Authors and texts (2 weeks)

This is a summative fiction unit designed to be taught towards the end of the school year. It has potential, if required, to form the first elements of a Year 6 to Year 7 transition unit. It both explores a range of fiction from a significant children's author and introduces the keeping of a reading journal (on paper or on screen) as a way of supporting and extending reading. Materials and approaches for this could be drawn from English transition units for Year 6 and 7.

Phase 1

Children are introduced to and explore the possibilities of keeping a reading journal. They begin to create one (in a form and format of their own choosing or devising) and make entries recording their responses to the particular author under consideration.

Phase 2

Children continue to explore the work of the author, particularly using role-play and other empathetic approaches, and again record their response in their journal.

Phase 3

Children further explore the work of the author, particularly using experimental writing and other modes of communication as investigative tools, and continue to record their responses in their journal.

Phase 4

Children share their reading journal with others, evaluate their development against agreed criteria and consider how they will continue to use them in the future.

Note: In Year 7, if this is being developed as a transition unit, children will continue to use and develop the same reading journal, and also continue to explore at least some different work by the same author, thus building directly on their reading experience in Year 6.

Overview

- Select an author. Read a linked series of books and/or short stories by the chosen author. Have other texts available for independent reading. Research the author using the internet and other sources. Describe and evaluate author's style, identify common themes and compare different works.
- Identify a theme from reading and explore ideas for new stories through improvisation and role-play. Children work independently to build on this work. Plan and write an extended narrative (throughout the unit) that uses different narrative techniques to engage and entertain the reader. Revise and redraft to presentation standard (written or using ICT). Write synopsis for blurb.
Groups of children work collaboratively to select another author. Each child reads at least one book by the author, prepares a synopsis of the text and presents to the group. Groups work on oral presentations about the author and prepare written reviews of their favourite books for the class. Use persuasive techniques to convince the class to try a new book or author.

1998 Framework objectives covered:

Year 6, Term 3: T1 author’s style; T5 compare and contrast author’s work; T6 different writers; T9 write summaries of books; T10 written synopsis; T11 review; T12 compare books in writing; T14 extended story.

Objectives

To ensure effective planning of literacy teachers need to ensure they plan for all elements of literacy effectively across the year ensuring that assessment for learning is used to plan and amend teaching. It is essential that core skills such as phonic strategies, spelling, and handwriting are incorporated into these exemplar units to ensure effective learning.

Most children learn to:

(The following list comprises only the strands, numbered 1 through 12, that are relevant to this particular unit. Where there are relevant Steps in Learning for an objective, a link has been included.)

1. Speaking

- Use a range of oral techniques to present persuasive arguments and engaging narratives
- Use the techniques of dialogic talk to explore ideas, topics or issues

3. Group discussion and interaction

- Understand and use a variety of ways to criticise constructively and respond to criticism

4. Drama

- Improvise using a range of drama strategies and conventions to explore themes such as hopes, fears and desires

6. Word structure and spelling

- Spell familiar words correctly and employ a range of strategies to spell difficult and unfamiliar words
- Use a range of appropriate strategies to edit, proofread and correct spelling in their own work, on paper and on screen

8. Engaging with and responding to texts

- Read extensively and discuss personal reading with others, including in reading groups
- Sustain engagement with longer texts, using different techniques to make the text come alive
9. Creating and shaping texts

- Set their own challenges to extend achievement and experience in writing
- Use different narrative techniques to engage and entertain the reader

10. Text structure and organisation

- Use varied structures to shape and organise texts coherently
- Use paragraphs to achieve pace and emphasis

11. Sentence structure and punctuation

- Express subtle distinctions of meaning, including hypothesis, speculation and supposition, by constructing sentences in varied ways
- Use punctuation to clarify meaning in complex sentences

12. Presentation

- Use different styles of handwriting for different purposes with a range of media, developing a consistent and personal legible style
- Select from a wide range of ICT programs to present text effectively and communicate information and ideas

Prior learning

Check that children can already:

- Identify and discuss the various features of a fiction text; including characters, settings, themes and dilemmas, the author's intentions, the structure and organisation of the text and the way language is used to create effects on the reader.
- Discuss their responses to a range of fiction they have read.
- Use a range of approaches and learning strategies, for example role-play, dialogue and experimental writing, to extend and explore their understanding of and response to a work of fiction.

