

The big ideas of the reading framework

This document is a compilation of the big ideas associated with the signposts of the reading framework. It is important that these are used alongside the sets of illustrations, which support a deeper understanding of what developing expertise looks like by highlighting how students use their knowledge and skills to respond to a specific task. If the big ideas are used without the illustrations there is a reasonable possibility that teachers will interpret them in a variety of different ways.

Making sense of text: using a processing system

When learning to read, students use their developing understanding of the written code to decode the text. As their reading becomes fluent, students draw on their increasing understanding of how words work, to read with automaticity. They develop confidence in using many sources of information to make sense of text, monitor their understanding, and take action if this breaks down. As they progress through school, students develop expertise in reading an increasing range of texts with greater independence, fluency, awareness, and control over their repertoire of strategies.

Set 1

Students understand that books have print, and print tells the story. Students are beginning to recognise consonant and vowel letters and provide the most common phonic sounds for them to read simple words in text. Students use their developing phonemic awareness to apply phonological strategies to word reading. Students can attend to print in an organised way including one-to-one matching and directional movement.

Set 2

Students attempt to use phonics knowledge to decode and understand text.

Students provide the sounds to a variety of increasingly complex orthographic (grapheme-phoneme) patterns to decode words in text.

Students are able to quickly recognise and read an increasing number of high-frequency print words.

The students' self-monitoring is indicated by the fact that they are beginning to notice and correct mismatches (errors). They use illustrations to support their decoding attempts.

They read some words together in a phrased way and are beginning to use intonation.

Students are beginning to make meaning beyond their prior knowledge and can retell stories they have read themselves.

Set 3

Students are using their growing knowledge of the print system to read with fluency and understanding.

Students look carefully at each word and sound out new and complex orthographic patterns, or fluently read words with known orthographic patterns and use context-based cues to cross-check their decoding attempts.

They automatically recognise most high-frequency words in their instructional texts.

As fluency increases, students begin to make greater connections between their prior knowledge and what they read. Students can retell what they read as well as discuss what they read.

Set 4

The students' reading processing systems are functioning smoothly and are becoming self-extending.

The students automatically read all high-frequency words and solve new challenges, including straightforward multisyllabic words, within more difficult text at speed, giving necessary attention to parts of words including morphemes.

The students have made the transition to silent reading and are reading longer, advanced texts quickly and with increasing independence and fluency.

Students can discuss what they have read and start making inferences.

Students use text structures and features to support their understanding of text they are reading.

Set 5

The students are independently operating reading processing systems across a range of text types. They decode texts fluently and accurately and select an appropriate strategy when encountering unknown words, using their knowledge of common prefixes, suffixes, and root words, of compound words, and of syllable patterns.

The students select from a variety of strategies to monitor their reading and to use when meaning breaks down. These strategies include cross-checking meaning, structure, and visual clues to confirm or self-correct; rereading; using what they know about words and sentence structure; and looking for text clues to confirm their predictions and inferences.

The students use visual language features to support their understanding of the ideas and information in the text, such as pictures, diagrams, and text boxes.

Set 6

The students are operating effective reading processing systems across a wide range of mixed text types. They decode texts automatically and accurately using a range of reliable structural analysis strategies when encountering unknown words. These strategies include looking for known chunks, recognising the meaning and origin of roots and affixes, breaking words into syllables, and using their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme relationships.

The students monitor their reading for accuracy and sense, demonstrating that they have the confidence to adjust their reading when they encounter difficulties by varying the speed of reading, rereading to combine context clues with word-solving strategies, and attending to the most important information. They adjust their reading rate to suit reading purposes such as detailed reading, skimming, or scanning.

Set 7

The students are operating effective reading processes across a wide range of complex (or age- and year-level-appropriate), continuous and non-continuous, subject-specific texts. They decode words, including unfamiliar words, quickly and automatically.

They deliberately select from an increased repertoire of reading comprehension strategies, using their knowledge of subject-based reading purposes, text features, and themselves as readers (including strengths, preferences, and gaps).

They deliberately monitor the accuracy and effectiveness of their own reading skills and strategies, for example, by monitoring comprehension, searching for evidence to confirm or contradict interpretations, and cross-checking that the predicted meaning of an unfamiliar word is consistent with other information in the text.

The students apply increasingly sophisticated knowledge of texts and text features to make sense of challenging, subject-based texts. For example, they apply knowledge of structural features, such as topic sentences, complex sentence structures, cohesive devices, and typographical and visual features.

Making sense of text: using knowledge of text structure and features

Readers develop their knowledge of text features and use this to navigate and understand texts. This knowledge includes recognition of the structure of a text; the way it uses visual features, such as headings and illustrations; its punctuation; the language used, and the voice and register. Students become increasingly skilled at recognising the purpose and features of different text types.

