



A toolbox for English and foreign language teachers

ENGLISH



Reading

Reading is Worthwhile!



FREMMEDSPRÅKSENTERET
NORWEGIAN NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ENGLISH AND OTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION

Tips on Reading Skills

The Knowledge Promotion Reform (K06) provided a stronger focus on the five basic *skills of reading, writing, numeracy, oral skills and digital skills*. This booklet, which deals with *reading skills*, is the Norwegian National Centre for English and other Foreign Languages in Education's first booklet in a planned series of 'skill booklets' intended to provide teachers with a repertoire of approaches - a toolbox one can access in order to conduct pupil-activating and varied work regarding basic skills.

Texts are an important source of experiences, knowledge and language in both English and foreign language education. The *'Reading is Worthwhile!'* booklet provides you with a collection of tips that are well worth trying out in the work to promote pupils' reading skills. This is how one can equip pupils with tools that they can use in the discovery of texts in the target language – which is definitely worth reading!

Our tips have been chosen and described from a foreign language perspective. Developing reading skills in another language will help to strengthen reading skills in general – in line with the idea behind basic skills. As English and foreign language teachers, we are also 'reading teachers'.

When dealing with texts, we need strategies or methods to facilitate understanding – either to prepare, monitor or process what is being read. The practical reading activities presented in this booklet are therefore categorised according to the 3 stages of reading: pre-reading, through reading and post-reading. However, these stages will sometimes overlap.

The tips in this booklet are general and overarching, but are to a certain extent related to genres and types of texts. The choice of texts made will therefore determine the reading activities' degree of difficulty. In some cases, however, the language level required for the activity is indicated (beginner/advanced). No matter where you are in your language teaching, you will encounter challenging texts where these strategies or methods can be used.

The Reading is Worthwhile! booklet focuses on strengthening reading skills, but this work also involves and promotes other basic skills: One talks about texts, reads out loud, searches for texts online, listens, takes notes, creates digital products, presents, asks questions, recounts, reinvents etc.

From a long-term perspective, varied reading tasks will help make reading education less predictable and therefore more exciting and absorbing. By triggering the desire to read and promoting reading for pleasure, we achieve well-equipped readers – and that's for life!

All the tips in this booklet are also digitally available on the Norwegian National Centre for English and other Foreign Languages in Education website. They also include associated online resources that exemplify the activities: www.fremmedspraksen-teret.no/lesetips
We are now ready to strap on our tool belts and delve into the 'toolbox' – good luck!

Halden, 29 June 2012

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A Guide to Reading Expectations

This is a pre-reading activity where the pupils must consider various statements. All the statements should have a thematic connection to the text the pupils are to read afterwards. In other words, the aim of the activity is to activate pupils' prior knowledge.

The teacher organises the activity by making four posters with the inscriptions *agree*, *strongly agree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree written on them, respectively*. The teacher then hangs one poster in each corner of the room. As the teacher reads out the statements, pupils must stand next to the poster that best matches their own convictions. Pupils will thus move around the room depending on what their opinions are. They are not supposed to argue in favour of their points of view, they should only

consider whether they agree or disagree, and to what extent. Instead of making posters, the activity can be carried out by pupils marking their degree of agreement on a scale on a sheet of paper.

This pre-reading activity gives pupils an idea of what the content of the text is about, while also creating interest in one or more of the text's themes. The theme can range from global to national or local issues (environment, public transport, violence, openness, distribution of benefits, sports, etc.).

The teacher's preparation consists of choosing a suitable text and creating the posters and the guide that will give pupils reading expectations.

Probability Assessment

This is an activity that introduces a topic and activates the pupils' prior knowledge about the theme of a text. The approach to the topic is presented as an issue/a question, and the pupils are presented with various claims/statements that can be linked to the theme of the text they are going to read.

Let's say that the pupils are going to read a text about marketing. Then, for example, one can approach the theme of the text by giving them different statements regarding the relationship between purchasing power and purchasing pressure. Issue/question: Will Siri buy the jeans that cost 1200 kroner?

Examples of statements/claims:

- She is 15 years old.
- She is the oldest of four siblings.
- She experienced bad service at the shop

while trying the jeans.

- Both her parents are well-educated.
- She has a small cleaning job at her father's dental surgery (Saturdays).
- A recent consumer analysis showed that the jeans are of poor quality.
- She has 400 Nok pocket money per month.
- Jeans are her favorite garment.
- Her birthday is in two months.
- Her best friend has the same jeans.
- She is saving for a Mac.
- She is not an impulsive type.
- There has been an extensive commercial campaign for this model of jeans.
- The sales will start in three months.
- She has no other pants in this price range.
- She uses her pocket money and salary for social things.





Pupils must get into groups of three to five. The groups are given an envelope containing a question and a set of accompanying statements (as shown in the suggestion above) – all of which are related in one way or another to the text the pupils are going to read. In groups, the pupils must sort the statements that, in their opinion, are for or against the issue/question. In addition, the pupils within the group must agree on what they consider to be the most probable outcome based on the information they have received. The answer to the question must not be a simple count of the statements in 'for and against' piles, the statements may be weighted

differently, and pupils must assess whether there are some that weigh heavier than others. In addition, the task doesn't have a definitive answer in the form of a moral 'judgment'; the important thing is to arrive at a joint, reasoned probability assessment regarding the initial question. The pupils are now ready to read the text itself!

