL			Unit 35 GfW	
Prepositions		Barrier games SLL Listening leaflet	Barrier games SLL Listening leaflet			Unit 42 GfW	Unit 44 GfW
Adverbials		Unit 4 DEW	Unit I DEW		Units 28 and 32 GfW	Units 39 and 42 GfW	Units 44 and 46 GfW
Determiners	Unit 3 DEW		Units B, C, G and H DEW	Units 7, 11, 12 and 13 GfW	Unit 20 GfW	Units 39 and 40 GfW	
Pronouns			Units 13 and B DEW	Unit 15 GfW		Unit 41 GfW	
Comparison		Barrier games SLL Listening leaflet	Unit 15 DEW		Units 26 and 30 GfW		
Noun phrases				Unit 10 GfW		Unit 39 GfW	Unit 44 GfW
Passive voice						Unit 41 GfW	Units 45, 48 and 49 GfW

See glossary in *Grammar for Writing* (DfEE 0107/2000) for definitions of grammatical terminology.



## Reminders and general points

- Shared and guided reading, during literacy lessons and across the whole curriculum, provide opportunities for explicit learning and teaching of the way writers use particular grammatical features and sentence construction in real contexts. Using interactive whiteboards, during shared text and sentence level work, teachers can demonstrate by highlighting, underlining, substituting and transforming texts. Words, phrases or clauses can be added, extracted or moved. Earlier versions can be saved. Word banks, cloze activities, sentence tables and verb tense time lines can all be developed. Interactive whiteboards can also be used by children in guided sessions or working independently.

Providing opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively facilitates access to other children's vocabularies. Children often acquire new forms from slightly more expert peers.

- Teaching grammar is not an end in itself. Although it is useful to be able to group words into classes and name them, words can belong to more than one class depending on context. It is more important to understand the function of a word or phrase. It is important to teach explicitly those grammatical conventions and forms which will enable EAL learners to develop the range of meanings they can convey in spoken and written texts. The purpose is to increase the range of choices available to children as they speak and write, and enable them to express increasingly complex, subtle, logical and abstract relationships as they apply grammatical knowledge to text construction. To this end effective grammar teaching should always include assessment of and responses to individual children's oral and written work.

- A child who has learned one language has already learned a great deal about how language works. Much of this learning is transferable. Ensuring bilingual children know their bilingualism is valued in school, providing opportunities for them to talk about their languages and their language learning, and using bilingual strategies all support this transfer. Developing metalanguage (the language we use to talk about language) is particularly valuable for EAL learners as it supports them to talk about their languages and their language learning.

Certain aspects of grammatical knowledge which are implicit for children who speak English as a first language may not be implicit for children learning EAL, and rules internalised from the first language will not always transfer to English. Indirect speech is not introduced with a change of tense and pronoun in the South Asian languages spoken by the majority of bilingual children in our schools. Where there are trained adults who share the children's first language, differences between the syntax and structure of the first language and English should be made explicit and, in any case, bilingual children should always be encouraged to compare and contrast their languages.



## Vocabulary extension

Access to the whole curriculum is dependent on children's vocabulary and the whole curriculum provides children with a rich resource for vocabulary development. When children explore word meanings collaboratively the resulting shared vocabulary makes a powerful contribution to a sense of belonging. Understanding the connotations and subtleties of words is essential for children to be able to approach texts critically, and to recognise bias, prejudice, racism and stereotyping. When children learn how to create new words from known words they begin to realise that their own words can make a difference in the world.



### What is vocabulary?

Vocabulary can be defined as knowledge of words and their meanings but the reality is far more complex than this simple definition suggests.

Jean Aitchison (1987) divided words into two types: function words and content words. It is content words that are generally meant when we talk about vocabulary.

Function words are words that cue a reader or speaker to the structure of the sentence. They make spoken and written language more meaningful, coherent and readable. Examples include words such as *are*, *to*, *of*, *or* and *the*, which are needed for grammatical competence. The number of function words in English is quite limited.

Content words are the words that really communicate meaning and their number is virtually unlimited. The content words in the following sentence are in italics.

*Chinese writing* has always been seen as an *art form*.  
*Calligraphers* write with *brushes* and *ink* although *Chinese text* can, of course, be *printed by machine*.

We need function words to develop grammatical competency but we need content words to create images, make sense of what we hear or read and communicate with others. We are more likely to make ourselves understood by using only content words than we are if all we know are function words and the rules of grammar.

Vocabulary does not always consist of individual words. Compound words and phrases where the meaning is lost if the words are separated are also units of vocabulary.



A child's receptive vocabulary is typically larger than his or her productive vocabulary, and children learning EAL usually develop a receptive understanding of new words before they are able to produce them.

### What does it mean to 'know' vocabulary?

Knowing a word involves a lot more than being able to recognise what it sounds like or looks like. It is more than being able to provide a dictionary definition. Developing an understanding of a word is a process that occurs over time and involves numerous encounters with the word in various contexts. Many words have multiple meanings. They can belong to different word classes depending on the function they are performing in a particular sentence. They may also have different meanings according to the context in which they occur, e.g. *This is an unexploded shell; I found this lovely shell on the beach; Shell the peas for me, please.*



Some everyday high-frequency words have multiple meanings, e.g. *top, set, line, table.*

Common verbs acquire different meanings when used in phrasal verbs, e.g. 'put' in *put off* meaning 'to postpone'.

The same word can have literal and figurative meanings, e.g. *The tortoise stayed inside his shell; That girl has started to come out of her shell lately.*

Sometimes figurative uses of vocabulary are so embedded in everyday speech that we hardly remember that they are actually metaphoric, e.g. *a blade of grass, running water.*

Children need to know how words combine with other words to make new words, e.g. *sea shell, shellfish.* They need to know about collocation. We never say 'Christmas Father', 'chips and fish', or substitute words in idiomatic phrases.

