

Reading Aloud

Reading Comprehension Strategy

Why promote reading aloud? Reading aloud builds many important foundational skills, introduces vocabulary, provides a model of fluent, expressive reading, and helps students recognise what reading for pleasure is all about. Reading aloud demonstrates the relationship between the printed word and meaning. It helps students make meaning of the texts they read. Students can listen on a higher language level than they can read, so reading aloud makes complex ideas more accessible and exposes students to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech thereby supporting independent reading. It is particularly helpful for EAL students. It also exposes less able readers to the same rich and engaging books that fluent readers read on their own and entices them to become better readers. Students of any age benefit from hearing an experienced reading of a text. It is important to note, however, that reading aloud is just one strategy and should form part of a balanced approach to engaging with a text.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- OL4: Listen actively in order to get the gist of an account or presentation, noting its main points and purpose
- OL11: Engage with the world of oral language as a pleasurable and purposeful activity
- OL13: Develop their spoken language proficiency by... stimulating appropriate responses relative to context and purpose
- R1: Read texts with fluency, understanding and competence, decoding groups of words/phrases and not just single words
- R2: Read for a variety of purposes: learning, pleasure, research, comparison
- R5: Engage in sustained private reading as a pleasurable and purposeful activity, applying what they have learned about the effectiveness of spoken and written texts to their own experience of reading.

Possible Key Skills

- Communicating
- Being Literate
- Working with Others
- Others

Instructions

While most texts are appropriate to read as a read-aloud, it can be challenging to hold some students' attention for texts longer than two pages. Use your knowledge of your students, coupled with the appeal of the text, to select a reading of appropriate length. When doing a read-aloud, it is best if all students have a copy of the text so that they can follow along, usually taking notes as they listen. The teacher might begin reading the text, reading a few lines or a whole paragraph. There are many ways to structure a read-aloud:

- Read-alouds can be structured "popcorn style." As soon as one student stops reading, another student can begin.
- Teachers can assign students a section of the text to read. Often teachers give students the assignment the night before, so that they can practice reading for homework.
- Students are assigned or volunteer to take on parts/characters, including the part/role of narrator. Parts/roles should be rotated frequently.
- Students can read in the order in which they are sitting continuing around the room until the text is finished. Sometimes teachers encourage students to say "pass" if they prefer not to read. Knowing students' competence and confidence as readers is crucial for this approach.

As the text is read, students might **annotate their own text or take notes on a graphic organiser**. Many teachers have students underline or highlight important words or phrases in the text and write questions in the margins of the page. Sometimes teachers give students questions that they should answer as they listen to the text being read.

Depending on the length of the reading, you may want to **pause after each paragraph** to check for understanding, clarify misconceptions, and ask students to make predictions.

If there are particularly important parts of the material that you want to emphasise, you can have students **reread these sections**. Students often pick up on different ideas and words when they hear a text read more than once. Alternatively after the read-aloud, you can ask students to reread the text silently on their own.