

## Supporting EAL Learners with reading comprehension



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# Aim of today's workshop:

1. Consider some of the barriers to effective reading comprehension for EAL learners.
- 2. Take away a range of scaffolding activities to support EAL learners to make faster progress in understanding what they read.**

# Introduction

- Strategies table ~ add notes as we go through (star priorities)
- Questions ~ as we go, or jot them down on a post-it

# Task:

1. Take an envelope
2. Read what is in your envelope
3. Do not share with anyone else!

People with envelope A ~ what was this text describing?

# Barriers for EAL readers when reading for meaning?

This process is as easy as it is enjoyable. This process can take anywhere from about one hour to all day. The length of time depends on the elaborateness of the final product. Only one substance is necessary for this process. However, the substance must be quite abundant and of suitable consistency. The substance is best used when it is fresh, as its lifespan can vary. Its lifespan varies depending on where the substance is located. If one waits too long before using it, the substance may disappear. This process is such that almost anyone can do it. The easiest method is to compress the substance into a denser mass than it had in its original state. This process gives a previously amorphous substance some structure. Other substances can be introduced near the end of the process to add to the complexity of the final product. These substances are not necessary. However, many people find that they add to the desired effect.

# Building a snowman



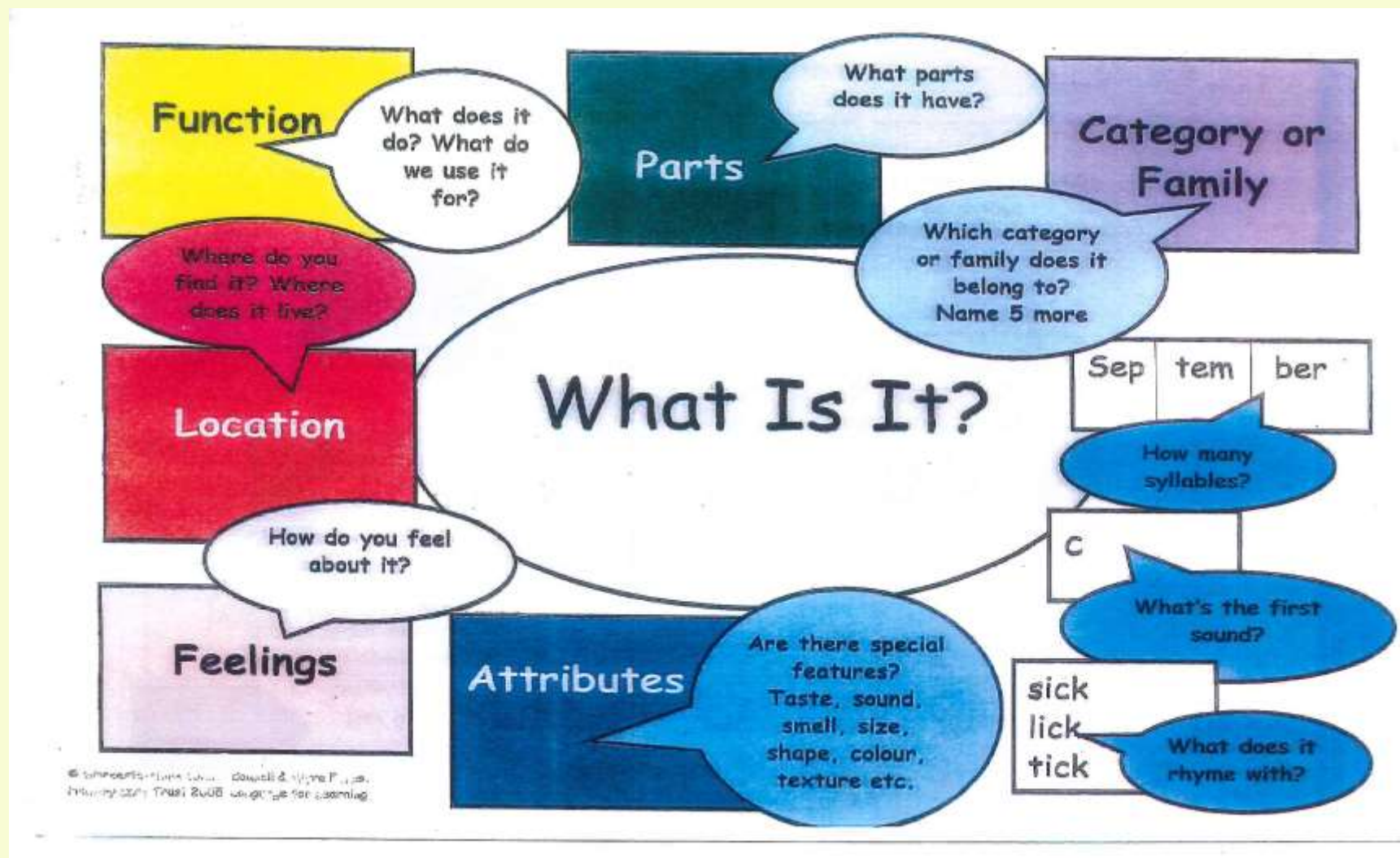
A ~ What was missing for you?

