

HIAS MOODLE+ RESOURCE

Reading Progression Yr1-6: Pen Portraits and Curriculum Priorities

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Overview

This document exemplifies a pathway for progression in reading across the Primary English curriculum.

Points to consider when using this resource

- Pen portraits are reflective of a pupil meeting age related expectations in the Primary English curriculum at the end of the academic year.
- Schools should use this as a model to complete their own pathways, mapping out the pupil's journey across the KS1 and KS2 curriculum.
- Priorities for teaching indicate a suggested timeline of coverage. They support the development of basic skills and consolidation of previous learning so that your curriculum builds strong foundations for every child.
- Not every National Curriculum statement is evident in this document, and it should not be used as a replacement for existing assessment tools.
- Progression in reading is not always linear, with skills and knowledge growing through practice and application to new texts and new literary concepts.
- Background content knowledge is strongly linked to reading comprehension, so pupils with strong content knowledge may be able to access and work with more challenging texts in their areas of interest or linked to prior study.

Pen Portraits Year 1 - 6

<p>Year 1</p> <p>Pupils have passed the phonics screening check and can apply their knowledge of taught GPCs to decodable books. Having read a book on several occasions, they demonstrate a sufficient level of fluency. They recognise taught common exception words and read these on sight. Pupils verbally express their response to books read to them, identifying likes and dislikes. When prompted, they ask simple questions to further their understanding. Pupils are able to retell familiar stories and make simple predictions based on what has been read so far.</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>Pupils demonstrate a secure use of phonics to read unfamiliar words in age-appropriate books. Their increasing knowledge of common exception words supports fluency. This improved fluency enables them to comprehend more of what they are reading. They independently deploy self-correction strategies when the text does not make sense to them. They reflect on their reading, expressing and justifying personal responses. Pupils can locate key information and make simple inferences.</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>Pupils can use their knowledge of phonics and morphology to read aloud most words accurately and grow their knowledge of words. When reading age-appropriate books, pupils read many words automatically, show awareness of phrase boundaries, and attempt expression. They comprehend more of what they are reading, locating key information and making inferences by combining prior knowledge with that in the text. They demonstrate understanding of a text and express personal opinions.</p>
<p>Year 4</p> <p>Pupils use their knowledge of phonics, morphology and etymology to read most words accurately and automatically. When reading age-appropriate texts, pupils generally pay attention to phrase boundaries, read with an appropriate pace and are able to vary tone, intonation and expression to match meaning. They comprehend more of what they are reading by retrieving information and making sound inferences, justifying these with evidence from the text. They can discuss their personal response to a range of texts read independently.</p>	<p>Year 5</p> <p>Pupils read a wide range of age-appropriate texts fluently. They ask questions to enhance this understanding and are able to make comparisons within and across different texts. Through discussion, they show that they are able to build sound inferences relating to a characters' feelings, thoughts and motives. They justify these inferences with evidence from the text. They are beginning to distinguish between fact and opinion. Pupils can summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph.</p>	<p>Year 6</p> <p>Pupils read a wide range of age-appropriate texts fluently, identifying common themes and conventions. They understand how organisational structures and language contribute to meaning and how this affects the reader. Through discussion, and in writing about their reading, they show that they are able to build inferences around characters' feelings, thoughts and motives, supporting these with evidence from the text. Pupils can provide a succinct summary drawn from more than one paragraph.</p>

Age-appropriate texts

There is a well-documented progression in text complexity in children's books from ages 4 to 11, which aligns with their cognitive, linguistic, and literacy development. Studies like those by [Hsiao et al. \(2022\)](#) track lexical richness (vocabulary diversity and sophistication) and syntactic complexity (sentence structure) in children's writing, showing a clear developmental trajectory.

A summary of identified text features, vocabulary and complexity of themes has been provided for each phase of education eg Early Years, Key stage 1, Lower Key stage 2, Upper Key stage 2. This is to guide teachers in their understanding of progression and support them in evaluating the appropriateness of text.