Multiple meanings, synonymy and antonymy, and collocation are features of the behaviour of vocabulary in all languages and prior knowledge of these features in the first language supports learning about the feature in English.

Some words are 'loaded'. When authors or characters use words with negative connotations instead of more neutral alternatives it tells us a great deal about their point of view, e.g. *get-up* rather than *outfit*; *slumped* rather than *sat*; *banger* rather than *car*; *brat* rather than *child*.



New words must be fitted into existing schemata. Other words previously encountered contribute to the way in which new words are understood. Each individual, because of his or her different previous experiences, brings different words to the development of a concept associated with the new word. Words may have different connotations for children from different cultural backgrounds.

Knowing a word also involves appreciating its connotations. Depending on the type of word, this may involve being able to use it and recognise it in jokes, puns, idioms and so on.

Knowledge of one word connects to and supports knowledge of other words, e.g. *urban, suburban; vacant, vacate, vacancy*.

'Knowing' a word is a matter of degree. Categories will be continually renegotiated, spectrums enlarged and continuums altered as the child's vocabulary develops and his or her potential range of meanings expands.

### Strategies for developing vocabulary

In addition to incidental learning of vocabulary through oral language and reading experience, children learning EAL need opportunities for explicit learning and teaching of new vocabulary across the curriculum and throughout the primary years in order to learn new vocabulary of four broad types:

- synonyms for words they already know:
  - to support reading comprehension;
  - to make their writing more lively and interesting;
  - to avoid repetition and make their writing more cohesive and fluent-sounding;
  - to support access to the whole curriculum;
  - to make their writing more academic;
- the multiple meanings, subtleties and connotations of words they already know at some level including figurative and idiomatic meanings;
- literary metaphor and imagery;
- academic vocabulary (words for new concepts, particularly subject-specific vocabulary and abstract ideas).



Children often use strategies to compensate for gaps in their vocabulary such as:

- pointing, where there is a visual context;
- saying *this*, *it* or *that*;
- using words such as *thing*, *bit* or *stuff* in wordy explanations, e.g. *used a thing to dig with* (spade);
- using known category nouns such as *flower* or *bird* rather than for example *daffodil* or *sparrow*;
- staying within the parameters of the vocabulary they are familiar with and avoiding any 'risks'.

Scaffold their learning by modelling the appropriate new vocabulary, using the sequence that follows.



### A sequence for teaching children new vocabulary

- Model it in context
- Use it in questions
- Prompt for it and elicit it
- Repeat it
- Draw attention to it and use it in other contexts
- Display it
- Provide opportunities for children to practise it
- Give specific positive feedback about its use
- Encourage children to reflect on the way they use it



### Strategies for learning and teaching synonyms

- Identify unfamiliar words in texts before shared or guided reading across the curriculum. Share one or two examples of the use of the word in context and provide a definition using a synonym the children are likely to know.
- After reading substitute the synonyms or near-synonyms for the new words in order to investigate the effect and contribute to a deeper understanding of the subtleties and connotations of the new vocabulary.



- Explore the subtle differences between near-synonyms by creating spectrums or continuums of words, e.g. *drowsy, tired, weary, worn-out* (metaphor), *exhausted, shattered*.



### Learning about multiple meanings of familiar words

- When planning for reading sessions, highlight for discussion the words and phrases that have the potential for more than one meaning. During reading sessions, ask children what they understand by such words in the given context. Words with other potential meanings could be pulled out for exploration of further meanings at another time.
- Share figurative as well as literal meanings of words. Encourage children to make collections of words with multiple meanings. Explore their meaning in different contexts, through acting and mime as well as discussion.

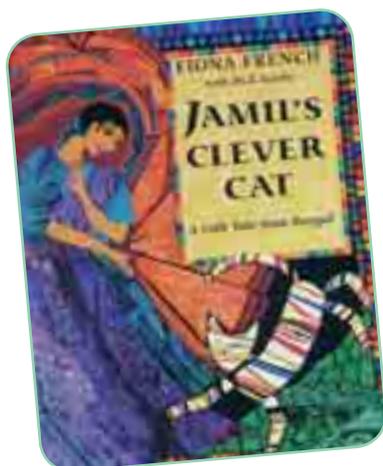


- Draw attention to and discuss deliberate plays on multiple meanings, in advertisements, poetry, book titles and jokes. Discuss the problems that could arise if the wrong meaning of a word with a multiple meaning were to be translated, e.g. a notice which in English read 'baby changing room' in a translated version meant 'baby exchanging room'!
- Pay explicit attention to idiomatic expressions during reading sessions. Although many idioms have become second nature to first-language English speakers, they are particularly challenging for EAL learners as they are derived from a specific cultural and linguistic heritage.
- Teach children that words often have different meanings when used in idioms, e.g. *keep an eye on the baby; he wanted to save face*. Many idioms are metaphoric; discuss why they may be used instead of more literal statements.
- Give children the chance to create oral sentences using idioms so that you can discuss when such expressions are appropriate and when they are not. Many idioms are used solely in colloquial and oral situations and would be inappropriate in some formal and written contexts.



