



## Guided Reading

**Guided Reading** is a strategy that supports students to discover the meaning of a text for themselves. The amount of guidance given by you, the teacher, varies according to the ability and confidence of the students.

**In Guided Reading** students with similar reading abilities or students who need to acquire similar skills to be successful readers are grouped together. Groups can also consist of students with common interests or experiences. The groups are flexible and are kept small to encourage interaction among the students and to allow you to observe individual reading behaviour.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strategy</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guided Reading</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Text</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A range of texts – including both narrative and information texts</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrates the Four Roles/Resources of the Reader</li> <li>• allows the teacher to emphasise the different Roles/Resources of the Reader according to the needs of the students or features of the text</li> <li>• enables the students to read more challenging texts than they can read independently</li> <li>• may be used with a variety of texts</li> <li>• provides explicit teaching based on the identified needs of the students</li> <li>• brings background knowledge, skills and experiences to the fore to enable the students to make sense of what they are reading and to make links with prior knowledge</li> <li>• engages students in discussion about the content of the text, the reading strategies they use and their understandings of the text</li> <li>• small needs-based/purpose-based groups encourage participation by all students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• challenges students to work with more difficult texts than they would be able to read independently</li> <li>• texts may be chosen to focus on specific literacy features or to link with topics in other curriculum areas</li> <li>• select texts which are related to student interest and experience or explore universal/contemporary themes and issues</li> </ul>



## **Implementing the Strategy**

### **Before Reading**

#### **Information gathering**

The first step in *Guided Reading* is gathering information about the students that will enable you to group the students effectively and to identify the learning needs of the students. This information can be gathered from classroom observations of student reading behaviour.

#### **Grouping students**

*Guided Reading* groups should be small, 2-8 students. From the information collected the teacher makes decisions about the composition of the group. This can be based on the student's reading ability, skills to be developed or common interests. The groups are temporary and should be reviewed regularly.

#### **Selection of text**

Select the text with a particular teaching focus in mind. The text may be chosen for its text features, language features or understandings it may develop. The text should support students by having sufficient familiar features that they feel successful while being challenged to develop new skills. The aim in *Guided Reading* is that all students be able to read the text successfully with teacher support. There should be enough copies of the text for each student to have their own copy.

#### **Teaching focus**

The teaching focus is determined by the needs of the particular group of students. The focus may be one or more aspects from one or more *Roles/Resources of the Reader*, eg Code breaker – develops knowledge of various literary devices such as similes and metaphors; Text analyst – constructs an alternative position to the one taken in the text.



## **The Guided Reading Lesson**

### **Introduce the text**

Allow the students to have a quick look at the text. Discuss the title and any predictions the students can make about the genre and possible content of the text. Encourage the students to discuss what they already know about this topic or genre. Identify any words or features you feel may cause problems for the students and assist them to problem solve.

### **Examples of Questions**

- Why do you think the author chose this title? (Text analyst)
- Can you predict what genre this text is written in and what it might be about? (Text user)
- What text features would you expect to find in this genre? (Code breaker)
- How can you find information in this text? (Text user)
- What words can you see in the text that have prefixes/suffixes? (Code breaker)
- What word can you see in this word that will help you work it out? (Code breaker)

What does the title/cover suggest that this text is about? (Text participant)

### **Reading the text**

The reading of the text is done silently, allowing the students to check their predictions. While the students are reading silently, move around the group assisting where necessary. Encourage the students to use known strategies to problem solve on the text.

### **Revisiting the text**

When all the students have had an opportunity to read the text the group can now explore the language, discuss the features, mood, style, etc, and reread to make sense of the text or to find evidence to support their opinion. Direct the students' attention to specific features of the text to build their knowledge or to allow them to apply



strategies they already have. During this time the teacher is facilitating a discussion with open-ended questions.

### **Examples of Questions**

- What letter pattern is familiar in this word? (Code breaker)
- Have your predictions of the type of text been confirmed or rejected? Why? (Text user)
- What are the main ideas? (Text participant)
- Were any of your questions answered by the text? (Text participant)
- What clues are in the text to help you work out what this word means? (Code breaker)
- How are the photographs used? What do they make you think? (Text participant)
- How is this word used in this context? (Code breaker)
- What do you notice about the way the author started this story? How did it suit its purpose? (Text user)
- How is the language in this text similar to or different from other examples of this genre you have read? (Text user)
- How would the story be different from another point of view? (Text analyst)

### **Responding to the text**

Don't expect that students will respond to every text they read. You may like to invite students to respond to the text orally or through an activity. The response may be individual, paired or a group response. Record observations of student reading behaviours on the Checklist. The Checklist observations may include the current teaching focus and/or specific reading behaviours identified for review.

### **After Reading**

After the *Guided Reading* Lesson students should have the opportunity to revisit the text over the next couple of weeks.



Reflect on the lesson and think about the effectiveness of the teaching and how well the group worked together. Make notes on strategies you observed the students using and things you think they need to know next.

## Classroom Protocols for Guided Reading

- A *Guided Reading* lesson usually takes about 20 minutes although you may need to allow for some extra reading time for longer text.
- *Explicit teaching* is needed to allow the students to be aware of their focus for the lesson. They need to be given time to pull together what they already know about the topic and/or genre.
- The social environment is vital to the implementation of a *Guided Reading* lesson. Students need to be comfortable with taking turns, accepting the opinion of others especially where it differs from your own, and supporting each other in sharing views and opinions. Students develop skills that enable them to build on and to question each other's ideas.
- The organisation of the room is important as the other students in the class need to be able to work apart from the *Guided Reading* group so that they don't interrupt the conversation. The *Guided Reading* group needs to be seated where they can see every member of the group, either on chairs in a circle or seated around a table.
- During the 'Reading the Text' stage you have the opportunity to hear the students read. This can be done unobtrusively by having a signal for the students to read aloud such as when you sit beside a student, that student reads aloud until you move on to the next student.
- One of the advantages of *Guided Reading* is that it allows you to observe and note student reading behaviour. It also allows you to provide immediate feedback to students.

Adapted from: Blackall, S. [http://www.myread.org/guide\\_guided.htm](http://www.myread.org/guide_guided.htm)