The statements/claims may also help train pupils to consider and argue for and against a certain case using the target language, and expose them to vocabulary and structures. The pupils will benefit from this in later written work.

Image-Supported Pre-Reading with Subsequent Round of Questions

Reading texts in the target language can present major challenges during English and foreign language primary education. Therefore, this reading activity aims to introduce pupils to large parts of the text's theme prior to the actual reading – and this is done by involving multiple senses.

Narrative texts with a somewhat surprising ending are best suited. One should not reveal the entire story beforehand, because the pre-reading activity should end with a round of questions where pupils ask the teacher yes/no questions about the outcome of the story. By presenting a simplified, oral version of the text in the target language, supported, and clarified using gestures and mimicry, illustrative images and key words, the teacher leads the pupils through the course of action in the text. To preserve some excitement regarding individual reading, the teacher stops the presentation before the ending is revealed.

Before pupils read the text in its entirety, they must process what the teacher has presented to them. Based on how they believe the story ends, they must ask the teacher yes/no questions in the target language. Whether or not the pupils are able to reason their way to or guess the right ending is not a crucial factor. The most important thing is that the round of questions helps pupils to become further motivated regarding the actual reading. Depending on the pupils' language level, this section is carried out with or without preparation time.

Pupils then read the entire text to see how it ends, and to gain a deeper understanding. Preparation: Based on a suitable text, the teacher selects appropriate images and key words and assembles them as a presentation of the plot in the text to be read.



Book Launch Party: Introduction Through Text Excerpts

The setting for this pre-reading activity is a fancy book launch party. Unlike the more traditional launch party, the contents of the glasses are not liquid, but are more 'spiritual' in nature. In each of the stemmed glasses, one will find a strip of paper with a sentence written on it from a literary text.

To give pupils the right associations and get them in a party mood, they are presented with a long table covered in a tablecloth and neatly placed stemmed glasses. Pupils are then asked to help themselves to a glass from the festive table, but are told not to peek at the strip of paper until the teacher gives the go-ahead.

The name of the author or title of the book is not relevant to the activity. However, being social is! At the launch party, no one has met each other before, and it is therefore natural for everyone to introduce themselves. This is

expected i.e., mingling and chatting with as many of the guests as possible – one has to 'see and be seen'! However, there is one compulsory requirement before one can move on to the next person: One must use the sentence on the piece of paper in the glass in the conversation. The more pupils that manage to talk to each other, the more excerpts from the text they get to hear. The recognition they then experience when reading the text in its entirety will have a positive impact on their reading comprehension.

Preparation:

- Set several desks to a long table and set it with as many stemmed glasses as there are pupils in the group (feel free to use a tablecloth and decorate the table as if a party was taking place).
- Write sentences from the text on pieces of paper and place one in each glass.

Word Cloud

In this pre-reading activity, attention is directed to key words pupils will encounter in an unknown text. The words are presented collectively in a word cloud so that the themes of the text are highlighted for all to see.

For example, the word cloud can be used in the following ways:

A) Pupils work in pairs with the word cloud and discuss what they think the text will be about. Pupils can then team up with another pair to further discuss the text. The pairs are free to work with different word clouds, which may make the conversation more interesting.

The teacher summarises and activates the pupils' linguistic knowledge. For example, how prefixes, suffixes and transparency can help us to find the meaning of a word. The fact that the words are presented collectively and are related to a theme will contribute to a more comprehensive overview of the content of the text.

B) The class is divided into two groups. One group is tasked with reading through the new text and trying to understand its main content. Associated pictures, headings, word lists etc. may be of help here. The other half of the class





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is then given the word cloud, and by studying the words, form an opinion about what they think the text will be about. Then, pupils are put into pairs, and the pupils with the word cloud tell their partner what their hypothesis is, while the pupils with the original text contribute ideas and correct.

One can also split the text and create different word clouds for the different parts. In this way, one can limit the task somewhat.

When creating the word cloud, the entire text can be typed into the word cloud editor called *Wordle*, which then generates a word cloud in which the most frequent words in the text become the most prominent in the cloud.

This method does not necessarily ensure a focus on the content words, which often need to be understood in order to fully benefit from the reading. By choosing advanced function you can write in and set the frequency of your own chosen words to ensure a prominent place in the cloud.

The advantage of the words being presented in a word cloud is that it provides a clear visual expression, which can be very useful for many pupils. The teacher's preparation consists of selecting key content words from the text and creating a word cloud (or more) using the word cloud editor called *Wordle* (<http://www.wordle.net/>).





Pieces of the Puzzle Become Words

This is a pre-reading activity for the youngest children, where attention is directed to words that the children will encounter in a text. The pupils may have previously encountered the words in oral form in a natural context, through things such as songs, games etc., but the goal is now that sound and written words will be connected.



