



Leafield C.E. Primary School

Whole Class Reading Approach:

What is whole class reading?

Instead of guided reading groups and a carousel of activities, pupils have daily reading lessons as a whole class. These sessions:

- Are built around the teacher reading high-quality and challenging texts, which are dissected by the class through high-level questioning and discussion.
- Include a range of activities – not all of which must have a written outcome – that enable pupils to develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

Why is this better than guided reading?

How does it work?

- Pupils are regularly immersed in high-quality children's literature.
- Pupils can improve speaking and listening skills, as well as developing comprehension skills.
- More time is given to modelling skills rather than just assessing ability.
- Behaviour for learning is improved as all pupils are engaged in the lesson.

The teacher selects a high-quality piece of children's literature or non-fiction text that will challenge all pupils. It should be at a level beyond that at which they can read independently. The text can be linked to a relevant topic and used to benefit other subjects.

The learning objective for the session is the same for all pupils. Pupils will have access to the same activities and levels of questioning but with differing levels of support provided depending on pupil needs.

The teacher reads the text to the class, modelling fluency, intonation and comprehension, and pupils follow the text with their own copy.

The teacher uses skilful questioning and discussion to help pupils get to grips with new vocabulary and develop their understanding of the text.

Pupils work on activities that help them to develop their comprehension of the text. Depending on the activity, pupils may work in mixed-ability groups, pairs or by themselves.

Activities do not always need a written outcome, for example you may use drama to help children explore a character through role play, debates or freeze frames.

The teacher makes assessments at the end of the lesson to inform planning of future sessions.

Discrete reading sessions should last no more than 30 minutes, to ensure pupils remain engaged and to make a distinction between these sessions and English or literacy lessons.

Listening to pupils read

The teacher should avoid selecting individual children to read aloud during whole class reading. 'Cold reading' an unfamiliar, difficult text can be a negative experience for pupils who are developing their confidence. Instead, the teacher could take opportunities to listen to individuals reading after they have read and modelled good practice.

Benefits of Whole Class Reading

- 1. Improved Comprehension Skills:** Engaging with a text as a whole class allows for in-depth exploration and discussion. Teachers can guide children through complex texts, modelling strategies for comprehension, such as making predictions, asking questions, and summarizing. These shared experiences help children develop critical thinking and comprehension skills.
- 2. Enhanced Vocabulary and Language Development:** Whole class reading exposes students to rich, varied vocabulary and complex sentence structures. Teachers can highlight and explain new words within the context of the text, enhancing children's language development. This shared vocabulary becomes a common language for classroom discussions, further reinforcing learning.
- 3. Development of Listening and Speaking Skills:** Group discussions about the text help develop their speaking skills, as they learn to articulate their thoughts and respond to others' ideas.
- 4. Cultivation of a Love for Reading:** Whole class reading often involves engaging and high-quality texts that capture children's interest. Shared reading experiences can foster a love for reading, as children enjoy the collective journey through a story or informational text. Teachers can choose texts that are culturally relevant and resonate with children's experiences, and expose them to genres they wouldn't ordinarily choose, further motivating them to read.
- 5. Structured Learning Experience:** Whole class reading provides a structured approach to reading instruction. Teachers can plan lessons that build on each other, ensuring a coherent progression of skills. This structured approach helps all children, particularly those who may struggle with unstructured or independent reading tasks, to follow along and achieve success.
- 6. Opportunities for Formative Assessment:** Teachers can use whole class reading sessions to conduct formative assessments, observing children's reading abilities, comprehension, and engagement. This ongoing assessment allows teachers to identify children who need additional support and adjust their teaching, accordingly, ensuring that no child falls behind.

Whole class reading is an effective method for teaching reading that ensures no child gets left behind. It fosters an inclusive learning environment, allows for differentiated teaching, and promotes peer learning. The benefits of whole class reading include improved comprehension skills, enhanced vocabulary and language development, development of listening and speaking skills, cultivation of a love for reading, structured learning experiences, and opportunities for formative assessment. By adopting whole class reading, educators can support the reading development of all students, paving the way for their academic success and lifelong learning.