Ages 4–5 (Early Years/Foundation Stage)

- Text Features: Simple sentence structures, repetitive phrases, predictable patterns.
- Vocabulary: High-frequency, familiar words; concrete nouns and verbs.
- Themes: Everyday experiences, emotions, family, animals.

Ages 6–7 (Key Stage 1 / Years 1–2)

- Text Features: Slightly longer sentences, basic conjunctions (and, but, because), simple dialogue.
- Vocabulary: Introduction of less common words, some figurative language.
- Themes: Friendship, school life, simple adventures.

Ages 8–9 (Lower Key Stage 2 / Years 3–4)

- Text Features: More complex sentence structures, paragraphs, varied punctuation.
- Vocabulary: Richer, more descriptive language; introduction of idioms and metaphors.
- Themes: Moral dilemmas, fantasy, historical settings.

Ages 10–11 (Upper Key Stage 2 / Years 5–6)

- Text Features: Complex narratives, multiple perspectives, flashbacks.
- Vocabulary: Advanced and subject-specific words; nuanced language.
- Themes: Identity, justice, social issues, abstract concepts.

Suggested Curriculum Priorities – Year 1

Year 1 Termly Progression / Journey			Year 2 End of Year Pen Portrait
Autumn	Spring	Summer	
Word Reading Apply phonic knowledge to decode words in phonically decodable texts	Word Reading Blend sounds in unfamiliar words using the GPCs taught so far	Word Reading Read words containing -s, -es, -ing, -ed and -est endings Read contractions e.g. zI'm, I'll and we'll	Pupils have passed the phonics screening check and can apply their knowledge of taught GPCs to decodable books. Having read a book on several occasions, they demonstrate a sufficient level of fluency. They recognise taught common exception words and read these on sight. Pupils verbally express their response to books read to them, identifying likes and dislikes. When prompted, they ask simple questions to further their understanding. Pupils are able to retell familiar stories and make simple predictions based on what has been read so far.
Fluency Recognise and join in with predictable phrases	Fluency Reread texts to build up fluency in blending	Fluency Reread texts to build up fluency and confidence in word reading	
Comprehension Recall the main points of a narrative in the correct sequence Predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far	Comprehension Participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say	Comprehension Find key points in a story or some key facts from an information text	
Text complexity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features: A mixture of sentence lengths, basic conjunctions (and, but, because), simple dialogue. Vocabulary: past and present tense, introduction of some literary language. Themes: Friendship, school life, simple adventures 			Example age-appropriate texts: Independent reading books will be matched to school phonics programme and pupils' developing knowledge. Example read aloud books: <i>Q Pootle 5</i> by Nick Butterworth <i>Lost in the Toy Museum</i> by David Lucas <i>A Walk in the Woods</i> by Flora Martyn <i>Little People Big Dreams</i> (various titles) A range of poems and rhymes to be enjoyed and learned by heart

Suggested Curriculum Priorities – Year 2

Year 2 Termly Progression / Journey			Year 2 End of Year Pen Portrait
Autumn	Spring	Summer	
Word reading Read accurately by blending, including alternative sounds for graphemes	Word reading Read polysyllabic words containing known graphemes	Word reading Read common suffixes	Pupils demonstrate a secure use of phonics to read unfamiliar words in age-appropriate books. Their increasing knowledge of common exception words supports fluency. This improved fluency enables them to comprehend more of what they are reading. They independently deploy self-correction strategies when the text does not make sense to them. They reflect on their reading, expressing and justifying personal responses. Pupils can locate key information and make simple inferences.
Fluency Read familiar texts fluently without overt sounding and blending	Fluency Read most words quickly and accurately without overt sounding and blending	Fluency <i>A rate of 90 words correct per minute is useful as a guide at the end of Year 2.</i>	
Comprehension Check that the text makes sense to them as they read and correct inaccurate reading Extract information from the text and discuss orally with reference to the text	Comprehension Make simple inferences about characters' thoughts and feelings and reasons for actions	Comprehension Draw on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary, provided by the teacher	
Text complexity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features: Longer sentences, simple dialogue, more complex episodes or events. Vocabulary: More literary language, contractions and inflections are used widely, wider vocabulary and range of terminology. Themes: Friendship, school life, simple adventures. 		Example age-appropriate texts: <i>Claude</i> series of early chapter books by Alex T. Smith <i>The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark</i> by Jill Tomlinson <i>Stop! That's Not My Story</i> by Smriti Halls <i>Pumpkin Soup</i> by Helen Cooper <i>Can I Build Another Me?</i> By Shinsuke Yoshitake <i>Don't Let Them Disappear</i> by Chelsea Clinton A range of poems and rhymes to be enjoyed and learned by heart	