At this level, one often works with things such as specific, small pictures of animals that are cut out or drawn and individually glued onto a piece of cardboard. Then, each piece of cardboard is cut into jigsaw puzzle pieces. The pieces are placed in a small pile on the group tables, and the children must put the pieces of the puzzle together – which head belongs to which feet, etc. Then it is time for the words; they are also on small jigsaw pieces and the pupils must find the right word for the right picture. Word pictures and illustrations will reinforce learning and understanding of the word, and several learning styles are involved.

The teacher's preparation consists of making the pieces of the puzzle, which probably requires a certain amount of time, but the result is an exercise that the pupils can use over and over again. It might be a good idea to laminate the jigsaw pieces.

Highlighting Key Concepts

Several of the pre-reading activities we address in this booklet are about familiarising oneself with the theme of a text before the text itself is presented - by activating or also developing prior knowledge. Based on a concrete text, pre-reading is also about getting an overview of and utilising its parts such as images, headlines, key words and introductory and concluding paragraphs, before it is read in its entirety.

Texts without illustrations and key concepts can also be adapted for this by

finding suitable images and highlighting words. Allowing pupils to note down/highlight key words and concepts is a useful processing strategy during reading, but it can also constitute a pre-reading activity. Highlighting key words in this way provides a word-level focus on the themes of the text. Concepts are introduced and processed in context.



The Avenue of Conscience

This is a simple drama exercise that can be used as a pre-reading activity when giving good advice to a person who finds themselves in a difficult situation, in a dilemma.

The teacher presents a situation or a case that is related to a theme in the text the pupils are going to read. For example, a person has to make a choice based on two incidents that happen at the same time, where both alternatives have certain disadvantages. What if one or more people get hurt if I choose one over the other? What will my friends think of me? What will Mum and Dad say? What is most important to me? etc.

A pupil volunteers to play the person who is in the difficult situation. The others in the class get a few minutes to think about what advice they want to give them. Then everyone lines up in two lines facing each other, and the person with the dilemma slowly walks through the 'avenue' while listening to the advice of others. The advice is to be whispered to the person with the dilemma as they pass them. At the end of the avenue, they turn around and walks back the way they came, and the advice is giv-

en once again. Finally, the teacher asks the person about the decision they have reached, and which advice was crucial. The class can then get involved in the discussion – would they have done the same?

The exercise can be used before a text is read. The pupils are introduced to the theme of the text, while also getting the opportunity to see a dilemma from different perspectives. When reading a text such as a short story or a novel, the exercise can also be used during reading. This is done by stopping when one of the characters must make a crucial decision. A third possibility is to apply the avenue of conscience when the text has an open ending – what will happen next?





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Sharing session

This reading activity can be based on almost any type of text. The class is organised into groups where the pupils in each group are numbered from one to four. Each group member is given a quarter of the text and a sheet of paper (A3/A4) that has been divided into four. The sections of the sheet are numbered from 1 to 4. The group members are individually responsible for reading their part of the text and writing notes about it in 'their' section. Everyone with the same part of the text, i.e., all the ones, twos, threes, and fours, then get together, discuss their notes and arrive at a common understanding. This is then presented to a new group consisting of a number one, a number two, a number three, and a number four.

Group members share information with each other, and the result is that everyone has a completed sheet of notes of all the text content.

The advantage of sharing responsibility regarding text comprehension is that not everyone has to deal with an entire text in the target language from the outset – the reading task is limited somewhat. In the final group composition, each individual contributes their findings, and everyone finally gets an overview of the content of the text as a whole. Over the course of several rounds, the pupils share their knowledge with others, which also reinforces their own learning.

Read, Remember and Draw!

This activity deals with strategies such as scanning a text for information as well as memorising what has been read, with a particular focus on remembering words, phrases, and short sentences. It is mainly the receptive skills that are practiced, but in the process of transferring information from one format to another, productive skills are also trained.

As an example, the teacher creates a text with a description of a person ('Missing person!'). This is displayed as a poster at the front of the classroom with the text facing the wall. There must be as many posters as there are groups in the class.

A pupil from each group starts by running forward, turning the poster, and quickly reading through the text. This is timed by the teacher, because pupils only get a certain number of seconds to read the text (for example, ten seconds). The pupil turns the poster back to the wall, returns to their group and recounts what they read. The information will now be transferred to a drawing, in addition to important facts being written down in a brief information box below the drawing. Before starting the task, the group can be given some

kind of template, such as a sheet of paper with a large oval circle indicating a face. This is to prevent them drawing something too small, and it gives them enough space to write a text underneath. Pupils are given some time to plan further tactics. The next pupil then runs forward, reads the text and returns to the group with new information, and they add to the drawing. Then it is the third pupil's turn. Depending on the difficulty of the text and the language level of the pupils, one can assess whether the procedure should be repeated just once or several times. It may be necessary, and helpful, to stop the pupils along the way to see if they can account for the strategies they use to remember, whether they plan what to look for (an overview first and then the details?), whether they have thoughts about how to proceed etc. In this way, pupils can get tips from each other.

Afterwards, the result is shown and discussed in relation to the original text, and which strategies they used both to remember and to transfer information from one format to another. It may also be a good idea to pass the drawings around the





classroom so that pupils can discuss each other's solutions.

