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# Introduction

## What is this resource for?

There has been a lot of focus in recent years on the teaching and learning of phonics. However, phonics is only one part of reading. Readers also have to make sense of the words that they decode – comprehending the meaning of the actual words and sentences as well as ‘reading between the lines’. Making inferences is a sophisticated skill. It involves not only understanding the explicit text, but also filling in the gaps in the text using existing knowledge of the world.

In the Ofsted document *Getting them Reading Early – Guidance and training for inspectors* (2011), it is made clear that inspectors are looking for evidence of the teaching of all areas of reading. The document suggests inspectors question the following areas: ‘higher-order reading skills, such as inference, appreciation of an author’s style, awareness of themes, similarity and differences between texts.’ Inference therefore, is as important as any other area of reading.

This resource focuses on the teaching of inference and deduction. The texts in this resource are not about decoding and the children may need support to read them, for example, you can read the texts aloud to them. It is simple and easy to use and can be used throughout Key Stage 1. It can be used on an interactive whiteboard for a whole class activity or to support small, guided reading groups. Using the resources will help provide evidence for the following Assessing Pupil Progress Reading Assessment Focuses (AFs):

- AF2 – understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to the text;
- AF3 – deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts;
- AF5 – explain and comment on writers’ use of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level;
- AF6 – identify and comment on writers’ purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text on the reader.

## Using this resource

It can often be very difficult to teach inference to less able readers because they cannot access challenging texts. Texts that support the teaching of ‘reading between the lines’, or inference and deduction, don’t normally appear until later in the book bands, for example, turquoise level (NC level 1A). The use of photographs as a first approach in this resource means all children can develop these important comprehension skills. This resource contains 32 units (nearly one per week of the academic year). Each unit contains one photograph and two texts.

Text 1 provides a story or explanation about the photograph that uses inference to give information (there are hints, but the author doesn't explicitly say what is happening); Text 2 is an alternative text which makes the story really obvious. There is little or no inference and the simplicity of the text provides a good comparison with Text 1.

The texts are written to support the teaching of inference and deduction and will probably need to be read to the children. The point of the exercise is not for the children to decode the texts but to understand and answer questions about it.

These texts and photographs can all be printed or shown on an interactive whiteboard.

Choose one photograph or text per week to use either in guided reading or in a whole class activity. It is recommended that this activity is carried out weekly so that the children learn how to use the resources and become more confident. With regular use the activity should be done within about 20 minutes or during a guided reading session.

To use the resource in Year 1, begin by studying the photographs with the children to see what information is explicit and which is inferred. Teach children how to 'read between the lines' by asking them to explain what is happening in the photograph and then discussing alternative stories or explanations.

Year 2 children can begin to learn how to 'read between the lines' using the two texts in each unit. Use Text 1 to see how a writer can give you information by inferring things or dropping hints. Encourage children to discuss what they think is happening and to back up their ideas using evidence from the text.

Children then compare Text 1 and Text 2 to see which is more effective. By comparing the texts children will begin to understand the power a writer has to choose words and give information to the reader using inference. It is important that in each year group the children are given the opportunity to express their own opinions about what is happening in the photograph or story.

Where the questions require the retrieval of specific words or themes from the text, prompts have been added after the questions in italics to enable teachers to find the information quickly and explain it simply. Simpler questions and those involving speculation are left unanswered. The 'prompts' are not to be read out to the children.

## **Lesson structure**

In Year 1 start by showing children an photograph. The units are not sequential and can be taught in any order. Show children the photograph and allow several minutes for them to look at it carefully and discuss what is happening. Then work through the questions.

In Year 2 start by showing children the text (don't show the photograph in the first instance). Ask them to read it or read it to them. Give the children a few minutes to talk about what they've read or heard then work through the questions. When you have read the questions, show the photograph to the children. Discuss whether the photograph is what they expected. Does it change the way they would want to answer the questions?

Each unit has suggested follow up activities that you can give to the children to support your assessment. See Appendices 1 – 3 for more ideas.

## **Writing and assessment**

The texts can also be used to teach aspects of writing. Appendix 4 provides guidance on how to do this as well as providing an index of writing tools that can be used to demonstrate different aspects of writing, for example adverbs, connectives and speech marks.

It can be difficult to find evidence to support some of the AFs in Assessing Pupil Progress (APP). However, because the children aren't expected to decode the texts themselves, this resource allows you to focus on one of the AFs. For example, by sharing a photograph or text and working through the suggested teacher questions you should be able to find evidence to show how well a child is able to select relevant information or talk about the effect a text has on them. For this purpose, a suggested guided reading assessment sheet to record evidence is included (see Appendix 5).

# Unit 1



## **Year 1 – Using the photograph**

### **Questions**

Who can you see in the photograph? Do you know for certain that they are boys? How?

What else can you see?