## 'Literary' metaphor and imagery

- When choosing texts for EAL learners, include some with examples of figurative language, including metaphors, so that EAL children can begin to appreciate the rich and poetic effects of the English language and explore how imagery can evoke particular responses.
- Ask children to create an image of the metaphor in their minds and either to explain the image, to draw it or to show it as a freeze-frame. When reading texts containing metaphors, encourage children to compare the images conjured up in their minds, as differences in children's prior experiences may result in different images being created and different feelings evoked.
- Teach children that metaphors work by making comparisons. Children are more likely to understand this once they have grasped similes.
- Explore the effect of other creative word choices such as the invented collective nouns used by Fiona French in *Jamil's Clever Cat* – Jamil's cat Sardul 'went out into the forest and gathered *a wild chorus of creatures, a roaring of tigers, a chattering of monkeys, a trumpeting of elephants.*'



For children whose first language is a Romance language, cognates with Latin-based vocabulary will be plentiful. Cognates are words that sound nearly the same in the first language as they do in the new language. French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian are all Romance languages but lots of other languages have borrowed heavily from these languages and many of their borrowed words remain remarkably similar. Examples of cognates from Spanish include 'valiente' (valiant or brave), 'insecto' (insect) and 'excava' (cave).

## Academic vocabulary

Academic language is characterised by Latin- and Greek-based vocabulary, and nominalisations. Abstract uncountable nouns for conditions, states and qualities act as agents in sentences. Passive verb forms focus attention on processes.

Long words and words derived from Latin or Greek are not necessarily more difficult for children learning EAL. Long words are made up of small words and can be made more accessible by breaking them down into their component parts.

Academic words and phrases frequently have everyday alternatives which are usually less precise in meaning and often inappropriately informal for a written text. These everyday alternatives are often words with multiple meanings and for that reason may be more difficult for children learning EAL.

*Resolution*, for example, is a more precise term than *end* to talk about the final part of a narrative text; *habitat* is more precise than *home* for talking about the environment where a particular animal can be found; *get* has multiple meanings whereas *acquire* is more precise. *Acquire* could sound pompous in informal conversation. Children learning EAL will need to learn to use appropriately both everyday vocabulary and academic vocabulary.

Nominalisations are nouns formed from other parts of speech (see Primary Framework, 2006, Year 5).

<i>length</i>	<i>information</i>
<i>kindness</i>	<i>evaporation</i>
<i>hunger</i>	<i>comparison</i>
<i>heat</i>	<i>measurement</i>

These abstract uncountable nouns are then used:

- in passive sentences with no agent, e.g. *Information was provided* (i.e. we do not know who provided it); *Comparisons are often made* (i.e. we do not know by whom);
- as agents in sentences to focus attention on a process, e.g. *Evaporation occurred*.

Nominalisations allow abstract ideas to be talked about. Many of the conditions, states, qualities and processes described by nominalisations can be measured or treated as variables.

Nouns used as superordinates or category nouns, e.g. occupation, precipitation, are frequently abstract and those used to classify adjectives always are, e.g. colour, shape, size, characteristics.

### Learning and teaching words for new concepts

Learning a new concept involves identifying those attributes which are critical or essential elements. For example, when learning the word *globe* at the same time as learning the concept, children need to understand that a globe is a sphere or that it is like a ball. This is an essential element. Therefore, a globe of the earth is one example of a globe; a map showing the earth is not a globe because maps are flat.

When attaching new words to concepts children may under- or over-generalise, e.g. *chair* may be used only for upholstered armchairs or it may be used to describe anything we can sit on including stools and settees.

The boundaries attached to a concept in English may not always map across languages in the same way, for example the Punjabi word for *finger* includes all the digits of the hands and feet.



- Provide opportunities where possible for children to use their first language to explore their understanding of the new concept.
- Encourage children to collect words that work together in categories, as classification is an important part of learning a word for a new concept.



## Teaching strategies to support independent learning of new words

Children need to develop an interest in words, curiosity about their meanings and awareness of their power.

Words can be investigated in shared sessions in literacy or any area of the curriculum. Teachers should model strategies which children can then continue to use in independent collaborative sessions. Where possible, groupings should facilitate the use of first language as this is a vital part of investigating the meaning of words.

Independent word learning strategies include:



- effective use of dictionaries and thesauruses including bilingual dictionaries:
  - Teachers should model the process of thinking through and deciding which definition is most likely in the particular context, making associations with their own previous experience.
  - Children should be encouraged to make connections with their first language, notice when equivalent words are similar in their first language, etc.;
- identifying and using context clues from the surrounding text or illustrations:
  - Context clues may include a definition, example or restatement but contexts will not always help and may sometimes be misleading, for example where language is used ironically;
- use of morphology or word-part information:
  - Many new words that children encounter can be broken down into smaller parts.



### *Strategies for remembering new words:*

- *'mapping' the word onto its equivalent word, phrase or explanation in the first language using sub-vocal speech;*
- *mentally placing the word in a topic group to which it belongs;*
- *visualising the word in a written context;*
- *repeating the word and orally rehearsing its use in context;*
- *applying a mnemonic or graphic, e.g. S h r i n k i n g.*



Word maps or webs are an effective graphic organiser which teachers can use to expand children's knowledge of words and stimulate their interest. Related words can be clustered around a word under investigation in ways that teachers or children choose. They can be created collaboratively, displayed and added to over time.

Norah McWilliam suggests the following categories for exploring word potential

- English synonyms (or near) and first language equivalents
- Analogies (including personal associations)
- Multiple meanings (literal, figurative, connotative)
- Homonyms (or near) including jokes, play on words and rhymes
- Collocations including phrasal verbs, compounds, coordinates
- Idiomatic phrases and 'chunks' (including proverbs, homilies, clichés)
- Differentiated meanings (*It's not the same as ...*)
- Word families/related words (including superordinates, antonyms)
- Root and affixes (including verbs, adjectives, adverbs)
- Etymology (origin and history).

