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*Make reading fun: a guide for Foundation Phase teachers*

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# Make reading fun

## A GUIDE FOR FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS

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INTRODUCTION

This book is for isiZulu Foundation Phase teachers to help them understand the Reading and Phonics part of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Grades R-3 (CAPS). It does not cover Writing or Handwriting although these are very important.

The CAPS lists things that reading teachers must do to teach reading, but many teachers find the CAPS difficult to read and to understand. This book is easy to read and gives you examples of exercises you can use to follow CAPS suggestions. It also talks about the important differences between teaching reading in isiZulu and in English. Understanding these differences makes teaching reading easier.

This book is mainly aimed at Foundation Phase teachers of isiZulu Home Language, but can also be used by teachers of English Home Language or English First Additional Language. It is written in English because many teachers find it easier to read this kind of information in English.

Note: Even though this book is written in English, this does not mean that you should talk to all the children in English.
If you are teaching isiZulu-speaking children to read in isiZulu, you should speak to them in isiZulu. If you are teaching them to read in English, it is probably best to use both languages in class to make sure that they understand all the things they need to.

In this book we talk about the CAPS. This refers to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for isiZulu and English Home Language for Grades R-3.

When we talk about the Workbooks, we mean the books that all learners have (or should have). These are books supplied by the Department of Basic Education. Some teachers call them the “Rainbow books” and some teachers call them the “Blue books”.

You will see that there is quite a lot in this book about enjoying reading. This is because if children learn to enjoy reading, then they are likely to learn to read well, and not run away from reading. This is very important because nearly all education in school, and beyond school, is based on reading. Reading is also a very important life skill.
THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AND ENJOYING IT

Why is reading important?

Reading is important for many different activities and in many areas of our lives. If you can read fluently, easily and with understanding, you can be well informed and have better chances in life.

In the box below, there are some activities you can do only if you can read well. Circle these activities. Underline activities you can do without reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gardening</th>
<th>Preparing for exams</th>
<th>Using the internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dusting and sweeping</td>
<td>Understanding text books</td>
<td>Watching TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing a degree</td>
<td>Washing cars</td>
<td>Listening to the radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newspapers</td>
<td>Applying for a social grant</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading books and magazines for pleasure</td>
<td>Enjoying a book</td>
<td>Being the secretary of a stokvel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the Bible aloud</td>
<td>Reading the Bible to yourself</td>
<td>Plaiting someone's hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing well at Maths</td>
<td>Washing clothes</td>
<td>Becoming a member of parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing well in Grade 12</td>
<td>Getting good marks at university</td>
<td>Doing well in a professional job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Look at what you have circled in the box. What does this tell you about what kinds of jobs good readers can get?
What does this tell you about how reading helps people to enjoy and participate in life?

If you can teach your learners to read well, they will do better at school and in studying after school. You need to be a good reader to do well in any subject, even Maths.

If you can teach your learners to read well and to enjoy reading, you will give them a gift that will help them through their whole lives.
What makes children enjoy reading?

The CAPS tells teachers to give a lot of time to reading, especially in the Foundation Phase. You should use this reading time in ways that help the children enjoy reading and look forward to it.

Here are some things that will help children to enjoy reading:

1. Do your best to make reading a happy time for your learners. Children who have fun when they learn to read will want to read more.

2. Show the children that you enjoy reading, and enjoy listening to them read. They will want to be like you.

3. Laugh with the children if the story is funny, or if there is a funny picture.

4. Try to praise each child for something. You can praise them for:
   - getting something right
   - trying hard
   - using their imagination
   - helping others
   - listening to instructions carefully, and so on

5. Respect and accept different opinions even from young children. There are different ways to interpret stories and if a child gives a different opinion, don’t just tell them that they’re wrong. Ask them to explain how they reached that opinion from what they read or the pictures they saw.

Children who have fun when they learn to read will want to read more.

---

1 CAPS English Foundation Phase p. 6, isiZulu Foundation Phase p. 6.
2 This links with what the CAPS says about children giving their own opinions and expressing feelings about stories - English Foundation Phase p. 23, isiZulu Foundation Phase p. 25.
**Why is it important for children to enjoy reading?**

If children are happy and relaxed, they will learn better. If they are tense and feel stupid, they will find it very difficult to learn to read and to enjoy reading.

