

Shared Reading Overview (Fact Sheet)

Shared Reading is a reading approach used across all year levels and across all subject areas, to teach less experienced readers how to problem solve the words and ideas across a range of text types. The teaching of strategic actions, or things a reader does, in order to decode letters and words, comprehend words, groups or words or ideas, or build fluency, may be targeted during shared reading lessons. Often, shared reading lessons occur with a large group of students. However, the shared approach can be used with any size group.

During shared reading, an expert reader leads the reading of a text above the level of students, i.e. a “hard” text. The teacher reads the text aloud as students follow along. During reading, the expert uses the text as a vehicle to highlight the strategic action or actions which he or she is using to problem solve the text, or aspects of the text. The expert reader stops to revisit the text to emphasise a teaching point, or instructional goal. Sections of the text may be reread by the expert, choral read with students and read independently by students.

The actions of **reading to** students, **reading with** students and **reading by** students which is a key feature of shared reading. It is precisely this scaffolding which enables younger, less experienced readers to be able to read a shared book, or commonly termed, *big book*, after using the text for only a few or a week. The frequent revisits to the text over multiple days, for multiple teaching purposes, lift the reader, enabling him or her to read a more challenging text than could be read during guided or independent reading.

This stretch to a more difficult text not only supports the teacher to “teach up” in order to highlight problem solving activity, but the gains to students of reading texts with more complex ideas, grammatical structures and vocabulary provides opportunities which extend beyond the levels of texts students may be reading on their own or during guided reading.

Short, sharp mini-lessons of up to 10 minutes enable the expert reader to focus explicitly on one strategy, skill or action for a length of time which is manageable for students to focus their attention. During this time the expert states the learning goal and sets a purpose. For example, “Today we are going to learn to ... in order to ...”

Longer lessons may also be provided. In longer lessons, the teacher may break up the lesson to promote attention and ensure active involvement over a longer period of time. Some further application may also occur within longer lessons.

Summary:

The purpose of shared reading is to teach students ways they can solve problems, or work things out, when reading. Shared reading provides an expert reader with the opportunity to teach less experienced readers ways to problem solve words or ideas in order to understand the text.