Set 1

The students know that texts are made up of words and pictures. They understand that some texts tell a story and that some texts tell us about things. They hold a book the right way up, and they know that it is read from front to back and that the print is read from left to right.

Set 2

The students know that texts can be print or digital and fiction or non-fiction. They use appropriate language when discussing features of books, such as the title, author, and illustrations. They draw on their knowledge of how stories work to help predict events.

The students know that texts are made up of sentences, and they recognise where a sentence begins and ends. They also recognise questions and dialogue through their understanding of basic punctuation, such as speech marks, commas, exclamation marks and question marks.

Set 3

The students understand that fiction and non-fiction texts have different purposes, and they recognise how and when some language and text features are used for these purposes. They understand some differences between navigating digital and print text.

The students use their knowledge of text structure to identify the beginning, middle and end of a story, or a sequence of events in a non-fiction text. The students recognise when something is happening in the past or in the present.

They know that sentences can be grouped in paragraphs to develop an idea or fact, and they look for more detail and information in illustrations, diagrams and photographs.

Set 4

The students draw on their developing knowledge of simple text structures when engaging with texts. They use their recognition of the text structure in both print and digital texts to identify the writer's purpose.

The students use their knowledge of plot structure to anticipate and navigate literary text. They use punctuation and layout to track unattributed dialogue between characters and can recognise rhythm and rhyming patterns in poetry.

They use their knowledge of contents pages, glossaries, headings, subheadings and topic sentences to locate information in non-fiction texts, and they look for information in visual language features (such as text boxes in non-fiction texts) to extend or clarify the text.

The students know that sentences can have more than one idea or one idea with supporting detail. They understand how pronoun references (for example, "he" and "they") and coordinating conjunctions (for example, "after", "while" and "whenever") are used within sentences.

The students can recognise how a change of tense affects meaning. They can use simple discourse markers (for example, "long ago" or "next") to follow a sequence in fiction or non-fiction text.

Set 5

The students recognise the features and purposes of common text types (continuous and non-continuous, print and digital) and use this knowledge to navigate and understand texts. For example, they use headings and subheadings, key words, topic sentences and key questions.

The students recognise basic grammatical constructions and understand how these affect meaning. They use their knowledge of cohesive devices such as pronouns and adverbs to track ideas and information across a text.

Set 6

The students deliberately use the features and structures of a wide variety of continuous and non-continuous text types and text forms, both digital and in print.

The students apply their knowledge of sentence structure to make sense of complex or complicated sentences that may include embedded clauses. They apply their understanding of a variety of grammatical constructions and some rhetorical patterns, such as comparing and contrasting. They make links across a text by recognising a range of connectives and adverbial clauses.

Set 7

The students effectively use developed knowledge of a wide range of complex text structures when reading subject-specialised texts.

They deliberately apply developed knowledge of the features and structures of a wide variety of complex, subject-specialised text types and text forms, both continuous and non-continuous, and both digital and in print. They effectively apply knowledge of a wide range of organisational and cohesive devices to analyse ideas, patterns, and relationships across texts as a whole – for example, levels of headings, paragraphs, repetition, choice of words (lexical coherence), and connectives.

The students effectively apply knowledge of grammatical structures to identify and cope with elements that may complicate meaning-making. These could include sentences which are long and informationally dense and which may have both embedded and subordinate clauses, long noun phrases, pronouns with unclear referents, omitted information (ellipsis), passive voice, and nominalisation.

The students effectively apply knowledge of the conventions of a wide range of specialised and complex forms of representation, such as different types of diagrams and graphs, including timelines (in social sciences) and probability trees (in mathematics).

Making sense of text: using vocabulary knowledge

As readers read, successful comprehension depends on their understanding most of the meanings of the words in the text. They recognise them in print and know what they mean. In the early stages, readers know words they decode because they are in their oral vocabulary. As they become more expert, most words, including academic words for expressing abstract notions, are in their reading vocabulary.

Set 1

The students draw on a limited oral vocabulary as a source for understanding texts.

Set 2

The students draw on a widening oral vocabulary, including nouns, verbs, and many adjectives and prepositions, when they engage with text.

Set 3

The students apply their knowledge of words and phrases from their oral vocabulary when engaging with written text. This vocabulary includes topic words and interest words, a wide range of regular and irregular verbs, and some adverbs.

Set 4

The students find the meanings of unknown vocabulary in texts by using context-related strategies. These strategies include rereading text to gather more information, looking for definitions in the text, using prior and subsequent information in sentences, and inferring from the illustrations.