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



# Planned opportunities for speaking and listening across the curriculum

Mainstream classroom teachers have very varied experience, confidence and expertise in terms of ensuring that children learning EAL continue to develop both language for social communication and the language associated with thinking, learning and academic development. Where teachers make full use of structured opportunities for different kinds of talk, children will be enabled to acquire new vocabulary as well as language structures and use them appropriately, supporting the development of new ideas and improving access and achievement across the curriculum.





## Experiential learning

In the early years, continuing into the Foundation Stage and throughout the primary years, all children need opportunities to experience and rehearse language within meaningful contexts during both adult-led and self-chosen activities. Everyday situations such as getting dressed, meal times, shopping and travelling to the setting provide rich contexts to encourage conversation and extend the use of language by offering incidental experiential learning opportunities that can be exploited by the skilful practitioner.

Practical activities including role-play and small-world play, which support learning and teaching across all areas of learning within a carefully planned and well-resourced setting, will provide children with supportive contexts for speaking and listening.

Children's learning is not compartmentalised. They learn when they make connections between experiences and ideas that are related to any aspect of their life in the setting, at home and in the community.

*Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA 2000)*

A carefully resourced home corner acknowledging a diversity of lifestyles will provide a familiar starting point for children to play out first-hand experiences using language and communication skills with peers and adults.

Other role-play and small-world scenarios provide the best contexts for learning when they are developed from the children's interests.



It may be a shop or a café, a health clinic, a garage or a building site, but it will be most successful if the children have first-hand experience through a visit and are able to help plan and design the area themselves. Emerging literacy can be supported by embedding appropriate reading and writing materials in role-play settings, but these should not detract from opportunities for speaking and listening. (See Unit 3, pages 36–38.)



Children are more likely to talk and to listen when they understand the key language connected with an activity, such as playing with dough or constructing a model.

*Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA 2000)*

For children learning EAL it is particularly important that they are supported in the acquisition of key language. Where support in the home language is available, the key vocabulary and concepts connected with the activities can be developed together and skills, knowledge and understanding transferred to English. Where first language is not available practitioners need to make use of resources and visual support to facilitate children's understanding and participation.

Storytelling and dramatic play provide rich contexts for developing a range of language skills; story-boards, props, dressing-up clothes and story sacks all support and enhance retelling and acting out of stories. Themed small-world play boxes with accompanying books enable children to create their own narratives.

Stories are particularly important for linguistic and conceptual development, and children learning EAL need to experience them in their first language. Stories reinforce and develop children's first language and at the same time support their learning of English by giving them a foundation on which to build. Children who are familiar with the structure and language of stories in their first language will be able to transfer that understanding to stories in English, especially when the stories are familiar.

High-quality role-play and storytelling which includes social interaction involves emotion, cognition and language, as well as physical action. Children learning EAL will benefit greatly from the opportunity to use their first language in these contexts. When children participate in and reason about 'pretend' situations, negotiation is necessary in order to develop a shared understanding with other children. Implicit rules are constructed and followed, e.g. taking a role, involving others, maintaining the pretence and so on. These experiences have clear links to social, cognitive, academic and linguistic development.

For additional guidance for children in early years, see *Communicating Matters 1775–2005DOC-EN*.





It is very beneficial, and relatively easy, to set up curriculum learning areas in classrooms to maximise the support that untrained adults including bilingual parents and carers can give to the children.

Key vocabulary and questions can be identified as teachers are planning and these can be posted across the classroom so that they can be referred to; for example, in the mathematics area a vocabulary list would identify words such as *heavy, heavier, light, lighter, weigh, scales, measure*. The key questions could relate specifically to an activity: *Which box is heavier?* There could also be more general questions: *Which one do you think is heavier? How can you find out?*

Just a small sample of questions is needed to give quite a clear message about the types of question that will move the child's learning on. Questions can be translated into the first languages of bilingual parents and carers. These questions will also support the dialogue between practitioners and parents and carers about how to support children's learning at home.





## Guided talk

### Guided group work

In guided group work, the group works with an adult who guides the learning through a planned sequence of tasks and discussions. Guided group work offers opportunities for focused teaching and assessment. The small number of children allows teaching to be fine-tuned to particular needs and for the level of challenge to be pitched appropriately.

Guided group work is a well-established feature of the National Strategies.

Teaching assistants often lead guided group work, including using the National Strategies' intervention programmes. Some schools have begun to use guided work in other areas of the curriculum, for example guided reading of non-fiction texts is used in history lessons when the main focus is on sharing and discussing the information.

Across the whole curriculum, guided group work supports the development of language for effective oral as well as written communication, and is particularly supportive of bilingual learners. Through use of talk frames and focused input by teachers and practitioners, it provides an opportunity to listen to and use the specific language required in a range of genres. For example, the use of activities such as barrier games during guided talk supports extended talk linked to mathematical language and knowledge.

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



## Talking Partners

*Evaluation of the approach developed by Bradford Education Department working with CfBT and the Basic Skills Agency*

Talking Partners is a programme, designed to be delivered in Key Stage 1 or lower Key Stage 2, within which children are provided with opportunities to develop proficiency in oral English. Those language functions over which children need to gain control in order to meet the demands of the curriculum, particularly those associated with literacy development, are given progressive attention each week within the framework of a ten-week intervention strategy.

A trained adult works with three children in three sessions of 20 minutes each week. Activities include news telling, describing pictures, giving and following instructions using barrier games, retelling familiar stories, and reporting back in a plenary session on something that has been done in a Talking Partners session or elsewhere.

The aim is to accelerate learning and increase independence in speaking and listening. There is an emphasis on specific praise and specific prompts to extend learning. The programme was evaluated in August 1999 and found to have impacted positively on children's group interaction skills and speaking and listening courtesies. Children had achieved observable progress in speaking and listening as well as in writing and it had helped them make connections across the curriculum.