The above example is well suited when working with personal descriptions. Other ideas may be describing a car or house that is going to be sold, a vegetable stall in the town square with all the prices, or a room in a house.

The teacher's preparation consists of creating a suitable text and perhaps a simple template for the drawing task, as well as having a watch that shows seconds.

Memorise by Muttering

Memorising what you have read to yourself in a low voice while reading can be a good way of monitoring your own reading comprehension – because recounting the main ideas is often more easily mastered once you have understood. One way of doing this is to read 'manageable' sequences of text, and then turn your gaze away from the text and try to mutter what you have read (in your own words or a word-for-word reproduction). 'Manageable' may involve several things, such as length, knowledge of the topic, and complexity of language and structure. The activity can also be beneficial when it comes to learning language structures and/or modes of expression. The goal is not to learn the whole text by heart, reading comprehension and the learning of structures

are the things to focus upon. The activity further involves articulating and listening to oneself – and therefore also involves several learning styles.

Shorter texts are certainly best suited here, otherwise the activity can quickly be perceived as monotonous. Memorising by muttering is admittedly a surface strategy, but can, like so much else, serve as variation when it comes to the different reading tasks that pupils partake in. It is also the case that the larger and more conscious the pupil's experience base is in relation to (reading) strategies, the easier it will be for them to independently choose an appropriate strategy depending on the reading purpose, type of text or learning style.

Reading Role Cards

When approaching an unknown text in the target language, it may be a good idea to somewhat limit pupils' reading tasks. This can be done by using so-called reading role cards (see suggestions at the Norwegian Reading Centre: <http://lesesenteret.uis.no>. Search words: role cards). In some roles, one should focus on words and/or paragraphs in the text (practice reading strategies), in others, one should associate with and ask questions about what has been read.

After pupils have read the text individually with their assigned role in mind, they form groups in which all reading roles are represented. Each pupil is an expert in their role and introduces the others

in their group to their 'findings' or 'assessments'. This gives everyone insight into different aspects of the text and therefore also a better understanding on the whole. One can conclude by summarising the activity together with the whole class.

Pupils have specific tasks when they read individually and during the conversation that they conduct in the groups. From a foreign language perspective, it is an advantage that one does not always have to deal with absolutely all aspects of texts. This method allows for level differentiation when selecting/allocating roles, since some roles will be more demanding than others.



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Book Slam

A 'book slam' is where pupils compete in performing a book presentation in the most creative and tempting way – with the aim of nurturing one's own and others' desire to read!

This is a version of the perhaps more famous 'slam poetry' – a poetry competition that can be described as a mixture of poetry reading, a stand-up competition and a 'hip hop battle'. In preparation for the book slam, two to four pupils collaborate on a book or text. In the book slam itself, each group has only three minutes at their disposal, but there are no restrictions when it comes to support materials – absolutely everything is allowed! In order to comply with the

tight time constraints, you may want to resort to props such as a stopwatch and a whistle.

The listeners take on the role of an active audience and must show interest by providing both words (supportive shouts, cheering, etc.) and actions (clapping, laughter, etc.). In addition, the audience has to assess the performances and give points on a scale of 1 to 10. Finally, the points are counted (by the teacher or a pupil), and the winner is announced.

The activity can be an alternative to the more traditional book report. The pupils who have been responsible for a book or text must adapt it, while the listeners take part in a form of pre-reading.

The Four Reading Strategies – Joint Reading Using the Reciprocal Method

In a reading context, a reciprocal approach would be to construct meaning from text through interaction, i.e., a controlled text conversation in groups. When working on the text, the teacher and the pupils make use of the four reading strategies: *summarising, questioning, clarifying, and predicting*. As part of the group conversation, pupils take turns summarising, asking questions, clarifying and predicting the action during the reading. As a result, participants are able to show each other how they think and work in order to understand a text – they work together to create meaning in the text.

The teacher has an important task in introducing and modelling the four strategies, but the goal is that the responsibility as a 'reading manager' is gradually transferred to the pupils, and that the use of strategies becomes both more automated and self-initiated. When the pupils are allowed to take part in fellow pupils' reflections regarding their understanding of the text, they

also become each other's models to a certain extent.

While reading a text, one makes use of the four reading strategies in the order. After reading a suitable sequence of the text (for example, a paragraph), stop and apply the following procedure:

1. Summarise: This sub-strategy involves extracting the most important things and finding the main learning targets in what has been read. When summarising, the pupils must use their own words and thereby are able to check whether they have understood the content.

2. Ask questions: Asking detailed questions about the text has a similar function as the point above – important information is identified and one's own understanding is tested.

3. Clarify: During this phase, the pupils are encouraged to critically assess the text and their own understanding through clarification of words, concepts, and content.





4. Predict: With the help of this last reading strategy, pupils learn to draw preliminary conclusions and make assumptions about what will happen next in the text (= pre-reading strategy before reading the next text sequence) – it involves their own ‘visual imagery’. This is based on what they have already read, and therefore know.

The procedure is repeated in connection with each sequence of text that is read.

