

Learning through reading and writing across the high school curriculum

An online resource for high school teachers, students and parents

Information for families and parents

What's in the resource?

This brochure tells you about a new resource produced by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW that shows how high school teachers can help their students to:

- learn from reading their high school subjects
- write what they have learnt from reading.

The [resource](#)¹ includes a demonstration lesson where the teacher is using specifically designed strategies to help students to develop reading and writing skills while learning the curriculum. This lesson is in Science, but the same strategies can be used in any subject.

Helping all high school students to read and to write

All subjects in high school involve reading. Students are expected to read textbooks, novels, plays, poems, websites, worksheets, notes that teachers write on the board and many other texts. Students often cannot read and understand these written texts well enough to learn from them and some cannot write well enough to succeed in high school.

It can be difficult for high school teachers to always provide opportunities to help students develop reading and writing skills. Teachers may think there is not enough time to teach



reading and writing skills as well as the content of their subject. It is also often assumed that reading and writing skills are learnt by students in primary school.

The strategies demonstrated in this resource have been designed to address these issues. They can be used by high school teachers to help students develop reading and writing skills while teaching the curriculum.

What you can do

If you are concerned about students in your family who are not succeeding well at high school, watch the videos and read the information included in the resource to find out how the strategies work. You can approach the student's teacher, school, P&C or your local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), to ask teachers about such strategies and using them in the classroom. You can also use the strategies yourself at home to help students in your

¹ <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/7-10-literacy-numeracy>

family and community with reading and writing during homework sessions.

These strategies take practice to do well. Teachers and/or parents need to plan the lessons carefully. They need to read the texts they are using and make a plan for how they will use the texts to develop students' reading and writing skills. Sample lesson plans are included in the resource.

The strategies

The strategies are presented in four stages:

1. Preparing for reading

The teacher prepares students to understand a text before reading it.

2. Detailed reading

The teacher guides students to read the text themselves, and to find key information.

3. Note-making

The students make notes from the information they have read.

4. Joint construction

The teacher guides the class to write a new text, using the notes they have made.

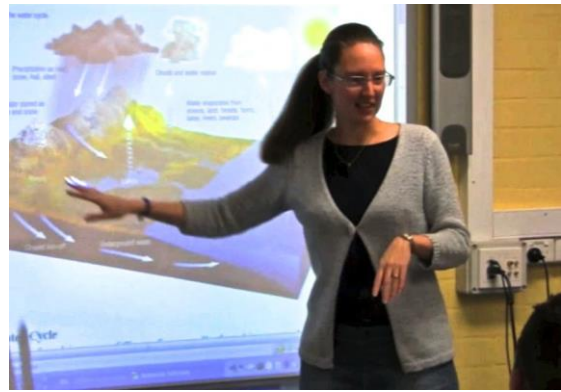
1. Preparing for reading

Preparing for reading enables all students in a class to follow a text as it is read aloud without struggling to understand what it is about. This includes two steps.

The first step is to give students the background knowledge they need to understand the text. This could be knowledge studied in previous lessons or it might be a new topic.

The second step is to tell students what the text says in a way that all students can understand. The teacher does not need to explain every word, but gives a brief summary of each section of the text.

The text is then read aloud, either by the teacher, or by students taking turns to read. The teacher leads the class in discussing



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important points as the text is read and after it is read.

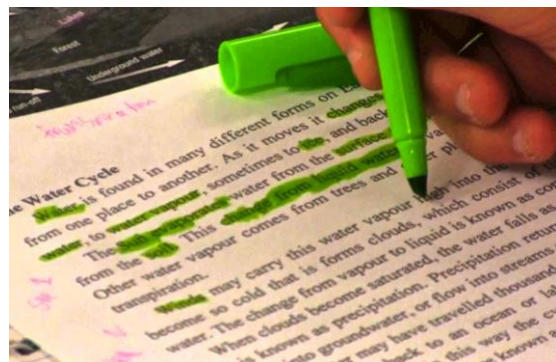
The teacher will have had to read the text before the lesson to find out what background knowledge students will need, and to prepare the summary of the text.

It is recommended that initially 15–20 minutes be spent in every lesson preparing and reading with the class. If this is done, students will be helped to read the curriculum independently.

2. Detailed reading

After reading and discussing, the teacher guides the class to find information that they will use later for writing. Students highlight or underline each key point.

Long or difficult texts can be read one paragraph at a time. The teacher guides students to mark two or three key points in each paragraph. A lot of text can be read quickly using this paragraph-by-paragraph reading.

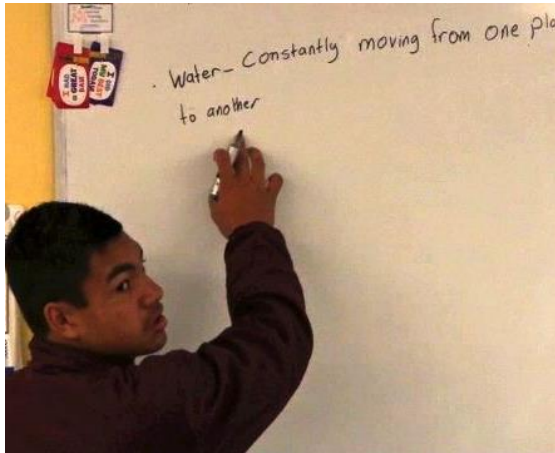


With short texts, the teacher guides students to mark key information in each sentence. This takes time, but it is a very effective way to help all students develop the skill to understand what they read.

If detailed reading is done every week, all students will rapidly learn to read difficult texts with understanding.

3. Note-making

In note-making, students scribe notes on the board from the information that they marked in the text. Students take turns to scribe notes on the board as other students tell them what to write and how to spell the words. As the notes go up on the board students write them in their books.



During note-making, the class can practise the spelling and pronunciation of words. The teacher can also discuss the meanings of words. This is a very powerful way to improve vocabulary and spelling skills.

4. Joint construction

In joint construction, the class writes a new text from the notes. The teacher guides the class to write each section of information in a new sentence. Once the class has constructed the sentence, it is written on the board either by the teacher or by students taking turns to write. As each sentence goes up on the board, students write it in their own books.



After writing a text together on the board, students practise writing the same kind of text themselves, either by using notes that the class has made together, or by reading and making notes independently.