Teaching sequence phase 1

Note: Children working significantly above or below age-related expectations will need differentiated support, which may include tracking forward or back in terms of learning objectives. EAL learners should be expected to work within the overall expectations for their year group. For further advice see the progression strands and hyperlinks to useful sources of practical support.

Establishing the use of a reading journal, on paper or on screen (possibly online), while exploring the work of a particular author (4 days)

Teaching content:

- Select a main novel and additional texts that can be used to explore the fictional work of a significant children's writer. It will be helpful if one or more of these texts is presented in log, journal or diary form. (Note: If this is to be used as a transition unit, the writer needs to be one whose work it has been agreed can be further explored in Year 7.) See English transition units for Year 6 and 7.
A comparative work or works by a different author also can be included if desired but this would probably necessitate expansion into a longer unit. Provided they meet these criteria, texts could of course also be chosen to fit work in other curriculum areas.

It is essential that children have read or heard the full text of the main novel prior to the start of the unit. Materials and approaches for this unit could possibly be drawn from the document *English transition units for Year 6 and 7*.

Use examples from the novels to introduce, explore and discuss the idea of a log or journal, and a range of types of entries. These can be compared with logs and journals in other media, particularly those on screen, for example weblogs. Introduce the idea of a reading journal. Briefly show and discuss examples of how a reading journal can be used. Again, these can include on-screen as well as paper journals, weblogs, etc.

Compare a particular aspect of two or more of the texts, for example the openings, and model the writing of a journal entry to explore this, perhaps also demonstrating the possibilities of different media and formats.

Children start their own reading journal (on paper or on screen) by responding to a different aspect of the texts, but building from teacher's modelling. If possible they should create or select their own media and form for their particular journal.

At appropriate times use response partners to support the writing of the journal entries. Share examples for discussion of children's writing in progress. Model editing and improving writing linked to agreed success criteria and to children's reading or writing development needs.

**Learning outcome:**

- Children can use a reading journal (on paper or on screen) and can use it in a variety of ways to record, explore and extend their own reading.

**Teaching sequence phase 2**

**Exploring the characters and their conflicts or dilemmas through empathy and role-play, recording outcomes in the reading journal (2 days)**

Note: This phase could be combined with phase 3.

**Teaching content:**

- With the children, identify interesting and important conflicts between characters in one or more of the books.
- Explore these through a variety of communication scenarios, for example live role-play improvisation, movement or dance, simulated conversation with a partner in partnership class through email or instant messaging, creating a script and podcasting it for other children for comment.
- In modelled or shared writing, produce a journal entry to record or respond to one such exploration.
- Children write or create a journal entry for their own exploration. If this has included electronic exploration and recording then a file, for example a sound file, could be created and attached to their e-log.

**Learning outcome:**

- Children can use a range of drama and other techniques to explore characters and their conflicts and dilemmas and extend their response to stories.

**Teaching sequence phase 3**
Exploring characters and their conflict and dilemmas through writing and other communication media, and recording outcomes in the reading journal (3 days)

Note: This phase could be combined with phase 2.

Teaching content:

• Continue to explore other aspects of the stories, for example the writer's language use, the shape and mapping of the plot, the writer's intention and themes, different characters and situations or conflicts.
• Use a wide variety of strategies for this, including writing and the use of other communication media, for example writing and recording a rap song to explore a character's emotions, writing (possibly simulated) letters or emails to the author or characters (perhaps with another child or teacher responding in role - a kind of electronic hotseating), taking digital images of freeze-frame enactment, then creating a slide-show and captioning, participating in an online discussion forum.
• Continue to experiment with effective ways of recording these explorations in each child's choice of reading journal, using response partners and plenary sharing or feedback to develop this.

Teaching sequence phase 4

Evaluating the use of the reading journal (1 day)

Teaching content:

• Lead a class review of the use of reading journals to explore a range of responses to the featured writer's work. Agree evaluation criteria. Organise children into groups to select and refine responses, possibly for inclusion into a class anthology reading journal (to be published for other children, parents and carers, etc., either on paper or electronically).

Learning outcome:

• Children can demonstrate how they can use a reading journal to help them reflect on a text.