The reciprocal approach to text is a developed method, and is what one would call a deeper reading strategy as opposed to more superficial reading strategies.

Cut Poetry

For this activity, one requires texts that are manageable in scope, such as short poetic texts (poems, songs, rhymes etc).

Method: The pupils work in pairs, where each pair is given an envelope containing a poem that has been cut into pieces. However, this is not a jigsaw puzzle task, because work is conducted on a linguistic level! Instead, it is more of a reading riddle, in which the pupils have to experiment and place the pieces in an order that they think is logical in terms of content (logical sequence of events, themes etc.) and/or in terms of form (capital letter, punctuation, new line, etc.).

Finally, the pupils compare their results with the original text. Here, it can be just as interesting to look at similarities as it is to look at differences (= ‘new’ texts that have emerged).

This activity can serve as an introductory piece of work that raises awareness about genre traits, such as the division of stanzas as a literary device in poetry. As is well known, genre knowledge is a key part of reading comprehension, since the expectations of a text depend on, among other things, the genre.

Reading Instructions/Conducting Experiments

Conducting experiments can be an exciting and engaging way to learn English and foreign languages. In particular, the benefits are often experienced when it comes to primary education, especially in relation to reading skills:

- The typical set up for conducting experiments makes the text easily accessible (step-by-step instruction/explanation).

- Illustrations help to understand.
- The use of concrete nouns is realistic.
- The excitement related to the outcome may motivate pupils to read; pupils can immediately check if they have understood the instructions.

In this activity, pupils’ reading skills are strengthened by reading and performing.



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Reading Relay Race

A reading competition can be arranged in many different ways. In this activity, text reading is organised as a relay race in the class. Teams consisting of three pupils are formed, and the roles of *oracle*, *messenger* and *writer* are allocated within each team. The oracle and the writer are placed in different rooms, or at each end of the same room.

The relay race can now start: The oracle receives the text that forms the starting point for the activity. The person in question must read and select manageable text sequences and convey the content orally to the messenger, who listens carefully. When the messenger feels ready to pass the content on, they rush to the writer and repeat the content. The writer listens and

notes down the information about the text. When this is done, a new 'round' starts with the next sequence of text, and so the activity continues until the entire text content has reached the writer.

The winner is chosen based on two things:

1. Speed
2. The quality of the summary (the written note compared to the original text)

The activity is quite noisy but can be used to create variety and a bit of movement. If one really stretches it to the point where one must use the concept of strategy, then this would be called a surface strategy. Short texts are best suited for this activity, as it can become somewhat monotonous if it continues for a long time.

A Whole Book in One Day!

The starting point for this activity is an entire book. Best suited are literary books with short chapters, a limited number of characters, and a clear plot.

Pupils are responsible for, either individually or in pairs, reading and presenting their own part (a chapter each) of the book. The work can be structured using the interrogative words *when*, *who*, *where*, *what* and *how*, or a supplementary timeline can serve the same purpose. At the end, such timelines can be put together and provide a visual overview of the book's course of action, where everyone has contributed with their part of a whole.

After pupils read their section of text, fellow pupils will take part in their reading experience. Each pupil/pair of pupils orally present/s what they have read in chronological order (= the

plot). This is in contrast to the preparation part, where they only read a section of the whole book. Everyone now gets an overview of the text's overall course of action, and hey presto, everyone has managed a whole book in one day!

This activity is an easy form of extensive reading. Although pupils do not read everything themselves, they contribute to and participate in a common reading experience. Approaching a text in this way can also motivate pupils to continue reading – either because one wants to read the specific book, or because one is inspired to read other literary texts. Through this method, pupils experience that reading a book is not insurmountable – and that it gives insight into a new and exciting world!



Timeline

The concept of *timeline* is broad and can be used in various ways as a tool for learning. When it comes to reading skills, keeping a timeline when reading can help you structure, understand, and remember what has been

read. Among other things, it may include the course of action in a literary text, the presentation of a historical development in years/important dates, or the description of a process.

Listen for Your Word!

This is a simple drama exercise for younger pupils where they are activated through the teacher reading an unfamiliar text out loud. Firstly, the teacher gets as many pieces of paper as there are pupils in the class, where each piece of paper has a word written on it that appears in the text. Three to four pieces of paper have the same word written on them. The pieces of paper are laid out on the floor or a table, and the pupils go forward and pick one up.

The teacher starts reading out loud — this should be a narrative text. Each time a pupil hears their word being read out loud, they must stand up and then sit down again (other responses may also be relevant) as the teacher carries on reading. This means that three or four pupils will stand up at the same time, and

if one of them is not quite paying attention, then the continuation offers new chances.

The exercise focuses on the sound of words when presented in a context. Depending on the difficulty of the text and the language level of the pupils, some pupils will benefit from the story itself, others are likely to be very preoccupied with listening for their word - and nothing more. Nevertheless, the advantage is that the words are spoken and repeated several times while the pupils sit with the written word in their hand.

In preparation for this exercise, the teacher must select the words from the text to which the pupils will respond and write them on pieces of paper.

Words Represented by Images

Short texts can easily be adapted for younger pupils and pupils at lower language levels by replacing new/challenging words and concepts in the text with images. By doing this, understanding is facilitated during the first reading, it still provides a reading experience and one can then focus on learning words and concepts during the

next reading session.