Set 5

The students use vocabulary strategies in order to make meaning from text. These strategies include using their knowledge of the meanings of some common prefixes, knowing the synonyms or multiple meanings of many common words, and applying their knowledge of word families and collocations to find the meaning of unknown words.

Set 6

The students draw on a repertoire of vocabulary strategies to make meaning from text. They work out the meaning of words and phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar by using strategies such as applying their knowledge of most common prefixes and some common suffixes, using reference sources such as dictionaries and thesauruses, inferring meanings from known roots and affixes, working out the meaning of unfamiliar phrases by drawing on their oral language and the context, and searching for clues in the illustrations.

Set 7

The students select and use effective vocabulary strategies for making meaning from texts of increasing complexity. They find the meaning of unknown vocabulary by using strategies such as applying their knowledge of how words work or by seeking explanations in the text, including the illustrations. They understand that words and phrases can have figurative as well as literal meanings and that some words have different meanings depending on context.

Set 8

The students confidently and deliberately select the most appropriate vocabulary strategies when making meaning from complex texts. They work out more complex, irregular, and/or ambiguous words by using strategies such as inferring the unknown from the known; using their growing academic and content-specific vocabulary to understand texts; and interpreting metaphor, analogy, and connotative language.

Set 9

The students effectively use highly-developed knowledge of a wide range of subject-specialised, general academic, and low-frequency (Tier 2) vocabulary to understand and analyse complex, subject-specialised texts.

They work out the meanings of complex, unfamiliar words and phrases by flexibly using a range of strategies. For example, they draw on developed knowledge of sub-word parts (such as prefixes, roots, and suffixes), parts of speech (for example, identifying that an unfamiliar word is an adverb), and context.

The students use developed knowledge of the connotative associations and the literal and figurative meanings of words to make inferences about a writer's purpose, ideas, and positioning of readers. They can analyse why a writer may have chosen particular words rather than possible synonyms (for example, degrees or nuances, technical or scientific terms rather than everyday words, or informal expressions rather than formal ones).

Making sense of text: reading critically

This progression focuses on students' developing expertise in understanding how writers influence them as readers. They are able to identify the ways in which writers deliberately select language and text features, as well as content, to shape the way they respond to particular ideas or information.

Set 1

The students demonstrate an awareness that texts have messages. They ask questions and make connections to their prior knowledge in relation to the writer's message. They know that the writer has used both the pictures and the text to convey this message, and they can talk about the message and make a personal response to it.

Set 2

The students can identify the writer's message in a simple text and can make simple inferences to interpret it. They identify the main ideas as well as some information and details in the text that support this message, and they can identify some language features that the writer uses to convey it.

The students can express an opinion about the writer's message and can relate it to their own experiences.

Set 3

The students know that texts can be written to influence audiences. They make inferences to interpret the writer's message from a mixture of explicit and implicit information that is nearby in the text and illustrations. They ask questions and make connections with their own experience in order to clarify the writer's message.

The students recognise that the writer has deliberately chosen a particular message, and that it could have been conveyed in a different way. They can distinguish fact from opinion and can recognise when language is being used to influence the reader.

Set 4

The students can identify specific devices that the writer has used to influence the reader or convey a particular point of view. The students evaluate the writer's use of language to influence an audience in relation to a particular purpose. They can identify the difference between fact and opinion.

The students can draw conclusions or generalisations about the writer's intention and can form their own opinions about the underlying message, theme, or point of view which the writer is conveying.

Set 5

The students know how written texts can deliberately position a reader. They can identify and evaluate how the writer has used language, content, and structure to influence the reader or to convey a particular point of view.

The students actively engage with the writer's message, theme, or point of view and consider it in relation to their own knowledge and experience. They are able to explain why they agree or disagree with the writer's message.

Set 6

The students consider how writers use content, structure, and persuasive language devices to position their readers in relation to particular points of view.

The students can analyse and evaluate a writer's message, looking for evidence to consider the reliability and credibility of the writer's argument or position, and identifying any bias and stereotyping. The students can then propose an opposing or different point of view.

Set 7

The students analyse and evaluate writers' development of ideas and themes and the ways in which they position their readers.

They can apply a range of criteria to evaluate the accuracy, relevance, reliability, usefulness, and status of ideas in complex texts, in terms of subject-area reading purposes. They have a repertoire of strategies for analysing and evaluating how writers position their readers, for example, by considering the writers' choice of vocabulary, types of visual representation, and grammatical devices (such as the use of the first-person-plural pronouns "we" and "our" to promote agreement). They can analyse and evaluate writers' language choices for impact and effectiveness in conveying their themes or point of view.