What scaffolding would have helped you?

## **Barriers for EAL readers when reading for meaning?**

On your tables, have 60 seconds to each share ideas/experiences of one thing that has prevented EAL children in your classes/schools, from developing good comprehension skills.

# What is it? board:





# Barriers for EAL readers when reading for meaning?

Red Riding Hood was invited to  
grandma's birthday party. She  
wondered if she would like a new scarf.  
She went to her room and shook her  
piggy bank. It made no  
sound.



# Barriers for EAL readers when reading for meaning?

1. Red Riding Hood wondered what to give grandma for her birthday.
2. Red Riding Hood wondered if grandma would like a scarf.
3. Red Riding Hood was going to buy grandma a scarf for her birthday.
4. She wondered if she had any money left.
5. She went to her room and shook her piggy bank.
6. The piggy bank made no sound.
7. The piggy bank was empty.



# Barriers for EAL readers when reading for meaning?

..... But then, out of the corner of her eye, she spotted a little bush, covered in tiny yellow roses and quite forgetting what she had been told, she left the path and went to take a closer look at them and smell their perfume.

All at once, she heard a voice,

“Where are *you* going?”

As she turned around to see who had spoken, fear gripped her so tightly that she was unable to answer at first. Mother had been right all along. She took a deep breath ...

“That way ... to .... to ... my grandma’s cottage,” she replied, pointing ahead.

“You don’t want to go that way then, I know a shortcut to her house...” Red ran off in the direction he was pointing .....

# Drama-based activities to support understanding

1. **Whoosh** ... a quick, participatory, physical telling of the story to establish consensual understanding.



2. **Thought Tunnel** – a quick way of telling a specific character how we feel and what we think of their behaviour – collectively.

3. **Hot-Seating** (Working In-Role) – Teacher and/or children are questioned in-role by the others. Whoever is on the 'hot seat' answers as their character would.



4. **Story in Pictures** – a series of still images, (or freeze frames), to tell the story, including 'thought tapping'

# Ensuring EAL children become active readers:

## Think Aloud Strategies ...

By using modelling, coached practice, and reflection, you can teach your children **strategies** to help them **think** while they read / listen and build their **comprehension**.

- ❖ Predicting
- ❖ Questioning
- ❖ Visualising
- ❖ Responding
- ❖ Clarifying
- ❖ Summarising
- ❖ Reflecting
- ❖ Connecting



# 10 top tips...

- 1) **Model it!** Children need to regularly hear adults reading. Expose them to a range of texts, including ones which they cannot yet access the text at a word / sentence level. e.g. read aloud strategies



# 10 top tips...

2) Pictures / Photos are essential ~ Supplement texts without images e.g. have key vocab pictures printed out or use image safe search to bring up images as you go.



# 10 top tips...

3) Use DARTS ~ either 1) Reconstruction activities with modified texts or 2) Analysis activities with unmodified texts.

<https://ealresources.bell-foundation.org.uk/teachers/great-ideas-darts>

(click DARTs word for document)





# DARTS: Directed Activities Related to Texts

DARTs provide an alternative to traditional comprehension questions, which encourages EAL learners to engage with texts in a way that promotes greater understanding. They can provide an opportunity to **go beyond the literal**, and look at meaning that is implied in the text rather than overtly stated, and support learners learning how to reconstruct and interrogate texts.

As well as being useful for independent learning, DARTs can also be carried out by pairs or small groups of learners and this turns them into **active, collaborative learning situations** giving opportunities for exploratory talk.

# DARTS: Directed Activities Related to Texts

## Practical ideas for using DARTs



### To help learners to see how a text is structured:

- Cut up a text for learners to sequence correctly.
- Blank out words (e.g. nouns, verbs, every tenth word, etc) for learners to decide what to put in (also known as cloze procedure).
- Ask learners to think of a sub-heading for each paragraph to show they have understood its meaning.
- Write labels or annotations for a diagram.
- Change the text into a picture or flow chart.

# DARTS: Directed Activities Related to Texts

## Practical ideas for using DARTs



### To help learners choose and analyse information:

- Highlight key words in a text.
- Use different colours to highlight different characters' views; or speech and action ready for converting into a play script.
- Recast information using graphic organisers, for example: tables, Venn diagrams, hierarchy pyramids, life cycles, tree diagrams.
- Transform text into other formats, e.g. letter, instructions, diary, article, advert, web page, storyboard.