Objectives for strands 6, 11 and 12

Throughout the unit, children should focus, as and when appropriate, on the word structure, spelling and presentation objectives.

Possible development as a transition unit

If this option is pursued then it will need to be agreed that both the reading journal and its use, and the exploration of the particular writer selected, will be picked up and developed in Year 7.

Materials and approaches for this unit could possibly be drawn from English transition units for Year 6 and 7

Complete teaching sequence
Note: Children working significantly above or below age-related expectations will need differentiated support, which may include tracking forward or back in terms of learning objectives. EAL learners should be expected to work within the overall expectations for their year group. For further advice see the progression strands and hyperlinks to useful sources of practical support.

**Phase 1: Establishing the use of a reading journal, on paper or on screen (possibly online), while exploring the work of a particular author (4 days)**

**Teaching content:**

- Select a main novel and additional texts that can be used to explore the fictional work of a significant children's writer. It will be helpful if one or more of these texts is presented in log, journal or diary form. (Note: If this is to be used as a transition unit, the writer needs to be one whose work it has been agreed can be further explored in Year 7.) See [English transition units for Year 6 and 7](#).
- A comparative work or works by a different author also can be included if desired but this would probably necessitate expansion into a longer unit. Provided they meet these criteria, texts could of course also be chosen to fit work in other curriculum areas.
- It is essential that children have read or heard the full text of the main novel prior to the start of the unit. Materials and approaches for this unit could possibly be drawn from the document [English transition units for Year 6 and 7](#).
- Use examples from the novels to introduce, explore and discuss the idea of a log or journal, and a range of types of entries. These can be compared with logs and journals in other media, particularly those on screen, for example weblogs. Introduce the idea of a reading journal. Briefly show and discuss examples of how a reading journal can be used. Again, these can include on-screen as well as paper journals, weblogs, etc.
- Compare a particular aspect of two or more of the texts, for example the openings, and model the writing of a journal entry to explore this, perhaps also demonstrating the possibilities of different media and formats.
- Children start their own reading journal (on paper or on screen) by responding to a different aspect of the texts, but building from teacher's modelling. If possible they should create or select their own media and form for their particular journal.
- At appropriate times use response partners to support the writing of the journal entries. Share examples for discussion of children's writing in progress. Model editing and improving writing linked to agreed success criteria and to children's reading or writing development needs.

**Learning outcome:**

- Children can use a reading journal (on paper or on screen) and can use it in a variety of ways to record, explore and extend their own reading.

**Phase 2: Exploring the characters and their conflicts or dilemmas through empathy and role-play, recording outcomes in the reading journal (2 days)**

Note: This phase could be combined with phase 3.

**Teaching content:**

- With the children, identify interesting and important conflicts between characters in one or more of the books.
- Explore these through a variety of communication scenarios, for example live role-play improvisation, movement or dance, simulated conversation with a partner in partnership class through email or instant messaging, creating a script and podcasting it for other children for comment.
- In modelled or shared writing, produce a journal entry to record or respond to one such exploration.
- Children write or create a journal entry for their own exploration. If this has included electronic exploration and recording then a file, for example a sound file, could be created and attached to their e-log.
Learning outcome:

- Children can use a range of drama and other techniques to explore characters and their conflicts and dilemmas and extend their response to stories.

Phase 3: Exploring characters and their conflict and dilemmas through writing and other communication media, and recording outcomes in the reading journal (3 days)

Note: This phase could be combined with phase 2.

Teaching content:

- Continue to explore other aspects of the stories, for example the writer's language use, the shape and mapping of the plot, the writer's intention and themes, different characters and situations or conflicts.
- Use a wide variety of strategies for this, including writing and the use of other communication media, for example writing and recording a rap song to explore a character's emotions, writing (possibly simulated) letters or emails to the author or characters (perhaps with another child or teacher responding in role - a kind of electronic hotseating), taking digital images of freeze-frame enactment, then creating a slide-show and captioning, participating in an online discussion forum.
- Continue to experiment with effective ways of recording these explorations in each child's choice of reading journal, using response partners and plenary sharing or feedback to develop this.