To help you think more about this, try to match the two parts of the sentences below. You can draw an arrow from one half of the sentence to the other.

For example, A (in the left box) goes with 3 (in the right).

| A. When they enjoy reading ... | 1. ... they stop participating in a lesson. |
| B. If children get ignored or often told they are wrong ... | 2. ... are role models for their learners. |
| C. Laughing at funny stories ... | 3. ... children want to read more. |
| D. Teachers who show they enjoy reading ... | 4. ... are often both right. |
| E. Imagination and play ... | 5. ... it is better to praise them for trying than to scold them for being wrong. |
| F. Two different opinions about what a text says ... | 6. ... makes reading fun for everyone. |
| G. When children make mistakes... | 7. ... are important aspects of learning to read. |

**Why don't people enjoy reading?**

In the box below circle things that you think make people run away from reading.

Underline the things that make people like reading.

- Trying to read text that is too difficult.
- Finding interesting or useful information in books or on the internet.
- Believing that you are good at reading.
- Having to read something that you have no interest in.
- Having to read texts you have read many times before and are tired of.
- Seeing other people enjoy reading.
LEARNING ABOUT READING

When do children start to learn about reading?

Children start to learn about reading as soon as they see books and print, when they see people reading and when people read to them. Children can learn a lot about reading long before they start Grade R.

What they learn depends on what they see other people doing. Many children start Grade R or Grade 1 without learning about reading at home. This is when the job of the teacher becomes even more important. If their teacher helps them to enjoy books and love listening to stories from books, they are likely to want to learn to read better and better.

The CAPS talks about young children pretending to read. It says they should “read” books, or that they will “adopt a ‘reading voice’”. This means that they should be encouraged to pretend they are reading. Children learn many things by pretending to do them first. They know they are pretending. Help them pretend and learn. It is not good to say things like “You don’t know how to read! Stop pretending!” It is good to say things like “Clever girl, learning to read! One day you will read a whole book by yourself!”

Check your understanding

There are three pairs of statements below. In each pair, one is true and one is false. Write ✓ in the box for the ones you think are true. Write X in the box for the ones you think are false.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement 1</th>
<th>Statement 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children will naturally want to learn to read if they see adults enjoying reading.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children will naturally want to learn to read if teachers tell them to read.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children cannot learn to read and have fun at the same time.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who have fun while they learn to read will enjoy reading and read well.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending to read is an important way for children to start practising reading skills.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing and pretending have nothing to do with learning to read.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do we do when we read? What is reading?

Remember: Reading means getting the meaning from what you read. This is not the same as saying words properly as you look at the text. Always get the children you are teaching to think about the meaning of what they read, even if it is just one word.

Reading is a complicated thing to learn. If we learn to do it well, it becomes very easy. It is like learning to drive a car. In the beginning you have to think very hard about all the different things you have to do. When you are an experienced driver, you don’t have to think about what you are doing. It is automatic and easy.

Readers start by looking at text. They see letters grouped into words. They use the words they see to build their ideas of what the writer meant to say.

Good readers are good at recognising a lot of words without having to sound them out. They are also good at holding ideas in their minds of what a writer means to say. As they read, these ideas get clearer. If the idea of what the writer means to say does not get clearer, they go back and read some of the text again.

Good readers know that the most important thing about reading is understanding what the writer meant to say. As they find this out, good readers remember other things that they have read about the same thing, and build their knowledge. Or they decide they do not agree with the writer. Or they understand new ideas that the writer is telling them. Or the writer makes them laugh.

If a reader cannot recognise a lot of words quickly, and takes a long time to read to the end of a sentence, it is hard for them to understand what the writer says. This is because they are struggling to work out each word, so they can’t think about the ideas in the text.

Check your understanding

The words missing from this paragraph are in the box below. Choose the correct words and write them in the spaces.

Beginner readers have to learn to recognise ___________ and understand the ___________ in each sentence. When they can recognise words easily and ___________, readers can think about what the text ___________. Understanding the meaning in text is the most ___________ thing about reading. Readers who take a ___________ time to recognise words and get to the end of ___________ struggle to ___________ the ideas in the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>means</th>
<th>words</th>
<th>understand</th>
<th>quickly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td>idea</td>
<td>sentences</td>
<td>important</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What makes a good reader?