In October 1999, building on the proven success of Talking Partners, Bradford Education Department developed guided talk sessions. This initiative was situated within the Literacy Strategy which was already delivering regular structured teaching. The focus was on the speaking and listening demands of the writing objectives of the NLS *Framework for teaching*.

An evaluation in August 2000 testified to its success:

Guided Talk had a very large impact on the pupils' productive oral language skills. Pupils with access to Guided Talk made about one and a half times the progress of the comparison group in the amount of information they were able to give to describe a set of pictures. Most startlingly, the Guided Talk pupils made over twice the progress of the comparison group in their control over grammatical structures, i.e. in the accuracy of their responses. The comparison group made significantly less than expected progress over a school year in this area.

*Annex 4 Guided Talk in EAL: More than survival,*  
Basic Skills Agency

*That was great, Manuel. I really like the way you used your voice to emphasise how big and gruff he was.*

In addition to the quantitative evidence, teachers reported being more aware of how to maximise opportunities for oral language development, and children's writing samples clearly showed that they were able to use longer sentences and more complex grammatical structures and that their overall text organisation was better.

### Guided talk for literacy

Guided talk sessions for literacy can form part of the teaching sequence for writing and should be positioned in the sequence in the same way and with the same status as guided writing, as a bridge between shared writing and independent writing. The type of talk will be 'presentational' talk or oral rehearsal for writing.

Although these guided talk sessions will address speaking and listening objectives, their main purpose is to support children to access literacy objectives across the curriculum. They are an opportunity to revisit writing objectives after shared writing and before independent work. They also provide an opportunity for children to use new subject-specific vocabulary from across the curriculum in meaningful contexts.

Guided talk sessions may be delivered by a class teacher, specialist support teacher or a trained teaching assistant. The adult works with a small group of children on a carefully planned, focused and scaffolded activity. The adult models both language and behaviours, intervening to encourage the use of academic language, prompting and praising appropriately and supporting the transition to independence.

Guided sessions for additional language development may be delivered to up to six children in 20-minute slots. This could be in the literacy hour as part of the teaching sequence for writing, or as 'presentation talk' or oral rehearsal for writing in any area of the curriculum.

### Guided talk provides the opportunity for practitioners to:

- establish a secure environment where children feel confident to participate and take risks:
- give children the opportunity to rehearse specific language forms which have been modelled by proficient speakers in appropriate contexts;
- help children to become more independent speakers and listeners;
- activate prior knowledge, including encouraging children to use their first language as well as English;
- model and prompt for specific language and structures in appropriate contexts;





- draw on knowledge of children's cultural background to provide examples, etc.;
- recast the language children use to move them out of their comfort zone;
- provide well-paced activities in which the whole group can be involved;
- put children into situations where they will need to produce specific language;
- assess oral language competence and use assessment for learning;
- ensure that, over time, children take greater control of activities;
- note change and development over time and plan accordingly.

**Guided talk provides the opportunity for children to:**

- use language purposefully;
- use extended stretches of language;
- use new subject-specific vocabulary in meaningful contexts;
- interact with others.

**The role of frames and prompts in guided talk**

Writing frames are used extensively to support children to shape and frame written texts. Using frames to help children plan talk is a natural development. Talk frames and prompts are useful where children are planning talk as presentation or performance, for example, reporting back, persuading, retelling or recounting. They may also be useful when planning a series of questions, in an interview situation for instance. (For examples of frames and prompts, see page 84.)

Frames to support children in planning their talk are also a pivotal part of the Talking Partners programme.

Quantitative and qualitative measures have shown that this intervention impacts positively on the oral language and literacy development of bilingual learners. Talking Partners frames are designed for use in Key Stage 1. They support progressively more complex description of objects or artefacts and pictures of people and scenes, news telling, question planning, story retelling, and reporting back following a shared activity.



## Examples of talk frames



The following are examples of talk frames. The first three examples are taken from Talking Partners, with permission from Education Bradford.

**What is it?**

What kind of thing is it?  
 What does it look like?  
 What does it feel like - for example, colour, size, shape?  
 Where do you keep it?  
 What can you do with it?

R2 **Reporting Back 2**

- ☺ Who did you work with?
- ☺ What were you doing?
- ☺ How did you do it?  
*"First of all ...  
 After that ...  
 Next ...  
 Finally ..."*
- ☺ Did you have any problems?  
 What did you do to solve them?
- ☺ What did you like about the activity?

**News Plan**

- ☺ Orientation  
 When  
 Who  
 Where  
 What  
 Why
- ☺ Events  
 First  
 After that  
 Next  
 Later
- ☺ Problems and solutions
- ☺ Feelings

**Giving examples:**

An example of this is ...

For instance ...

... such as ...

... similar to ...

This can be illustrated by ...

**Character profiles**  
**Developing character**

Who is it?

What does he/she look like?

What does he/she do?

Where does he/she live?

What does he/she say?

How doe he/she behave or act?

What else do you want others to know about the character, for example, family, interests, job, etc?



## Use of pause, prompt, praise by the adult during guided talk as strategies to develop confidence and independence

### Pause

Give children time to think about the problem, search for the right word or words and organise their thoughts.

Allow time for children to self-correct linguistic errors, add or change vocabulary.

### Prompt

Support children with prompts which model the appropriate form for purpose, for example past tense for recounting events.

Provide words and phrases:

*Was it raining **heavily**?*

Introduce new vocabulary:

*The boy reading hasn't noticed because he's so interested in his book – he's **engrossed** in his book.*

Model correct linguistic structure sensitively, for example:

*Children: They sawed the girl slipped and failed.*

*Guide: Yes, they saw her slip and fall. It's lucky they were there.*

Refer to speaking and listening courtesies:

*We look at the person who is talking to show we are listening.*

Invite rephrasing:

*Can you think of a different way of saying that?*

Prompt through nods and smiles.