# DARTS: Directed Activities Related to Texts

CAUSE		EFFECT
Leaving the path to smell the roses ...		... the woodcutter to come running and save grandma.
Insisting on going to grandma's house alone ...		... the wolf to be sent to prison.
Red Riding Hood's loud scream ...		... Red Riding Hood to meet up with the wolf.
Swallowing grandma whole and scaring Red Riding Hood ...		... Red Riding Hood's mother to worry about her.

# 10 top tips...

4) Overlearning ~ use the same text for multiple tasks.



# 10 top tips...

5) Questioning ~ prepare, consider different types of questions AND how you will scaffold answers + opportunities for them to generate questions. E.g. Bloom's taxonomy



# 10 top tips...

6) Show them! ~ with facial expression, gestures, intonation  
& role play /drama.



# 10 top tips...

7) Mixed ability teaching & collaboration ~ develop skills in listening to each other (metacognition)





# 10 top tips...

- 8) Have a **comprehension toolkit** ready to support activities. (whiteboard and pen, what is it? / senses board, tablet/IWB, any of the other supporting documents shared today e.g. question prompts)



# 10 top tips...

9) Allow additional processing time

~ fight your instinct to fill the silence!!

- Repeat the same question if needed
- Prompts when responding can help
- Give question and come back
- Culture of an expected answer, but in a scaffolded context



# Something to consider ....

In 2004, K.S 2 English test results of about 600 pupils learning EAL were analysed on the responses given in the Reading tests. Their results were lower than the monolingual samples and written answers to questions showed that EAL pupils:

Lacked a vocabulary for describing characters – their feelings and attitudes

Demonstrated difficulties with expressing their own responses to texts.

The hardest questions proved to be those containing negative or conditional formulations and those requiring the construction of an argument based on information given in the text.

Those qualities were necessary to attain a Level 5 ...

When this analysis was repeated in 2014, the exact same areas were identified as preventing pupils from attaining a Level 5. BPS (2016)

# 10 top tips...

10) Good for EAL is good for all

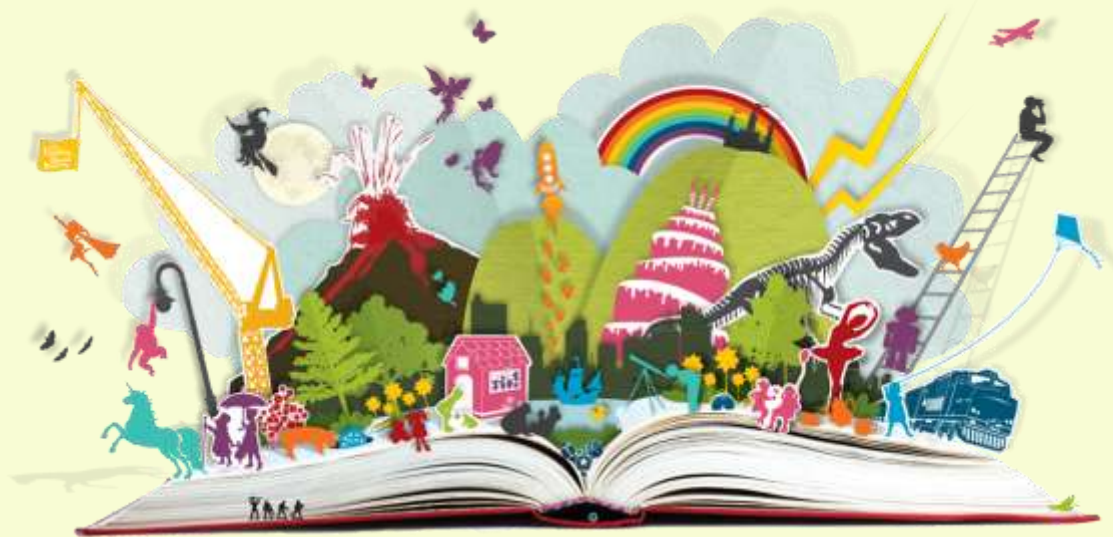
"The more you **read**  
the more **things** you know.  
The more that you **learn**  
the more **places** you'll go."  
-Dr. Seuss

**BOOKS**  
aren't just made of  
**WORDS**...  
they're also filled with  
**PLACES**  
to visit and  
**PEOPLE**  
to meet.

**A CHILD**  
WHO  
**READS**  
WILL BE AN  
**ADULT WHO**  
**THINKS**



# Pupil and School Support



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Partners on the pathway to a positive future for children and young people