Levels 4–5: Overview of Learning and Teaching Activities for Reading

At this level students read, interpret and respond to a range of literary and multimedia texts in a range of topics from the various subjects. These texts include more abstract concepts and symbolic ideas than those in Levels 3–4, although the context will usually be linked with students’ everyday life.

Texts develop themes and topics that will usually be less familiar to students and there is a greater focus on reading in order to learn. Texts may develop their topics in more sophisticated ways, using more complex language (for example, generalizations, conditional ideas) and sentence structures.

Individual sentences will often have more concepts than in earlier texts and may be linked in complex ways, using conjunctions and prepositions. The texts may be more open to multiple interpretations and make greater use of inferential devices. The texts will have a readability rating in the 7–8 grade range.

The types of texts include:

- Shorter, more concentrated extracts of prose such as encyclopedia entries and reference materials.
- Operational manuals, texts that specify sets of procedures that need to be implemented in various familiar, everyday contexts. For example, procedures in science practical work, technology, physical education and domestic science.
- Longer texts with one or more sub themes contributing to the main themes.
- Articles, reports, evaluations, critiques, multiple treatments of the same topic, persuasive and opinion oriented versus factual text such as letters to the editor and editorials
- Satirical text.
- Short poems (verse and songs), fantasies, science fiction and informative text about relatively concrete topics.

Over Levels 4–5, the complexity of texts increases in the following ways:

- sentences refer to more concepts
- sentences have less redundancy and less repetition
- the grammar of the sentences becomes more complex
- the meaning of each sentence and paragraph becomes more complex.

At this level there are two learning and teaching sequences, one for a fiction text *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and one for a non fiction text *Giand Pandas*. This overview provides Teaching Strategies, Student Reading Behaviours and Word Level Knowledge.

Teaching Strategies

Over Levels 4–5 students are taught to use the following types of reading strategies to integrate multiple contextual cues and text organisation:

Describe their reading plan for these types of texts. Each student’s plan explicitly mentions:

- Before beginning to read the text in-depth, will skim it to they decide its likely topic; how it fits with what they know; what it might tell them; questions it might answer; and why the text was written, that is, what the author's purpose or intention was.
- What actions they might use while reading; plan where they will pause and review what the text has said so far; how they will keep track of key ideas as they read; and how they will use the main ideas in sentences to comprehend paragraphs.
- The steps they will take to make sure they actually add new ideas to what they know.
Skim and scan the text for key words and decide its likely topic. Students use the heading, subheadings and any illustrations; the sequence of topic sentences; and an abstract or introduction for this purpose.

Identify how a text is organised; distinguish between particular types of informative texts such as simple types of explanatory text, descriptive texts, fiction, opinions and persuasive text; and use this to say what they might know having read a particular type of text.

Read the text independently, either silently or aloud as appropriate. Students may switch from one mode to the other if necessary for comprehension or other communication purposes.

Use vocabulary enhancement strategies to work out the subject specific meanings of unfamiliar topic words. This is achieved by linking them with other concepts they know that accompany it; analysing the word morphographically to work out its meaning; paraphrasing and visualising sentences that contain the unfamiliar words and using this to suggest possible synonyms or phrases.

Use sentence comprehending strategies. For example combining visualising and paraphrasing to comprehend general statements and conditional general statements.

Use paragraph comprehending strategies to infer the main idea of a paragraph. For example:

- Paraphrasing a topic sentence and recording key ideas in the text by taking notes as they read.
- Saying the questions that are answered by particular sentences in the text and use the sequence of questions to synthesise the ideas in the paragraph.
- Identify the main and subordinate ideas across paragraphs in a text, integrate these into a summary representation and evaluate it in terms of the adequacy of its fit with the paragraph.

Use paragraph synthesis strategies. For example, students paraphrase the topic sentence of each paragraph and integrate these and then identify the key questions answered by each paragraph and use these to integrate the ideas in the text.

Consolidate and review what they read. Students describe the synthesis of the paragraphs in key words or sentences; select the paragraphs that answer particular questions or provide particular information and note the main questions answered by the text; note how the interpretation of the text is influenced by the language used by the writer.

A guide for organising learning and teaching of reading strategies is provided in Learning and Teaching Structure.

**Student Reading Behaviours**

Over Levels 4–5 students are taught to display the following outcomes for the types of texts read in this phase:

Show literal comprehension, students:
- Identify and discuss the main ideas, themes or issues in the text.
- Answer questions about the key ideas, use several strategies to locate, select and record key information from texts.
- Support their interpretations with evidence drawn from the text.
- Do the action sequences or procedures described in procedural texts or manuals where the description of the actions does not match the order in which they need to be completed.
- Identify and synthesise concepts and events across several paragraphs.

Show inferential comprehension in a range of ways, students can:
- Infer possible antecedent motives and characteristics.
Infer unstated information including cause and effect and motivation; infer cause and effect across paragraphs.

Read between the lines; infer the cause and nature of possible changes; infer the features and characteristics of key concepts; and predict possible events.

Answer questions that ask readers to infer ‘What would happen if….?’ by changing ideas in the text.

Identify and synthesise concepts and events across several paragraphs; suggest why concepts, characters and events are described in particular ways; and suggest what might be alternative ways of describing them.

Identify how sociocultural values, attitudes and beliefs are presented in particular texts.

Identify different interpretations of a text; explain why these arise and justify their interpretation of each by selecting supporting evidence from the text; and develop critical and personal responses such as interpretive pieces or character profiles.

Suggest the author’s purpose for writing the text or their point of view as well as how well the text achieved its purpose. For example, ‘Did the text help you to understand why X did Y? What did the writer seem to assume about the readers? How suitable was the text for adolescent readers?’

Describe how texts are written for particular purposes, students:

- Analyse how writers use imagery, characterization, dialogue, plot and setting.
- Identify how language is used in different ways by different writers to represent characters, people and events in different ways, for example, by comparing two reports about the same topic.
- Identify and infer some of the techniques used to foster a particular interpretation. For example, ‘Would you have been as interested if the writer had said…? Would you have been worried if the writer had said…?’
- Explain how writers use language techniques such as humour or suspense to engage readers.
- Decide how well the way the text was written helped them to comprehend the ideas.

Talk about the actions they use while reading to learn, for example:

- Skim and scan the text using the headings, sub-headings and the sequence of topic sentences to identify how a text is organised.
- Analyse unfamiliar words by looking at their meanings.
- Visualise and paraphrase sentences.
- Understand paragraphs by selecting the main idea in each sentence.

Describe how reading helps them and is a useful activity. For example, to discover what other people are thinking; to teach new ideas efficiently; or to learn how different people think about a topic.

Show they are aware that a topic can be described in multiple ways, leading to alternative interpretations. Students note how the language used in the alternative versions differs and could lead to different impressions of the same events.

Word Level Knowledge

Over Levels 4–5 students:

- Read multi-syllabic words by integrating morphographic and graphophonic strategies.
- Automatise morphographic units and use them to predict the meanings of words.
- Identify the morphographs in unfamiliar three-syllable words and predict which vowels will be destressed.
- Identify the types of words to which particular suffixes are added, for example, ‘-ful’ is added to nouns such as ‘beauty’ or ‘mind’.
- Are aware that word meanings are subject specific.
- Identify the meaning stem of two- and three-syllable words and work out meaning when the stem is not a known word, for example, they suggest the meaning of ‘-ject’.
- Describe how adding suffixes such as ‘-age’, ‘-er’, ‘-ist’ and ‘-or’ to nouns or verbs affects their meaning.