Acknowledge contributions with non-verbal clues.

Use visual prompts or frames and refer children to the appropriate prompt:

*Tell us how the problem was resolved.*

Prompt using first language.

### Praise

Be specific. Children need focused feedback that helps them to know what they have done well and what else they need to attend to in order to improve.

- For observing listening and speaking behaviours:  
*I liked the way Bashkim waited until Yasmeen had finished speaking.*



- For using the talk frames to develop talk:  
*Well done. You looked at the frame and checked what else you needed to add. You looked at the frame to decide what to say next.*
- For how well the task was completed:  
*I like the adjectives you used to describe the place in the photograph. You really made me realise how busy Nairobi was. Your instructions were detailed and you spoke clearly.*





**There is an example of a guided talk session which develops the language of description on the accompanying DVD.**

**DVD VIDEO** **Guided talk for literacy – developing descriptive language**

In the DVD example (section 4), guided talk is being used in Year 3 as an additional intervention in order to support children who achieved level 2C at the end of Key Stage 1. This forms part of the whole-school approach to mapping provision for all children at risk of underachievement on the basis of an annual needs analysis and consequent resource and provision allocation.

Classroom observation and analysis of their written work has shown that the three children in this group have difficulty giving extended responses to open-ended questions in both whole-class and small-group situations. Their oral responses lack structure and coherence. These features can also be observed in their writing. Guided talk was selected as an appropriate intervention strategy for a total of six children in the year group, as it was felt that the direct modelling and prompting involved would be of benefit. The sessions would also provide an opportunity to revisit areas of the curriculum that the children had found particularly challenging.

A teaching assistant is seen observing the group session in order to reinforce key teaching and learning points later in the week. This is the model promoted in the

Primary National Strategy's Early Literacy, Year 3 Literacy and Further Literacy Support programmes (also intended as additional interventions).

The DVD sequence shows part of a guided talk session of 20 minutes' duration. The language focus for the session is descriptive language. The session is split into two 10-minute slots; the first activity is entitled 'Same and Different'. This shows the children examining a range of everyday objects made from different materials. The teacher is seen modelling appropriate language structures and prompting the children for precision and fluency.

In the second part of the session the children went on to discuss the attributes of a range of toy mini-beasts. This was followed by a barrier game where the children placed the items on a six square grid. Some of the mini-beasts were very similar, so the children had to describe them clearly and in detail in order to distinguish between them. The subject focus was chosen to link to current work in science and therefore to support curriculum access for the group as well as promoting language development. Both activities practise the same language structures and encourage children to use appropriate adjectives and academic language to describe and compare objects and their characteristics.



See also the accompanying CD-ROM for an example of a guided talk session for Year 5 that develops vocabulary for mathematics – the language of probability.



In 'presentational' talk, the child gives a prepared reply or exposition, however brief. It is public and intended for a listening audience, often the teacher or practitioner. 'Process' talk is very different. It is exploratory talk concerned with working things out. It is often tentative and uses speculation and hypothesis. Shared understandings can be developed. Group and paired work can be fruitful contexts for encouraging such talk.

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

## Exploratory talk

Exploratory talk involves collective reasoning and therefore, by its very nature, scaffolded reasoning. It is characterised by the use of questions, reasons and reflection. It is underpinned by constructivist approaches to learning. (Knowledge is constructed collaboratively – see especially Vygotsky (1962) for the notion of Zone of Proximal Development.)

Children work collaboratively in small groups with support from an adult. Relevant information is shared. Everyone can contribute their ideas and opinions which are all listened to and respected. Participants give reasons for their ideas. Alternative ideas and disagreements are voiced and reasons for alternative suggestions and challenges are given. Reasoning is evident in the talk as the group tries to reach agreement.

Children need to learn to engage in exploratory talk. Without support children may simply put forward their own ideas and argue for them without listening to alternatives and be unwilling to change their mind in the light of any new ideas or information. Alternatively they may listen respectfully to everyone's ideas and simply add them to a collective pool of opinions and information without engaging in reasoned argument. In exploratory talk the best arguments need to prevail. The ideas compete, rather than the children in the group. Exploratory talk depends on a shared group identity developing. The best possible learning outcome is arrived at collectively by the group thinking and learning together.