To help learners in your class become good readers you need to do five things for them:
1. Make reading activities enjoyable.
2. Build their confidence as much as you can.
3. Give them ways to work out new words for themselves.
4. Give them plenty of practice in reading.
5. Give them interesting books to read.

Praising children when they read builds their confidence
Check your understanding

Complete these sentences and then compare your answers with the notes below:

Teachers can make reading enjoyable by ________________________________

Teachers can build readers’ confidence by ________________________________

Teachers can help readers develop independence in reading by ________________________________

Teachers should give their learners practice in reading by ________________________________

Reading lessons are enjoyable for learners if their teachers:
• keep them busy and interested
• choose stories and texts that interest them
• praise them for what they manage to do rather than punish them and shout at them for not doing things correctly

Learners gain confidence if:
• they get praise for what they manage to learn
• take part in lessons with happiness
• their ideas are taken seriously and not rejected or scorned (This doesn’t mean you must pretend that learners are right when they are wrong. It does mean you have to gently find out why they think what they do.)

Learners develop independence if they:
• learn ways to work out words
• make sense of texts for themselves

Learners should get practice in:
• reading in the classroom, in the library, at home and in streets
• reading newspapers, books, stories, magazines, cell phone text
• getting used to using dictionaries, the internet and other sources of information

A balanced approach to reading

The CAPS uses a balanced approach to teaching reading. In other words, there is not only one method for teaching reading. Teachers need to teach children to read using all these different methods. According to the CAPS and many reading experts around the world there are five components of teaching reading. Teachers must develop learners’:
• Phonemic awareness
• Word recognition (sight words and phonics)
• Comprehension
• Vocabulary
• Fluency

Each of these has to be taught explicitly to learners and practised every day.
Word attack strategies

It is useful to teach your learners a five finger way of working out what an unfamiliar word is:

**The thumb:** Read to the end of the sentence. At the end of the sentence you may be able to see what the new word is. This is using the context to get meaning.

**The pointing finger:** Look at pictures that go with the story. You may see from the picture what the new word is.

**The middle finger:** Look at the word carefully and see if you know any parts of the word. This is often very helpful in isiZulu where lots of the words have many parts.

**The ring finger:** Sound out the word. This is often easier in isiZulu than it is in English, because all the letters always stand for the same sounds in isiZulu.

**The little finger:** Ask a friend or the teacher if you still don’t know the word.

As a teacher, if a learner asks for help, give it freely. Support the learners and help them learn from you.

Here is a picture showing this idea with notes in isiZulu:

What stops children from becoming good readers?

In your class you will always have some children who read better than others. It is important that you manage the differences between learners well.

1. Don’t try to make the learners who learn to read easily go at the pace of those who learn to read slowly. If you do, reading will be boring for them. They will lose interest and will probably not become good readers.

2. Don’t try to force the slower learners to keep up with faster learners. If you do, they will get confused and ashamed. When they feel that way, they cannot enjoy reading and will not learn to read well.

3. Don’t repeat the same sentence or question over and over again. Children soon learn that it’s boring to listen to teachers who do that, and just stop listening.

One way you can manage different learning styles in your class is to divide the learners into groups according to their learning style, and make the exercises that you use in class slightly different for each group.

For example, when you have read a story, and asked learners to write a response to the story, you can ask them to write at least one sentence. When half the class has finished one sentence, instead of making them all wait until everyone has finished, encourage those who finish early to write another sentence or two. This way they are all kept busy, the quicker ones are not left with nothing to do and the slower ones are given a chance to finish the basic exercise.

We will talk about this more when we look at group guided reading later in this book.

READING IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE (GRADE R TO GRADE 3)

In the CAPS there are four main types of reading activities that must be done almost every day:

- Shared reading
- Group guided reading
- Paired and independent reading
- Phonics (and phonemic awareness)

We will talk about each of these one by one. We will also talk about reading aloud and discussing stories with children.
Shared reading (teacher works with the whole class)

Shared reading is done with the whole class. This is where you, the teacher, read aloud to the whole class, and point to what you are reading so that the learners can follow. This is where you model and teach reading skills.

Shared reading is your chance to focus on meaning and fun. Learners can relax and enjoy what you are reading with no pressure. It is also a chance for you to teach all the reading skills in context.