Suggested Curriculum Priorities – Year 3

Year 3 Termly Progression / Journey			Year 3 End of Year Pen Portrait
Autumn	Spring	Summer	Pupils can use their knowledge of phonics and morphology to read aloud most words accurately and grow their knowledge of words. When reading age-appropriate books, pupils read many words automatically, show awareness of phrase boundaries, and attempt expression. They comprehend more of what they are reading, locating key information and making inferences by combining prior knowledge with that in the text. They demonstrate understanding of a text and express personal opinions.
Word reading Use phonic knowledge to decode quickly and accurately	Word reading Apply a growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes, both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new word	Word reading Read Year 3/4 statutory words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound, and where these occur in the word	
Fluency Read aloud taking notice of some punctuation and how this helps fluency and expression	Fluency Show understanding through intonation, tone and volume when reading aloud	Fluency <i>A rate of 100 words correct per minute is useful as a guide at the end of Year 3.</i>	
Comprehension Ask questions to improve their understanding of a text Predict what might happen from details stated and implied	Comprehension Check that the text makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and explaining the meaning of words in context	Comprehension Show understanding of the main points drawn from more than one paragraph	
Text complexity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features: More complex sentence structures, paragraphs, varied punctuation. Vocabulary: Richer, more descriptive language; introduction of idioms and metaphors. Themes: Moral dilemmas, fantasy, historical settings 		Example age-appropriate texts: <i>Hampstead the Hamster</i> by Michael Rosen <i>The Thames and Tide Club: The Secret City</i> by Katya Balen <i>The Boy Who Grew Dragons</i> by Andy Shepherd <i>An Otter Called Pebble</i> by Helen Peters <i>Meet the Ancient Romans</i> by James Davies <i>Africa, Amazing Africa</i> by Atinuke <i>Werewolf Club Rules</i> by Joseph Coelho	

Suggested Curriculum Priorities – Year 4

Year 4 Termly Progression / Journey			Year 4 End of Year Pen Portrait
Autumn	Spring	Summer	
<p>Apply a growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes, both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new words</p> <p>Read Year 3/4 statutory words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound, and where these occur in the word</p>			<p>Pupils use their knowledge of phonics, morphology and etymology to read most words accurately and automatically. When reading age-appropriate texts, pupils generally pay attention to phrase boundaries, read with an appropriate pace and are able to vary tone, intonation and expression to match meaning. They comprehend more of what they are reading by retrieving information and making sound inferences, justifying these with evidence from the text. They can discuss their personal response to a range of texts read independently.</p>
<p>Fluency Consider some simple punctuation such as commas that create phrasing within sentences</p>	<p>Fluency Read aloud with developing fluency and expression</p>	<p>Fluency <i>Pupils should now be reading at a rate above 100 words correct per minute.</i></p>	
<p>Comprehension Ask questions to improve their understanding of a text Provide reasoned justifications for their view</p>	<p>Comprehension Draw inferences around characters' feelings, thoughts and motives</p>	<p>Comprehension Use specific vocabulary, and ideas expressed in the text, to support their own responses</p>	
<p>Text complexity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features: More complex sentence structures, paragraphs, varied punctuation. Vocabulary: Richer, more descriptive language; introduction of idioms and metaphors. Themes: Moral dilemmas, fantasy, historical settings 		<p>Example age-appropriate texts: <i>Ice Palace</i> by Robert Swindells <i>The Boy at the Back of the Class</i> by Onjali Q. Raúf <i>The Fastest Boy in the World</i> by Elizabeth Laird <i>How to Train Your Dragon</i> by Cressida Cowell <i>Earth-shattering Events</i> by Robin Jacobs <i>Spaced Out</i> chosen by Brian Moses and James Carter</p>	