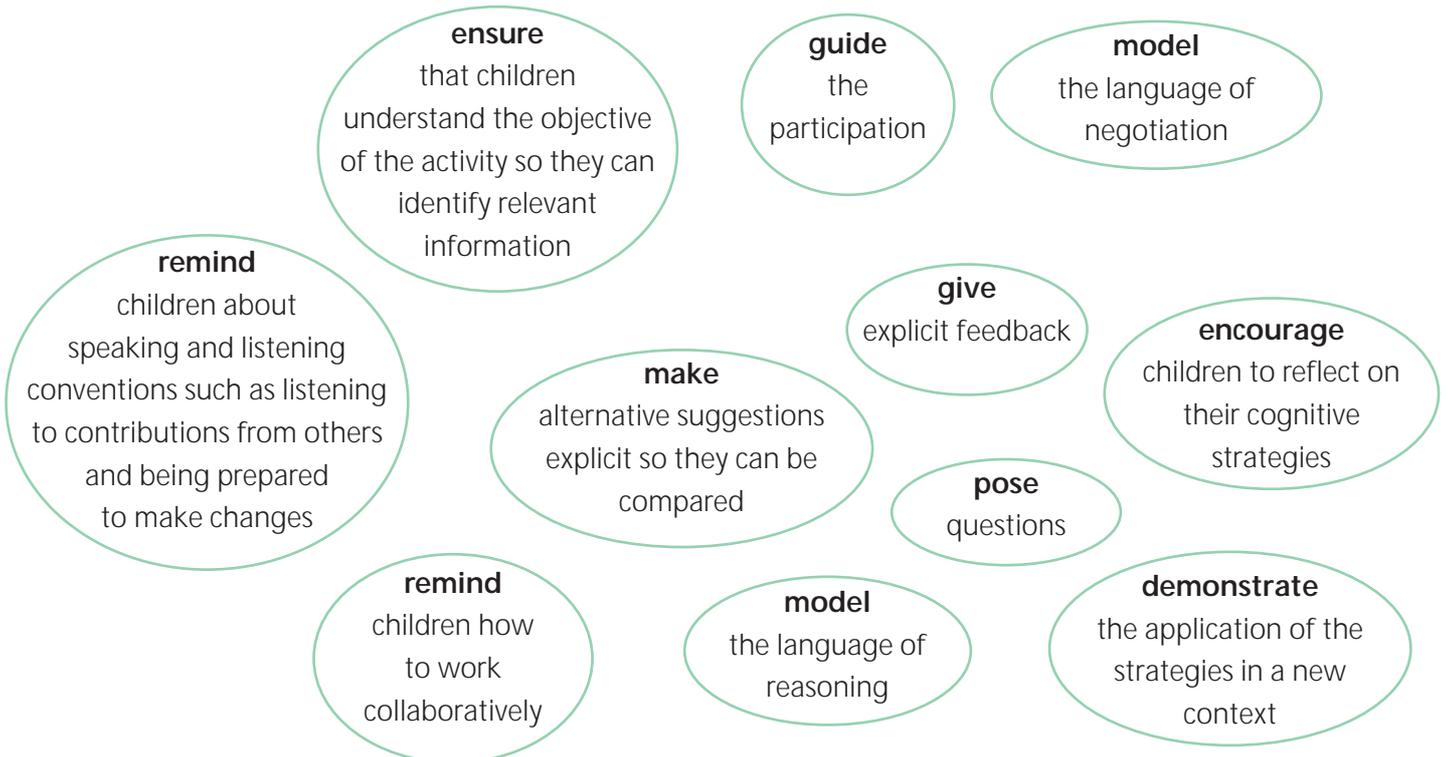


Opportunities for exploratory talk include any investigative, practical or problem-solving context across the curriculum, e.g. mathematics, design and technology, science, philosophy for children (see DfES Research report 115). ICT can be a catalyst for exploratory talk (see *ICT for EAL* flier and the CD-ROM which accompanies these units).

The strand of speaking and listening will be group interaction (*Speaking, Listening, Learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2*, DfES 0625-2003 G). See also Unit 4 of these materials, pages 25–27, for the benefits of collaborative work for children learning EAL and advice about groupings. See Unit 4, pages 33–54 and the accompanying DVD for an exemplar teaching sequence.



**The role of the adult is to:**





Reasoning, characterised by the use of logical connectives such as *so* and *because*, should be evident in the talk as the group tries to reach agreement.

Research findings include:

- marked changes in the way that groups of children talk together in the direction of greater reflection on learning and reasoning (Wegerif and Mercer 2000, cited in Wegerif 2004)
- learning gains in curriculum areas (Wegerif 2004)

There is evidence to suggest that those children less likely to use exploratory talk at home gain the most benefit from this approach in school and that, providing exploratory talk occurs within the context of an inclusive curriculum, EAL learners gain particular benefit (Wegerif 2004).

### Exploratory talk for mathematics

Exploratory talk for mathematics will provide opportunities to develop the language needed to solve mathematical problems of different types, such as:

- word problems involving number, money, measures or time in real-life contexts;
- finding all possibilities;
- logic problems;
- finding rules and describing patterns;
- diagram problems and visual puzzles.



Mathematical challenges for able children at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (downloadable resources on the Primary National Strategy website [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk)) provide the opportunity for children to work collaboratively to solve various types of problems in guided sessions. Contexts will need to be made as familiar and motivating as possible for the particular children in the group, e.g. names, food, clothes, games, buildings, television programmes, special occasions and situations.



At the beginning of these sessions, children will need to negotiate and make decisions about which operation(s), method of calculation (mental or written) and ways of recording they will use.

**The role of the adult includes:**



- activating and reinforcing previous learning of problem-solving strategies;
- restating the problem;
- making suggestions, e.g. *We need to count/build/draw...* ;
- asking questions such as: *Where do we need to start?, Do we all agree?, Does anyone have another idea?*

**During problem solving, children will be expressing degrees of probability using modal verbs. The adult supports the development of problem-solving strategies and associated language by:**



- modelling the language: *It could be ... , It might be ... , It couldn't be ... , It must be ... , It has to be either ...or...* and so on;
- posing questions such as *Have we discovered a rule?, Can we repeat it?*;
- introducing mathematical vocabulary such as *multiples* and *correlation*;
- recasting children's contributions: *Yes, there are three lots of ... , three sets of ... ;*
- encouraging children to justify their contributions: *Why do you think that?*;
- eliciting and reinforcing general statements.