It is very important that you make sure that learners look at exactly the right place while you are reading to them. If learners don’t look at the words that you or they are reading, they might just say the words off by heart.

For shared reading you can use:
- Big books
- Posters

Or you can make your own shared reading materials that you write out in big clear writing:
- Sentence strips
- Stories from the Workbooks or readers
- Stories that you have written yourself
- Learners’ stories
- Poems
- Songs
- Factual texts from the Workbooks or readers
For shared reading you can use anything, as long as it is big enough for all the learners to see. Do not be discouraged if your school does not have Big books. You can make your own materials on chart paper (and keep them for next year!).

Some teachers use Workbooks or other books for shared reading. They get the learners to look at their own individual copies of these books. The main problem with this method is that the learners cannot tell what part of the text you are reading because you cannot point as you are reading.

Make sure that the texts used in shared reading are at the right level for the learners’ reading skill. They should not be too easy or too difficult because the learners should practise what they have already learned, and learn more than they already know. They should learn more sight words and develop their vocabulary. They should also practise reading for meaning.

The CAPS suggests that shared reading should be done in the first 15 minutes of reading time for most days of the week. You can use the same text in different lessons during the week but do something different each time.

This is an example of what you could do. Note that you can do things in different ways and can combine sessions. You do not have to do four lessons every time you do shared reading.

Session 1

The focus here is on enjoyment of the story as a whole. Prepare the learners for what the story is about. Discuss the cover, the title and any words you think are new to them. Read the story while the learners follow with their eyes. While you are reading the story to the learners, make sure that you point at each word you are reading. You must make sure that you read with expression and don’t sound like a machine.

You can stop at different points to ask learners what they think and make sure that they are all concentrating on what you are doing. You can also point to the pictures that can help them understand the story.

When you have read the story to them once, you can read it with them again and this time they can join in and read aloud with you if they can. You can discuss their personal response to the story.

For beginner readers, reading the same sentence over again a few times, pointing to each word as you say it, helps children to remember what the words look like in print. Some children will enjoy this, but don’t make them do too much repetition. Stop as soon as you see that they have had enough of this. Look out for signs the learners give that are getting bored, like putting their heads down, or getting restless and noisy. When they do this, stop the activity.

Session 2

You read the story again, but this time have more discussion so that the focus is on the meaning of the story and on learners’ ideas and opinions.

Remember: If we want children to become better readers we must encourage them to think and talk for themselves. We do not just want them to be polite and quiet.

You can also point out new vocabulary. Don’t assume that if the learners understand all the words in the text they will automatically understand the whole text. This is not true. It is possible to understand all the words in a text, but fail to understand what the writer’s main point is.

In good balanced methods of teaching reading, a lot of time is spent on making sure that learners look at what the text is saying in each sentence, and in each paragraph, and finally in the text as a whole. For many South African teachers this is a new idea, and they take time to get used to discussing text in this way. This is dealt with in detail below.

Session 3

You read the same story again but focus on decoding (phonics), grammar and punctuation.
**Session 4**

The learners reread the story themselves and to do oral, practical and written activities based on the story. You should choose the activities carefully. The activities should keep the learners interested, and should encourage them to use their own logic and imagination about the text.

It is a good idea to link writing and drawing activities with reading. For example, young learners can draw pictures of characters in stories, or to show what happened, and older learners can write sentences to say what they think will happen next, or why something happened, or write letters to characters in the story, or design a poster advertising something in the story, and so on.

A very important part of shared reading is discussion. It is also very important for teachers to read aloud well. Discussion and reading aloud are discussed below.

**Discussing stories with children**

Discussion questions are very important to get children to think, to use their imagination, to give their opinions and to focus on comprehension and meaning.

There are different kinds of questions that you can ask:
- Factual questions about the story or related to the story
- Questions that get children to think more and use their imagination

**Factual questions**

Factual questions are information questions about the story like:
- What is the boy’s name?
- What are they doing in this picture?
- Where is the boy going?

These questions are easy and quick for the teacher to ask and for the learners to answer. They are important, but sometimes teachers ask too many of this kind of question.
Higher-order questions

Questions that get children to think more and use their imagination are sometimes called higher-order questions. It is important for the teacher to plan higher order questions about a text in advance.