The students can analyse how and why individuals or groups are presented in a text in certain ways, such as through subtle examples of bias or stereotyping or the inclusion or exclusion of particular perspectives and points of view.

They are developing the ability to critique the quality of ideas in a text against subject-based standards of evidence and argumentation (for example, by identifying examples of sampling issues in statistical reports or a lack of qualification in claims made in a scientific report).

Reading to organise ideas and information for learning

Students use their reading and writing to organise their ideas and information for different learning purposes. They develop their expertise in selecting, noting down, and organising ideas and information, using appropriate formats. They collate, analyse, and classify the content they need for a variety of curriculum tasks.

Set 1

The students ask questions about the text. They record some general detail about the character or events in a story through drawing or through making supported responses on a teacher-provided template.

Set 2

The students think of questions that they want to find the answers to from their reading. They record specific details or facts that answer their questions by using words and phrases on simple, teacher-provided frameworks and/or by using drawings and simple diagrams.

Set 3

The students use simple templates to help generate questions before, during, and after reading tasks that they are engaged in for curriculum-related learning purposes. They locate, record, and organise ideas and information using teacher-scaffolded processes, strategies, and/or frameworks.

Set 4

The students use a widening range of strategies and developed frameworks to clarify their reading purpose and to locate and organise information to support specific learning purposes. They generate and refine questions to guide their research; select and preview texts to evaluate their usefulness; and make notes by locating, evaluating and integrating information and ideas from within texts. They use developed frameworks and visual representations, such as mind maps, diagrams, and graphic organisers, to record and organise the ideas and information they gather.

Set 5

The students independently select, adapt, or create appropriate frameworks to clarify their reading purpose. They locate, organise, and analyse information to support specific learning purposes across the curriculum. They articulate and describe what they know and what they want to find out, generate and order questions, and develop key words from the main question to provide a search query. The students locate and preview texts to evaluate their usefulness, clarifying their questions if necessary. They make notes by locating, evaluating, and synthesising key ideas and information from across or within texts.

Set 6

The students confidently plan systematic investigations, for example, by generating specific areas or directions for subject-area investigation, evaluating current knowledge, identifying and evaluating possible sources, and developing sets of key words (and sets of synonyms) for search queries.

They employ efficient skills and effective strategies for locating, previewing, evaluating, and prioritising texts with regards to their usefulness, accuracy, relevance, reliability, and the status of their ideas.

They draw on a large repertoire of strategies for extracting, summarising, transforming, and organising information and ideas, for example, by selecting or creating retrieval frameworks (such as tables or graphic organisers) on the basis of subject-area reading purpose and personal preference or utility. They confidently apply strategies for translating quantitative or technical information expressed in words into visual forms, such as diagrams and graphs, and vice versa.

Acquiring and using information and ideas in informational texts

Students become increasingly dependent on their reading to locate ideas and information in a wide range of print and digital texts. The students evaluate the ideas and information in terms of their curriculum-related reading purpose, and they use the information to answer specific questions. As questions and tasks become more difficult, texts become more complex and the content more abstract and specialised.

Set 1

The students respond to informational texts in ways that demonstrate engagement. They know that illustrations and text combine to provide information, and they find factual details in the text mainly by using the illustrations. They can recall some factual information, using the illustrations as a prompt.

Set 2

The students draw on their prior knowledge to locate and use information in text. They can identify the main idea or theme in simple texts with familiar content. They locate and interpret ideas and information that is directly stated or explicit at the sentence level in the text or that is directly conveyed in the illustrations.

Set 3

The students identify the main ideas or themes of longer texts with some unfamiliar content. They make simple inferences using their prior knowledge along with information that is close by in the text. They locate and connect ideas and information across longer sections of the text.

The students can retrieve information that is explicitly stated in simple graphs and diagrams which are clearly explained and linked to the text.

Set 4

The students can locate, evaluate, and integrate information in text in relation to their reading purpose. They identify main ideas at the whole-text and paragraph level, locate supporting detail within paragraphs, and make connections between ideas throughout the text.

The students make inferences using their prior knowledge along with information that is close by in the text, demonstrating their awareness of some techniques that writers use to convey meaning. The students can identify and reject small amounts of competing information in relation to their purpose for reading.

The students identify and retrieve straightforward information from charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams that clarify or extend the text.

Set 5

The students locate and summarise main ideas and information within and across a small range of continuous and non-continuous texts by using text features such as key words, topic sentences, key questions or sub-headings, titles, keys, legends, and scales. They interpret and link several related items of information within and across paragraphs. They evaluate the relevance of the information in terms of their purpose for reading, identifying and rejecting competing information.