**At the end of the session, children will articulate their reasoning and explain how they have solved the problem. The role of the adult is to:**



- model and encourage the use of logical connectives such as *because, therefore, If ... then ...* to support the explanation;
- introduce verbs such as *visualised, found* and *noticed* to support children to explain their strategies;
- recast children's contributions, for example:
  - Child: *That's when we got it.*
  - Adult: *I see. That was when you realised ... ;*



- continue to demonstrate and talk about problem-solving strategies;
- provide focused and specific feedback and praise: *Well done. I like the way you explained that you only realised there was a quicker way to work it out after you had drawn and coloured all the sweets! Can you explain the quicker method to us?*



See the accompanying DVD section 4 for an example of collaborative exploratory talk used during a whole-class speaking and listening lesson. The teaching sequence for this lesson is in Unit 4 Speaking, listening, learning: working with children learning English as an additional language.





### Role of graphic organisers in exploratory talk

Graphic organisers are visual representations and organisational tools which are particularly useful for children learning EAL to use during guided sessions, or during independent collaborative activities, where talk is exploratory and there is a requirement to report back.

Semantic webs or concept maps can be constructed by practitioners during guided sessions or by children working independently in groups.

#### Reasons to use graphic organisers

- They promote inclusion by allowing children to construct their own meanings and make their 'ways of seeing' explicit.
- They facilitate access to linguistically demanding tasks and support the development of cognitive and academic language.
- Thoughts and ideas generated in order to activate prior knowledge can be grouped in order to help children to clarify their thinking.
- Steps in a procedure, a sequence of events or attributes of a shape or object can be represented in a visual form. Children develop and use the language associated with listing, classifying, sequencing, prioritising, etc.
- They help children understand the range of ways and alternative ways in which ideas can be organised.
- They support practitioners to find out what children already know, the ways in which they group information and ideas, and the connections they make.
- Misconceptions can be identified and the visual revisited at the end of a session to see how ideas have changed or developed.
- They support children to report back and reflect on learning, following an investigative or problem-solving activity.



## Barrier games

Barrier games involve procedures based on giving and receiving information and instructions across a physical barrier that prevents a direct view of the work under discussion. They require pairs or groups of children to use specific and unambiguous language for real purposes in an interactive way in order to complete the task.

Barrier games can be used in guided sessions as well as for independent collaborative work across the whole curriculum.

Although games can be designed to develop language for a very wide range of purposes, they are particularly useful as a way of developing mathematical vocabulary including:

- directional and positional language;
- language to describe attributes, patterns, shape and space;
- the language of comparison.

They are a vehicle for developing new vocabulary and specific language structures, as well as providing a real purpose to practise and consolidate language previously introduced.

Speakers learn the importance and skill of giving explicit and complete information to listeners. Listeners learn the importance and skill of listening carefully, assessing information and asking questions to clarify or obtain further information.





## Introducing and developing barrier games

### Role of adults

Games can be introduced either by a trained practitioner working with a pair or group of children or by two adults demonstrating the game to the whole class. Either approach gives an opportunity for the particular language needed as well as the game itself to be modelled.

Practitioners need to be aware of the language demands and opportunities of the activity and ensure that these are made explicit in the modelling section of the teaching sequence. Barrier games will place considerable demands on children's linguistic resources as well as on their ability to self-monitor and solve problems. They will continue to need the involvement of a trained practitioner to monitor, model and prompt where necessary as they play the game. Practitioners should use assessment for learning to support intervention.

### Groupings and organisation

- It is beneficial to have at least one good language model within the group or as one of the pair.
- It is a good idea to group or pair children who share a first language, as it may on occasions be beneficial for children to play the game in their first language before they attempt to play the game in English.

Where there are more than two children playing a barrier game, a number of organisational strategies are possible.

- Several children working independently may be responding to one child acting as an instructor.
- Several children may work together to arrive at a collaborative decision about how to respond to the instructions.

### Assessment for learning – focuses for observation during the game

- How clear are the instructions?
- How complete are they?
- Is the vocabulary specific enough for the purpose?
- Is feedback taken account of?
- Are instructions changed or supplemented when it was evident they were unclear?
- Was the instructor asked for clarification?



- How focused were the questions?
- How grammatically correct was the language?

After the game is over, the observations of the adult should be used as part of focused feedback to the children. Positive aspects of performance should be reinforced, alternative vocabulary introduced and language development objectives revisited.

### Examples of barrier games

Games can be designed which prompt children to develop and use a range of language, for example, to prompt children to use the language of description, classification and/or comparison, to ask and answer questions or give and follow instructions. They can require the language of sequencing or ordering and incorporate mathematical vocabulary, directional and/or positional language.

### Activities may involve children in:



- drawing characters, imaginary creatures, scenes, shapes or maps;
- constructing, using materials, bricks or Lego™;
- creating patterns, drawing, using mosaic or gummed paper shapes;
- sequencing pictures;
- spotting differences;
- creating models with clay or dough;
- dressing dolls or figures;
- placing pictures or pieces on a board or background;
- sequencing and threading beads;
- choosing objects;
- matching descriptions with characters;
- matching questions with answers;
- matching words with definitions;
- describing and creating scenarios with play people, animals, mini-beasts, dinosaurs or vehicles;
- giving and following or tracing directions on a map.

It is important to ensure that all children involved have opportunities both to give the instructions (or descriptions) and to follow them. Emphasise, to the child who is giving the instructions, the need to allow their partner(s) time to respond before moving on to the next step.



### Enrichment and progression

Barrier games can be varied in order to provide differing levels of challenge. Here are some examples.

- A rule which sets a limit on the number of questions that may be asked will encourage children to plan their questions very carefully.
- Deliberately leaving out vital information from instructions will require the listening child to ask questions for clarification.
- Deliberately failing to ask for clarification will reveal the shortcomings of the instructions at the end of the game.
- Prohibiting certain types of word will make children search for synonyms.

Progression can be achieved by using increasingly complex subject-specific vocabulary, more complex pictures and models, instructions with several parts to them, increasingly complex positional and directional language and other similar stepped processes.



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