



Guided Reading White Paper

Implementing guided reading instruction
in the classroom



What is guided reading?

Guided reading is a research-informed approach to reading instruction. Used by literacy educators in classrooms, it is a key component of a balanced and comprehensive literacy strategy. Guided reading is designed to support the reading development of students in all years of primary school.

Guided reading equips students to:

- ✓ engage meaningfully with complex texts.
- ✓ apply a range of reading strategies to read fluently and comprehend the text, by enabling them to respond to literal, inferential and response-based questions.
- ✓ make personal connections with texts.

Guided reading is a highly successful and pedagogically sound teaching approach used to support or scaffold student reading development from the time they begin to read until they become independent and balanced readers.

Typically, guided reading involves a teacher working with a small group of students – between four and six – with the same reading needs and who are able to independently read texts at the same or similar level.

The purpose of guided reading is to:

- support students as they actively reconstruct meaning by sampling, predicting, checking, confirming and self-correcting
- learn and practise explicitly taught reading and comprehension strategies
- use initial sound and picture clues to help decode content words
- experience a wide range of text types

- select texts that target specific skills and reading strategies students need to focus on
- generate teacher–student conversation regarding the text through discussion, questioning and evaluating the text
- learn and practise explicitly taught reading and comprehension strategies.

The teaching focus of a guided reading session reflects the students' learning needs and is informed by reliable assessment data. It is crucial to gather assessment data regularly in order to effectively cater for the ever-changing needs of students.

The ultimate goal of guided reading is to support students to "think actively and problem-solve their way through texts" (Wall, 2014: 136, 137), drawing on a tool-belt of strategies. This will enable them to become effective and efficient independent readers when interacting with a variety of sophisticated books.

A typical guided reading session



Visit www.scholastic.co.uk/pm to watch how to conduct a guided reading session in the classroom.



The role of the teacher

The teacher plays a critical role at all stages of a guided reading session.

In a guided reading session, a teacher may:

- use questioning, prompting or modelling to demonstrate the reading practices of effective and efficient readers
- invite responses and insights about the text from children
- facilitate quality discussions that involve children expressing personal opinions
- support children in examining challenges presented in the text and characteristics of a particular text type
- invite children to share strategies for establishing the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary
- build childrens comprehension skills
- provide considered and constructive feedback that builds on students' understandings.



The benefits for students and teachers

The benefits of guided reading for children include:

- building and applying new knowledge and understanding through a wide range of effective comprehension strategies
- feeling motivated to read more widely and more frequently
- gaining the right balance of challenge and support in their reading through using appropriately levelled texts at their instructional level.

The benefits for the teacher include:

- small-group instruction creates opportunities to address common needs of children
- ability to explicitly target reading strategies, supporting children to engage meaningfully with increasingly complex texts over time
- ability to regularly monitor and assess child reading progress
- ability to acknowledge childrens' established reading skills, so time is not invested in teaching skills readers have already attained.



Seven elements of guided reading

A typical guided reading session should incorporate these seven elements:

1. Establish a teaching objective or focus

The teacher identifies a teaching focus based on the common needs of individual learners. A teaching objective may include the introduction of an unfamiliar text type.

2. Select a suitable guided reading text

The teacher selects an appropriate text that is accurately levelled. Early and emergent readers commonly read a short text, while fluent and advanced readers read more complex texts. The **PM** series follows this model, and our books are written to our strict and finely graded levelling criteria.

3. Introduce the text prior to reading

It is important to introduce the text to students and determine whether it is fiction or non-fiction. It is useful to discuss distinguishing features of the text type and to explore the text to identify any key words, to familiarise students with the topic.

4. Read the text

Invite students to read the text quietly or in silence, allowing them to practise strategies covered.

5. Discuss the text

Explore specific aspects of the text in detail, such as plot, character motivations and the resolution in a narrative. Teachers may discuss common or atypical language features and patterns, or investigate the use of illustrations to convey meaning.

6. Respond to the text

This step involves students working independently on a personal response learning task with links to the guided reading text.

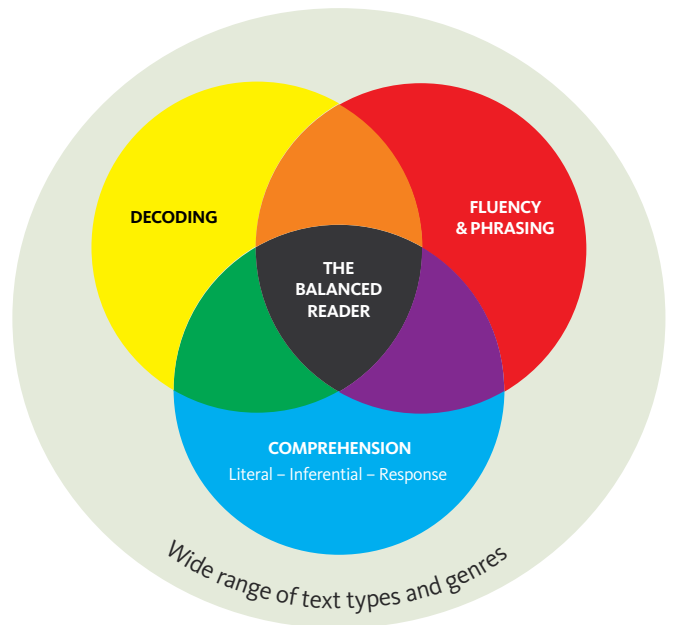
7. Reflect on student learning

The final stage of a guided reading session involves the teacher and students revisiting the original purpose of the session, to share new learnings and discuss how they can be applied in future reading.