Learning is facilitated by associating the word/concept with an image. The teacher's preparation consists of writing the text and selecting images to replace words/terms. These can be found in CC clip-art archives on the internet or in digital picture dictionaries.



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Poems for Two Voices

This poetry activity is a form of reading out loud – but with enthusiasm and preparation. The pupils work in pairs, and based on a lyrical text, they have to read a few lines on their own and a few lines together.

Pupils collaborate on reading comprehension and therefore help guide each other's reading. The fact that the pupils are together during both the preparation (understanding + accentuation) and the performance, makes them feel more confident in the situation. When the 'reading work' is distributed and pupils work together, the task also becomes more

manageable from a foreign language perspective. The activity is therefore suitable for pupils at lower language levels, but the activity can also be utilised for reading variation ('creative' reading) at higher language education levels.

The teacher (or pupils) finds a suitable poem, such as a poem that contains contrasts, and indicates which parts pupil A must read, which parts pupil B must read, and which parts must be read together by both pupil A and pupil B.

Reading Theatre

Reading theatre has great potential in English and foreign language teaching. It is a group reading activity where one is assigned a role (a character or a narrator). The pupils are then tasked with reading out loud the text associated with the role - basically, they become 'readers on stage'.

Use of voice and emphasis on words and expressions can help give a text new dimensions, but in order to convey the text in a strong and convincing way, a good understanding of the text must form the basis. Reading theatre activities facilitate

work concerning the interpretation of the text content. In a classroom situation, the reading theatre method can provide a good reading experience, both on a personal level and together with others, which in turn can motivate pupils to continue reading.

The method allows readers who are at different linguistic levels to participate because roles and lines are adapted to the individual.

There are many ready-to-use reading theatre versions of texts on the internet, but one may also consider adapting a text for a reading theatre script.

Fill in the Gaps – to 'read' words into a context

For this text activity, short texts are best suited, and perhaps lyrical texts above all. The gaps in the text enable one to achieve an alternate focus on words and text level. By choosing words, pupils bring something of themselves to the text - admittedly something that is more 'technical' than working with text analysis and reading experience. Although there is a kind of answer

in the original text, one will find that other words can also be used. The choice of words will also say something about the pupils' understanding, and new 'literary works' may emerge.

Rhyming poems will simplify the activity somewhat because there is only a limited number of words that can be used.



Show Reading Comprehension Through the Loop Activity

The Loop activity is a post-reading activity that is carried out by giving each pupil a piece of paper containing both a question and an answer, (the question and the answer do not belong together). Another pupil has the answer to the question! The activity proceeds as follows:

- The student with the starting card reads the question on their piece of paper in the classroom: 'Who has ...?'
- The student who has the answer reads it out loud: 'I have ...'
- That student continues to read their question to the class.

This is how the Q&A activity continues as a kind of loop from one to the other, before the entire session concludes with the answer on the first pupil's starting card and the activity has gone full circle.

The Loop activity is based on a traditional Q&A task, but nevertheless represents something more: Absolutely all the pupils are involved in the activity – at the same time and together. Moreover, they are mutually dependent on each other to ensure that the loop does not stop. From a foreign language perspective, it can also be an advantage that the pupils are able to show their reading and listening comprehension without having to produce anything in the target language themselves. Therefore, the activity is particularly suitable in primary education. The content components in both the questions and answers are based on a text that has been read, and the pupils' task is to understand and recognise the content and facts of a case from what they have read.

Given the positive benefits of extensive reading, not all texts have to be processed as thoroughly, and this is an activity one can use when quickly reviewing a text.

In preparation for this task, the teacher must

select a suitable text, fill in a loop template that includes questions and answers, and cut them up into separate handouts.

In many cases, subject textbooks have associated questions that can be easily included in the template. It does not matter if there are more questions than pupils; it just means that some pupils will be responsible for two pieces of paper. But there should be at least one piece of paper per pupil to ensure that everyone actively participates. If the text is very short, the activity can be carried out in smaller groups with identical versions of the same loop.





‘The Doughnut’ – inner and outer circle

The ‘doughnut activity’ is essentially a Q&A session for going through a text that has been read, but with a twist. The pupils form two circles. Half of the group is in the inner circle, the other half in the outer one. The inner and outer circles must stand facing each other. Each pupil in the inner circle asks the pupil facing them in the outer circle a question, who must then answer. Pupils in the inner circle check the answer according to an answer they themselves have. When the teacher gives the word, the outer circle moves one (or more) step to the right, i.e., to a new pupil, who is ready to ask a new question. And so, the activity continues until the circle is back to where it started. If the pupils accidentally happen to ‘eavesdrop’ on the person standing next to them, it’s not the end of the world!

The activity can be used in connection with text reviews, either for variation’s sake or as a method to give more people the opportunity to show their reading comprehension. For example, all the pupils in the outer circle must answer all the questions on the text. To also activate the pupils in the inner circle, one might consider switching roles, or they may form the outer circle the next time - with a different text and different questions.