Examples of higher-order questions are:

- **Questions about feelings**
  For example: How do you think UJojo felt when he first saw the giant? How do you think the giant felt when he started to chase UJojo?

- **Questions about new ideas**
  For example: Do you think that there any plants in the world that grow up to the clouds? How fast do you think the fastest plants in the world grow? Are there giants in the world? Do you think there is a land up in the clouds where giants live?

- **Questions about opinions**
  For example: What do you think about UJojo stealing from the giant? Do you think it was a good idea for UJojo’s mother to send UJojo to sell the cow?

- **Questions about characters**
  For example: Who do you like best in the story and why?

- **Questions about different possibilities**
  For example: What do you think is going to happen next? Can you think of a different ending for this story?

Notice that all these questions are asking individual learners to think carefully about what is in the story, and to give their own answers. There are often no right or wrong answers to higher-order questions. Make sure that you give different learners a chance to answer questions - not just those who always want to answer first.

When you ask higher-order questions, you can use follow-up questions that ask children to give reasons for their answers. Even when children are young, they enjoy talking about their thoughts and opinions if they are given a chance.

Closed and open questions

Another way to think about questions is whether they are closed or open questions.

Closed questions just need a yes or no answer or a very short answer. Factual questions are usually closed questions.

Open questions are usually higher-order questions. They need longer answers, so children must talk and use language and vocabulary.

**Examples of closed questions that just need a yes/no answer:**
Do you like this story?
Is it good to eat beans?

**Examples of closed questions that just need a short factual answer:**
What was the name of the boy in the story?
Where does the story take place?

**Example of open questions:**
What do you think happened before this story began?
What would you do if your little brother went missing?

You can see how open questions make learners think more and talk more.
Check your understanding

Imagine that you read your class a story about two boys called Sipho and Sihle. This is how the story begins:

Sipho is tall and always wears a hat. One day Sipho puts on his favourite hat. He goes to find his friend Sihle. Sihle is short and always wears a jersey. Sipho finds Sihle sitting in the long grass behind his granny’s house. Sihle says he is hiding because his Granny asked him to buy some polony and he ate it all on the way back from the shop. Sipho sits down in the grass with Sihle. They can hear Sihle's granny shouting, “Sihle! Sihle! Hawu! Uphi lomfana kanti? Ngifuna ukudla!”

Look at the questions below and decide if they are open or closed questions. Think of the answers to the questions. Can you tell from your answers which are closed (can be answered with one or two words) and which are open questions (need longer answers)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion questions</th>
<th>Closed or open?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is Sipho’s friend?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does Sihle always wear?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does Sihle wish?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does Sipho always wear?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will happen to Sihle when his granny finds him?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does Sipho feel about Sihle?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now think of three different higher-order questions about Sipho and Sihle.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
Reading aloud

Reading aloud is a very important part of teaching reading. You, the teacher, read aloud when you do shared reading. You also read aloud when you read stories to the learners and they just listen. Children love to listen to stories.

When you read a story aloud, you must try to tell the story in an interesting and exciting way.

Think of the people you know who can read or tell good stories. What do they do that makes the stories interesting?

- They sound very interested in the story they are reading or telling.
- They use a lot of direct speech.
- They change their voice depending on the character.
- They don't repeat things in a boring way.
- They speak louder and softer.
- They pause when they want you to listen carefully.
- They pause when they want to make you excited, scared or worried.
- They change their facial expressions to go with what is happening in the story.
- They read in a natural voice (not a sing-song voice).

Practise reading aloud

Now read the story of Ujojo nesiqu sikabhontshisi (Jack and the beanstalk) silently to yourself. There is a copy of the story at the end of this Guide.

Now practise using different voices for each character:

- Make the giant sound very loud and scary.
- Make the mother sound very angry.
- Make Ujojo sound very afraid.

Practise changing your facial expression so that you look

- Scary
- Angry
- Afraid

Think about where you would pause in the story.
Think about where you would read very fast to show excitement.
Think about where you would read slowly to make the children wonder what will happen next.
Group guided reading (teacher works with smaller groups)

Group guided reading is when you work with small groups of 6 to 10 learners who are at the same reading level. They read the same book together. You work with at least two different groups each day. While you are busy with the small groups, the other learners in the class must be busy with other work, like written comprehension, spelling or grammar exercises, or paired or independent reading. In other words, all the learners must be busy.