Suggested Curriculum Priorities – Year 5

Year 5 Termly Progression / Journey			Year 5 End of Year Pen Portrait
Autumn	Spring	Summer	
Word reading			Pupils read a wide range of age-appropriate texts fluently. They ask questions to enhance this understanding and are able to make comparisons within and across different texts. Through discussion, they show that they are able to build sound inferences relating to a characters' feelings, thoughts and motives. They justify these inferences with evidence from the text. They are beginning to distinguish between fact and opinion. Pupils can summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph.
Apply knowledge of exception words, root words, prefixes, and suffixes/word endings and to decode any unfamiliar words with increasing speed and skill, recognising their meaning through contextual cues			
Fluency Notice more sophisticated punctuation, for example parenthesis and relative clause sentences, and use expression when reading aloud	Fluency Show understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that meaning is clear to an audience	Fluency <i>Pupils should now be reading at a rate above 115 words correct per minute.</i>	
Comprehension Ask questions to improve their understanding of a text Provide reasoned justifications for their view	Comprehension Make links between the authors' use of language and the inferences drawn Skim and scan efficiently for vocabulary, key ideas and facts on both the printed page and screen	Comprehension Produce a succinct summary, paraphrasing the main ideas from across the text or a range of sources	
Text complexity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features: Complex narratives, multiple perspectives, flashbacks. Vocabulary: Advanced and subject-specific words; nuanced language. Themes: Identity, justice, social issues, abstract concepts. 		Example age-appropriate texts: <i>City of Stolen Magic</i> by Nazneen Ahmed Pathak <i>Anglo-Saxon Boy</i> by Tony Bradman <i>The Girl Who Stole an Elephant</i> by Nizrana Farook <i>Tom's Midnight Garden</i> by Philippa Pearce <i>Black and British – An Illustrated History</i> by David Olusoga <i>Real-life Dragons</i> by Anita Ganeri <i>Stars With Flaming Tails</i> by Valerie Bloom	

Suggested Curriculum Priorities – Year 6

Year 6 Termly Progression / Journey			Year 6 End of Year Pen Portrait
Autumn	Spring	Summer	
Word reading Apply knowledge of exception words, root words, prefixes, and suffixes/word endings and to decode any unfamiliar words with increasing speed and skill, recognising their meaning through contextual cues			Pupils read a wide range of age-appropriate texts fluently, identifying common themes and conventions. They understand how organisational structures and language contribute to meaning and how this affects the reader. Through discussion, and in writing about their reading, they show that they are able to build inferences around characters' feelings, thoughts and motives, supporting these with evidence from the text. Pupils can provide a succinct summary drawn from more than one paragraph.
Fluency Notice and respond to a wide variety of punctuation accurately when reading aloud	Fluency Use intonation, tone and volume to keep the interest of an audience	Fluency <i>A rate above 130 words correct per minute is a useful guide for the end of Year 6.</i>	
Comprehension Discuss and evaluate the intended impact of the language used with reference to the text Answer questions drawing on multiple sources of information across the wider text	Comprehension Draw inferences such as characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence	Comprehension Compare and discuss accounts of the same event through different character viewpoints	
Text complexity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features: Complex narratives, multiple perspectives, flashbacks. Vocabulary: Advanced and subject-specific words; nuanced language. Themes: Identity, justice, social issues, abstract concepts. 		Example age-appropriate texts: <i>The Midnight Fox</i> by Betsy Byars <i>Floodland</i> by Marcus Sedgwick <i>Secrets of a Sun King</i> by Emma Carroll <i>The Nowhere Emporium</i> by Ross Mackenzie <i>Survivors</i> by David Long <i>Shackleton's Journey</i> by William Grill <i>Jabberwocky</i> by Lewis Carroll	

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For further details referring to English, please contact: Emma Tarrant: emma.tarrant@hants.gov.uk

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