Preparations for the activity consist of organising pieces of paper that have questions and answers on them about the text.





Reading Log

A reading log can take almost any form – everything from being a kind of reflection note that is taken while reading long texts, to a ‘reading account’, i.e., a constantly updated overview of all the texts that have been read, both long and short. It is not often that one works with extensive texts in primary level foreign language education, and a reading log can help to raise pupils’ awareness of what and how much they have read - it is often the case that one has read more than one thinks! This is how the reading quantity (extensive reading) is also highlighted and given value, not just the reading quality (reading comprehension etc.).

A log can be more or less controlled and managed, for example by adapting it as a writing frame that needs to be filled in, or something that is more openly and freely formulated. It can be academically oriented (containing analysis questions about devices, points of view, lists of characters, environment, and theme), or it can provide room to express one’s own opinions and experiences. If the log is controlled, the teacher must devise reflection points and choose the form beforehand.

Academic reading logs work well online, for example in a blog (class blog or individual blog). It allows pupils to take part in each other’s reflections on texts.

Visual Text Analysis

As a strategy for achieving deeper reading comprehension of a text, visual text analysis can be an option. This challenges the pupils both emotionally and cognitively. This activity is also a nice exercise on the way to a more traditional academic text analysis.

Since the analysis task is above all about visualising imagery, the best starting point may be poetry, which is often rich in imagery.

When pupils read the text, they need to think about the types of images it evokes in them. Next, pupils search image bases that have free images online, or they can draw or photograph something appropriate, i.e., something that matches their personal understanding/interpretation of the text. One advantage of this way of working is that pupils who are weak at writing can also show their reading comprehension.

In order to develop all of this a little further, one can use different digital presentation programmes when presenting

the analysis results, for example PhotoStory. The first step here is to import the images that illustrate the text into the programme. One can then add ‘titles’ such as quotations of text or one’s own formulations. In the next and third stage, it is possible to make recordings where pupils read the ‘titles’ of the images or a selection of key lines of text as an additional effect. The fourth and final creative step is to add background music that reflects the moods in the text. In the saving process, all the previous steps are integrated, and the result is a digitally composed text with a visual, an auditory and a textual expression. In addition, the pupils’ own interpretation of what has been read is embodied in a new expression of opinion.

This extended method of working with visual text analysis involves several skills. In addition to reading skills, digital as well as written and oral skills are trained.



Biographical Poems

Biopoems or *biographical* poems are great to use as part of a post-reading activity. As the name implies, they are particularly suitable when working with texts about people and their lives – for example, factual texts about famous living or historical figures, or literary texts with a fictional cast of characters.

Pupils are presented with the poetry instructions that state what to do (see example) – they must include everything from the person's name and place of residence, to their desires, feelings, fears, and achievements. At a lower language level, it can be demanding enough to understand and retrieve appropriate words from the text that has been read, while at a higher level, one will be able to allow for one's own interpretations. In both cases, it is about learning words and concepts.

Example:

1. line - first name
2. line - three adjectives that describe the person

3. line - the name of somebody that the person is related to
4. line – three things the person likes
5. line – three things the person dreams about
6. line – three things the person is afraid of/fears
7. line - where the person lives
8. line - first name and surname

The activity is particularly suitable for primary education in languages. Pupils process what has been read through simple writing tasks. The productive work is facilitated by sentence starters or a lyrical writing frame. The text processing lies above all else in the fact that key information in the read text emerges in a new form (= the biopoems). By making their own choices, the pupils get to put their personal touch on the poems they write. In addition, the activity results in great lyrical products and brings life to the individuals and their stories. The activity can also be used when working at primary level on genre awareness.

Retelling with Key Word Support

This is a post-reading activity where one combines receptive and oral productive skills. After reading a common text, pupils can process the content in groups by 'putting words to what has been read'. The groups are given pieces of paper on which key words from the text are written. Pupils then sort the pieces of paper into chronological order according to the course of action. Finally, the pupils must retell the text content orally using the key words on the pieces of paper.

To ensure a fair distribution, one can agree on how many pieces of paper each team member

must account for, before it is the next person's turn (three to five pieces of paper, depending on the length of the text). The activity continues until the whole story is retold.

Most importantly, the text processing shows understanding through retelling. In addition, the pupils practice orally, expressing what they have understood through the retelling process.

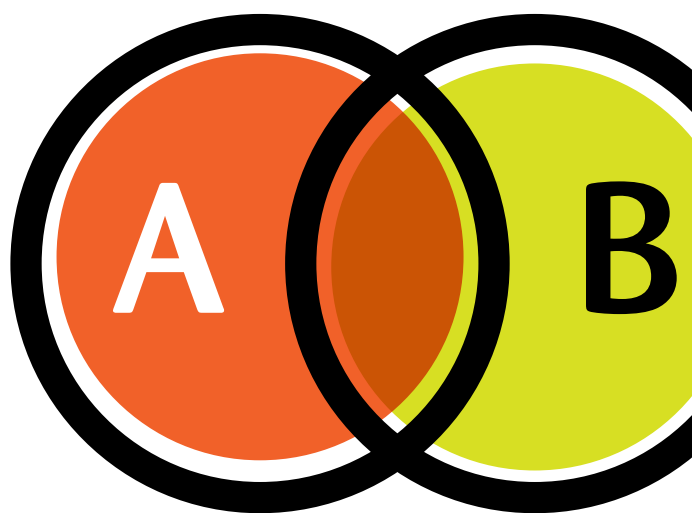
Alternatively, the activity can be arranged class by class. All the pupils stand in a line, and each one tells their part of the story using the key word/s given to them.