Phase 4: Evaluating the use of the reading journal (1 day)

Teaching content:

- Lead a class review of the use of reading journals to explore a range of responses to the featured writer's work. Agree evaluation criteria. Organise children into groups to select and refine responses, possibly for inclusion into a class anthology reading journal (to be published for other children, parents and carers, etc., either on paper or electronically).

Learning outcome:

- Children can demonstrate how they can use a reading journal to help them reflect on a text.

Objectives for strands 6, 11 and 12

Throughout the unit, children should focus, as and when appropriate, on the word structure, spelling and presentation objectives.

Possible development as a transition unit

If this option is pursued then it will need to be agreed that both the reading journal and its use, and the exploration of the particular writer selected, will be picked up and developed in Year 7.

Materials and approaches for this unit could possibly be drawn from *English transition units for Year 6 and 7*.
Assessment

Assessing pupils' progress

In this exemplified unit we have identified the main assessment focuses (AFs) for reading and writing. However, it is important to remember that teachers should interpret and adapt the teaching sequence to meet the needs of particular classes, and this may affect the choice of AFs against which you wish to gather a range of evidence.

In order for a judgement to be made against writing AFs 1 and 2 it is important that children are given space and time to develop their own ideas and define their own purposes for writing. Opportunities to plan for this will arise throughout the literacy curriculum as well as through the application of skills across the curriculum.

The suggested outcome for this unit is a reading journal (on paper or on screen) which children can use in a variety of ways to record, explore and extend their own reading. The teaching of this unit should support the collection of evidence against reading AF6 (identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader), reading AF7 (relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions) and writing AF2 (produce texts which are appropriate to task, reader and purpose).

Evidence against a variety of AFs will be collected at many points during the teaching sequence. Independence and opportunities to make decisions are integral to children's development in reading and writing. Therefore, as well as using assessment opportunities within the structure of the unit (as exemplified below) it will also be important to collect evidence of achievement against the AFs from occasions where children can demonstrate independence and choice.

Suggestions for the collection of assessment information against a range of AFs are found below.

Opportunities for assessment

The following are examples selected from the teaching content for this unit of work that will support planning for effective assessment as an integrated part of the teaching and learning process. Evidence gathered during this ongoing work will contribute to the periodic assessment of children's progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Example of teaching content and assessment opportunities</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Approach to assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children can use a reading journal (on paper or on screen) in a variety of ways to record, explore and extend their own reading.</td>
<td>On first meeting a main character in the class novel, children are asked to visualise that character. They use their reading journals to draw the visualisations. Language and phrases from the text which best describe the character are collected and noted alongside what the character says or the way he or she behaves. At a later point in the novel, children repeat this task. They draw pictures of the same character: How is your view of the character changing and why? They discuss how their drawings and ideas differ from the earlier entry. They consider what feelings the character evokes in them as readers and how this has changed.</td>
<td>Journal entries (sketched drawings and written notes) Children's discussions and oral responses</td>
<td>Teacher observation Teacher discussion Oral feedback on journal entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children can use a range of drama and</td>
<td>During drama, freeze-frames are used to create a landscape from the narrative and explore a moment of crisis facing the main characters. Children consider what each character is feeling. Ideas are noted by the teacher. The conscience alley technique is used to investigate further the</td>
<td>Children's discussions and oral responses</td>
<td>Teacher observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key aspects of learning

For further information, see the booklet *Progression in key aspects of learning* (Ref: 0524-2004) from Learning and teaching in the primary years: Professional development resources (Ref: 0518-2004G).

#### Enquiry

Children will identify their own key questions about the work of a particular writer, and then locate the evidence to answer them.

#### Information processing

Children will respond to information or stimuli from a range of sources on paper and on screen and compare, combine and orchestrate this as a basis for both oral and written communication.

#### Evaluation

Children will share responses orally and in writing. They will discuss success criteria, give feedback to others and judge the effectiveness of their own work.

#### Reasoning

Children will construct reasoned arguments based on their views and responses to the books or stories read.

#### Empathy

In discussing and writing about the books or stories, children will need to imagine themselves in another person’s position. They will explore techniques that facilitate this process.
Communication

Children will develop their ability to discuss and debate issues and personal responses both in respect of the form and the content of the stories they are reading and the journals they are creating. They will often work collaboratively in pairs and groups. They will communicate outcomes orally, in writing and through other modes and media.