Can you tell where the children are?

Who do you think they are? Do you think they are related?

What do you think they are doing? How do you know from the picture?

How do you think they are feeling? How can you tell?

Why do you think that the children are sitting in that way?

What do you think happened before this photograph was taken?

What do you think will happen next?

### **Suggested follow up activity:**

Ask children to draw a picture of what they would do outside on a sunny day. How does this make them feel?

## Year 2 – Reading texts

### Text 1

Ben slumped down with his head on his knees while his big brother Sam heaved a heavy sigh behind him. The holidays were meant to be fun, but they still had another four weeks of this!

The grass was damp from the last of the rain but the sun beat down overhead. Through the still, sticky heat came the sound of a cricket match in a nearby field. There was nothing else on the horizon but fields and trees. Sam looked around and shook his head.

### Questions

Who are the children in the text? How do you know?  
What are they doing? How can you tell?

Ask the children to try and copy the description of the body language and see how they feel.

How are the boys feeling? How does the author show this in the text? For example, the author has not used the words 'sad' or 'bored' in the text. What words have been used? *(Example words and phrases: slumped, heavy sigh, another four weeks of this, still, sticky, nothing else, shook his head.)*

Does the author show us why the boys are feeling this way?

How does the author tell us the time of year?

What do you think the boys had been doing before this part of the story?

What do you think they will do next?

## Year 2 – Reading texts

### Text 2

The boys were bored. They were visiting their Grandpa's farm and had nothing to do. They sat in the middle of a field wishing something interesting would happen.

The summer holidays were meant to be fun, but they still had another four weeks of being bored!

### Questions

What is the difference between Text 1 and Text 2?

Which text do you think is more interesting? Why?

Does the way you feel about the boys change when you read Text 2? Why?

What facts do you learn from Text 2 that aren't clear in Text 1? *(Example answers: The boys are visiting their Grandpa's farm, it is the summer holidays, the boys are in a field, they are brothers or cousins as they have the same Grandpa.)*

Both texts contain an exclamation mark. How does this affect the texts? *(In both texts, it shows that the boys are annoyed/frustrated in their boredom.)*

Both texts contain an exclamation mark. How does this affect the texts?

Count the describing words in Texts 1 and 2. Which text has more?

What kind of words could the author use to describe the body language of the boys if they were happy and having fun?

### Suggested follow up activity:

Ask children to draw a picture or cartoon strip of what is happening in the story using Text 1. When they have finished they can compare it to the photograph and discuss the differences/ similarities between the two. How did the author show what the photograph would look like using words?

## Unit 2



## Year 1 – Using the photograph

### Questions

Who or what can you see in the photograph?

Do you know for certain that the people are children? How do you know?

What are they doing?

How do you think they are feeling? What else would you need to see or hear to know how they are really feeling?

Where do you think the children are? What clues are there in the photograph?

Who do you think they are? How can you tell?

What do you think the two children behind the girl are doing? How do you know from the photograph?

How do you think the girl at the front of the photograph is feeling? How can you tell?

What or who do you think the girl at the front of the photograph is looking at?

Why do you think she has that expression on her face?

What do you think will happen next?

What would you do if you were her?

### **Suggested follow up activity:**

Ask children to draw a picture of something they are scared of.

## Year 2 – Reading texts

### Text 1

Suddenly the silence was shattered. Johanna jumped out of her skin as the door was thrown open and slammed against the wall.

The girls sitting in front of her turned round. They looked first behind her, then directly at Johanna and started sniggering.

Johanna didn't need to turn round to know who had just walked in. With a sense of dread, she slowly turned towards the door, then shivered. Sure enough, there *she* was.

### Questions

How many people are in the story?

Who are the people in the text? How do you know?

What are they doing? How can you tell from the text?

Who is Johanna?

Where do you think the story takes place? What makes you think this?

How is Johanna feeling? How does the author show this in the text? (*Example answers: She jumped out of her skin; with a sense of dread; shivered.*)

Does the author tell us why the girl is feeling this way?

Who do you think has just walked in through the door?

The person who comes through the door is only described as '*she*'. Why doesn't the author use the person's name? (*To increase suspense/mystery.*)

What do you think will happen next?

## Year 2 – Reading texts

### Text 2

Johanna was scared of the girl who had just walked in. She had been picking on Johanna for weeks. She had no one to talk to about it. In fact, the other children thought it was funny.

### Questions

What is the difference between Text 1 and Text 2?

Which text do you think is more interesting? Why?

Which text provides more information?

How does the author show us the way the girl feels in Text 1? Does Text 2 show you how she feels?

Who else might be at the door?

What do you think she should do about this person?

### Suggested follow up activity:

Ask the children to imagine that the story was about someone else coming through the door that Johanna liked. How could the author describe the body language and reactions of the characters in the story to show it was someone nice coming in?