Venn Diagram - Learning Through Comparison

A Venn diagram (named after John Venn) is a tool that can be used to visually compare things, for example text content. Simply put, a Venn diagram consists of two (or more) circles that overlap. Key words can then be placed in the middle to show commonalities, while the key words in the outer fields do not share the same traits. Therefore, a Venn diagram works very well as a post-reading activity for structuring what has been read.

One should use texts that are suitable for comparison: individual texts with a basis for comparison within the text, or two (or more) texts that have something in common – be it people (literary, historical, or famous), the environment, events or relevant themes.



Listening Games

Dramatising and performing texts have a lot to offer when it comes to strengthening language skills –including reading skills. For example, there is a lot of text processing involved when giving a narrative text dramatic form. In addition, the text is processed when giving it one's personal interpretation.

A clear prerequisite for a successful listening game is that it is based on good understanding of a text, but the actual dissemination, i.e., 'the actor's' interpretive expression – such as accentuation (accent/stress) and pronunciation – is even more important. In this respect, performing the text as a listening game places even greater demands on reading skills. There are not that

many props that one can resort to; the pupil's voice is key in terms of dissemination.

Simple ICT equipment can be used to record the performance – for editing (cut and paste), sharing (podcast) or assessment (self-assessment and/or feedback from the teacher and fellow pupils) of the product.

Using texts that have already been dramatised will of course save time.



Find Someone Who Can Answer!

“Find someone who can answer” is a post-reading activity in which the pupils repeat familiar material together. Each pupil is given a set of questions regarding a text that has been read (prepared by the teacher). There are spaces on the question sheet to write down the answers and it also contains dashed lines so receipts can be made for the answers given.

Pupils must then stand up: The pupils do not answer the questions themselves – they must mingle and ask their classmates. They are only allowed to ask one question to each of their classmates. The classmate gives an oral answer, and the pupil notes the answer down on the sheet. The classmate then signs the sheet confirming that they have given an answer. The pupil then moves on to find someone else to whom they can ask the next question. The same procedure is followed until the sheet is completed.

The purpose of the receipt when giving an answer is so that the pupils have to commit themselves to something (both the person asking and the person answering), and that it can be used to control the ‘turn-taking’ in any

subsequent rounds of repetition in the class: The person who has signed when giving an answer is the next one to read out questions with answers. A plenary repetition session gives the teacher and the pupils the opportunity to verify if the answers are correct (reading comprehension), thus reinforcing the learning.

This is a traditional Q&A task, only with a slightly different framework and in a more activating form: Pupils speak, listen and write - where the main goal is to check and develop reading comprehension.

The activity can also be used for differentiation purposes. Individual pupils do not need to show whether they have understood the text or not in front of the entire class, it becomes a matter between the questioner and the classmate providing the answer. In the final plenary session, each pupil will have answers to all questions, as these are obtained through collaboration (pupils exchanging answers). In addition, one can always ask to get a different question if a question is asked that cannot be answered.

Character Interview

When dealing with texts that have a developed cast of characters (detailed personal descriptions) – i.e., mainly epic or dramatic texts – one can vary the text processing by allowing the pupils to take on roles as people in the text and answer questions that their character receives.

The activity is best carried out in groups, so that everyone has a go at playing the role of questioner and as one of the people in the text. The size of the groups depends on how many characters are in the text, or which characters one wishes to cover. Based on the text, all the

members of the group then formulate two or three questions to each of the characters represented by the group members.

The interview questions can be based directly on the text content or be of a more interpretive nature, so that the character has something a bit more difficult to think about.

In the activity, pupils get to show their reading comprehension both by asking questions as an interviewer and by formulating their own answers in the role of a literary character.



Showdown!

This is a real Beat for Beat-style (from NRK) post-reading activity, but in this case, it is not a matter of solving musical puzzles, it is about answering questions that deal with reading comprehension. Short factual questions work best for this activity.

Organisation of the activity: Pupils are divided into groups of three, and each group is given 'posters' (A4 sheets) to write on and a thick marker pen. Each group has a column on the board where their scores are written down. Then, questions are asked that the groups

must answer. Each group writes their answers on the A4 sheet of paper. Four questions are asked before the groups have a showdown, i.e., holding up the poster with the answers and showing it to the question master (the teacher). Check the answers and write down the points. This is repeated for a couple of rounds until all the questions are asked. The method represents an opportunity for variation when working with simpler text processing, and the competitive element often motivates the pupils.

Referanser og ressurser til videre lesing

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Telephone: +47 69 60 83 00
Website: www.fremmedspraksenteret.no

ISBN: 978-82-8195-075-7 (printed) and 978-82-8195-076-4 (online)