The link between guided reading and levelled texts

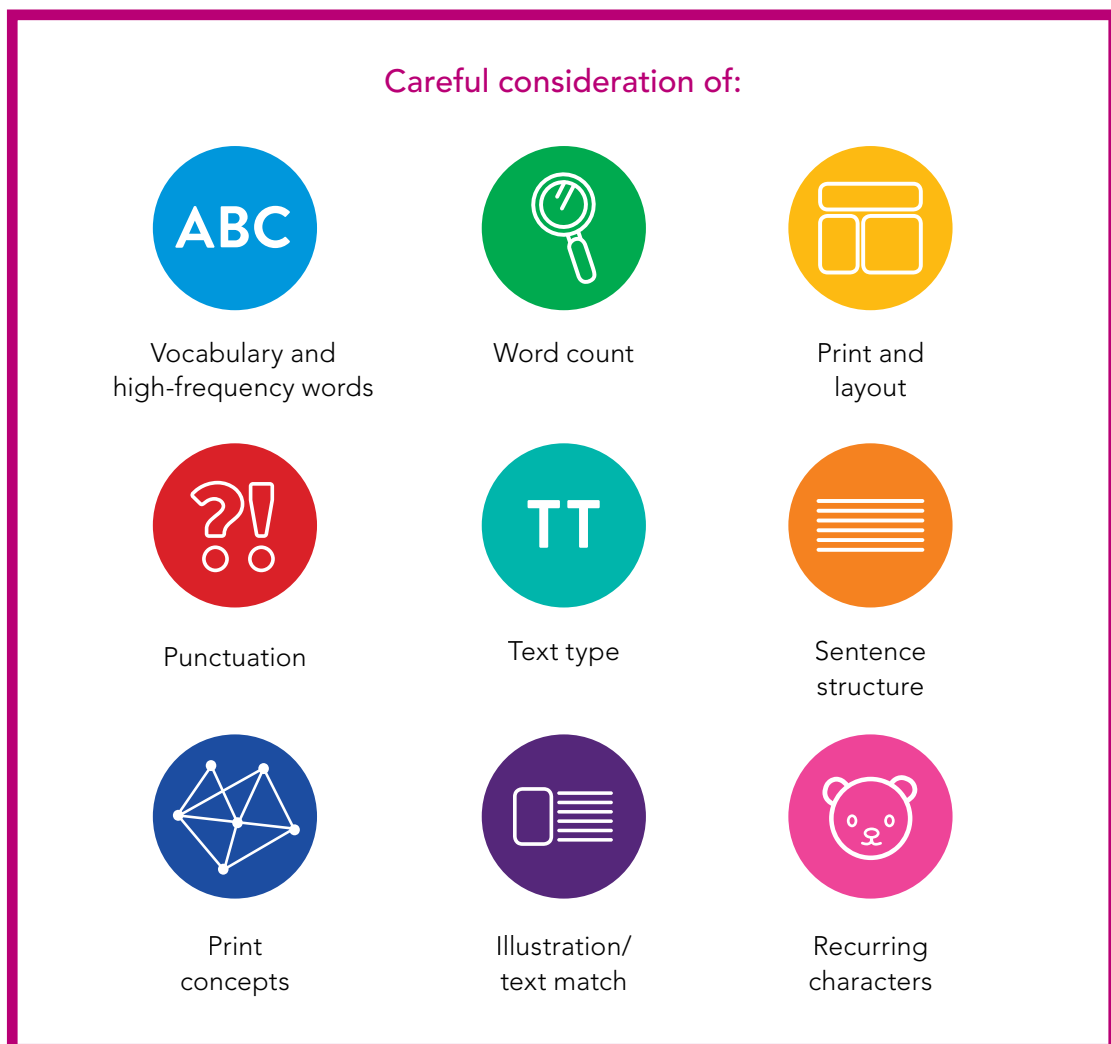
Careful selection of texts by teachers for guided reading is vital. The selected book needs to match students' reading needs, interests and abilities, and be appropriate in terms of reading age. Levelled texts are specifically designed to support reading instruction at all stages of reading development and become progressively more challenging the higher the level.

The **PM** series is meticulously levelled and ensures students are gradually introduced to books of increasing difficulty. The **PM** series has taken the complex Balanced Reader Model and broken it down into 30 incremental levels, spanning all years of primary school.



The Balanced Reader Model

What makes the PM levelling successful?



References

Wall, H. (2014). When guided reading isn't working: strategies for effective instruction. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 10(2), 134–41.

CONTACT US



www.scholastic.co.uk/pm



pm@scholastic.co.uk



0845 603 9091



Scholastic UK Teachers



[@scholasticuktch](https://twitter.com/scholasticuktch)



Contact your local Scholastic Education
Consultant at www.scholastic.co.uk/consultants