The students use concrete examples in text along with prior knowledge to support their understanding of abstract concepts.

Set 6

The students locate, evaluate, and synthesise information and ideas from across a range of texts to meet a particular reading purpose.

The students select and use a range of continuous and non-continuous texts, both digital and in print, and make decisions as they read about the usefulness of the text in terms of its relevance to their particular reading purpose. They link multiple pieces of information from across the texts to make inferences. They synthesise information and reflect critically on the meaning they are gaining, critically evaluating texts in relation to accuracy and bias.

The students use text information and prior knowledge to interpret and integrate abstract ideas.

Set 7

The students confidently locate, evaluate, and synthesise complex information and ideas. They select, evaluate, and critically use complex continuous and non-continuous print and digital texts, including texts written for a general adult audience.

They apply increasingly sophisticated knowledge of texts, text features, and strategies to evaluate, interpret, and integrate complex, abstract ideas. They synthesise information across a range of texts or within complex texts to form a coherent understanding of a complex situation, idea, process, or phenomenon.

They identify and make informed judgments about conflicting or inconsistent claims or pieces of information within and across a range of complex texts.

Reading for literary experience

As they go through school, students develop their expertise in interpreting and responding to ideas, information, and experiences in literary texts. Most of the literary texts they read are narrative fiction, including interactive fiction, although they will read and respond to other literary forms, such as poems and plays.

Set 1

The students respond to literary text in ways that demonstrate engagement. They laugh at funny parts, empathise with characters, join in with the reading, ask questions, and express opinions.

The students “read” very familiar stories by reciting them or use illustrations to “read” a story.

Set 2

The students respond to and interpret literary texts in relation to their own experiences. They form a hypothesis before reading by using the title, illustrations, and their knowledge of the context or setting.

The students gain information (for example, about plot, character traits, and themes) that is directly stated in the text, and they make simple inferences by drawing on their prior knowledge.

They express personal views about a character’s actions and can relate those views to their own behaviour or the behaviour of others they know.

Set 3

The students draw on their developing knowledge of how narrative texts work to make predictions about the text. They interpret ideas and information about plot, character traits, and themes that are directly stated or explicit in the text, drawing on ideas and information from their experiences and from other texts they have read.

They express opinions about characters and events with reference to the text and are beginning to recognise the effects of specific words used by the writer, such as action verbs.

Set 4

The students make inferences about a story’s plot, character traits, and themes from a mixture of explicit and implicit information that is nearby in the text and illustrations. They can visualise what is happening in the text and can understand the effects of particular words and phrases, for example, in creating humour, images, and mood.

The students can understand and discuss the relationships between characters, justifying their views by providing evidence from the text.

The students recognise some differences between stories and poems.

Set 5

The students make connections between their prior knowledge and concrete examples in the text in order to understand abstract ideas. They make and justify inferences about plot, motives, character traits, and themes from information that is close by in the text.

The students recognise when language is used for effect, for example, for creating humour, images, and mood. They make connections between the text and their prior knowledge to interpret figurative language.

They identify the point of view from which a story is told and respond critically to issues raised in stories, exploring alternative courses of action.

Set 6

The students interpret abstract ideas, complex plots, and sophisticated themes. They integrate several related pieces of information within a text to make inferences about plots and characters.

They identify and reflect on writers' purposes and the ways they use language and ideas to suit particular purposes. For example, the students identify how writers use expressive, descriptive, and figurative language for creating mood and building tension.

The students can comment critically on the overall impact of the text with reference to a range of text features. They identify the point of view from which a story is told and can respond with another point of view.

Set 7

The students know that a text can be interpreted at multiple levels. They integrate and synthesise multiple pieces of information that may be far apart in a text or across texts to infer motives, plot, character traits, and themes.

The students identify and evaluate writers' purposes and consider how writers have used language and ideas to suit these purposes. They recognise differences in writers' voices and styles.

The students can evaluate the cultural, historical, or social significance of a text.

Set 8

The students develop and justify alternative readings of literary texts and explain important aspects of the writers' craft. They select, read, and appreciate increasingly complex literary texts, including texts intended for an adult audience, for enjoyment, personal fulfilment, and growth.

They make and justify more than one interpretation of increasingly complex literary texts by integrating, synthesising, and analysing multiple pieces of information across texts as a whole.

The students analyse writers' choices (for example, of setting, narration, language, characterisation, and form) in order to infer and make judgments about the writers' purposes and craft. They explain differences between writers' voices and styles in terms of purpose and effect, and they show a deepening understanding of how language and structural features contribute to and affect the meaning of a text.