Group guided reading is the time when you can really get to know individual learners, see what reading problems they have, and help them to develop reading strategies. It is a very important part of teaching reading.

The CAPS says you should spend half an hour doing group guided reading every day, working with one group for 15 minutes and another group for another 15 minutes. You should make sure that you give all the groups in your class about two group guided reading sessions each week.

How to group the learners

Group the learners into reading groups by putting the faster readers who are learning to read quickly together, and the slower ones together. It is better not to make the learners always sit in these groups in class. Rather give each group a name like “Fish group”, “Bird group”, “Flower group”, and call them from their usual places in the class to sit together in the group when you work with them.

When you have put the learners into the reading groups, choose texts to suit each group. The learners in each group should have a text that they can read, but that has some challenges for them in new words and in overall comprehension. If you have grouped the learners together correctly, all the learners in the group should finish reading the text at about the same time.
Steps in a group guided reading lesson

1. Choose a text for the group to read. Make sure that this is at the right level for the group.

2. Just like with shared reading, talk with the learners about what the text is about. Help them link the things the text is about to things in their own lives, but don't spend so much time doing this that they lose interest in what they are going to read.

3. Spend a few minutes discussing words or things the learners need to understand before they read the story, but don't do it for long. You don't want to make the learners bored with the text before they start reading.

4. Let the learners read the text by themselves. Beginner readers will need to whisper as they read, but encourage them to learn to read silently. As they read, you should watch them reading, and look to see whether they are getting on well and enjoying the text, or struggling. Move round the group and ask different learners to read small parts of the text aloud to you. You will be able to hear from how they read what they need help with, and if the text is too easy or too hard, and if they are interested in it.

As you listen to different learners reading, you can ask them what they think will happen next, or what they understand from the text. If they make a mistake but go back to that part of the text and read it correctly, you should praise them. This kind of error correction shows that they know if what they are reading makes sense or not, and can go back and get the right meaning.

If they cannot make sense of what they are reading, you can help them work it out for themselves. For example you can tell them to look at the pictures, show them which parts of the text have important information, or get them to use the five-finger strategy described under Word attack strategies earlier in this book.

5. When the learners finish reading the text, ask them to say what it was about in their own words. Discuss all questions they have and try and help them work out the answers for themselves. Remember that in reading, there is often more than one right answer. These are the kind of discussions that help children read for meaning and improve their reading comprehension. It is also important to talk about how they worked out words they did not recognise at once. This is decoding. It is very important to talk about how to work out new words in the text, and how to make sense of sentences and parts of sentences in the text. This is what is meant by “text talk” in the CAPS.

Check your understanding

In the box below underline things you think would be good to do in group guided reading. Draw a line through things that would be bad to do.

| Put learners into groups and then make jokes about how slow some of the groups are. |
| Give most of your attention to the slowest groups and keep telling them to hurry up. |
| Give most of your attention to the quick group and keep telling the rest of the class how much better they are. |
| Spend time with each group being sensitive to the needs of the learners in that group. |
| Only use texts from the Workbooks for group guided reading. |
| Find texts that suit the reading level of each group, and that the learners find interesting. |
Paired and independent reading (learners read in pairs or on their own)

Paired reading is when two learners read together and independent reading is when individual learners read on their own.¹

For Grade 1, the stories are likely to be made up of very few words and quite a lot of pictures. For Grade 3, the stories will be longer, and less simple. Whether the books are mainly of pictures or text, let the learners look at them and read them on their own.

It is important to remember that there is a difference between getting learners to read in pairs and giving them time to read independently.

**Paired reading**

In paired reading two learners read a story together. They can share the same book and help each other in different ways.

There are different ways of organising paired reading:

- Pairing learners of equal ability
- Pairing stronger and weaker readers

If you put two learners of equal ability together they can help each other to understand the story by using all the different methods they know. They can take turns to read aloud to each other.

Another way of using paired reading is to put a weaker reader with a slightly stronger one, and ask them to read something aloud together with no one else listening. Let them read the text as slowly as they want to. This helps the stronger reader build confidence by allowing them to practise and help another child. It can also help the weak reader because the stronger reader will model reading skills that they are still developing. It can also help the weaker reader to recognise words in print if they read with the stronger reader.

In all paired reading, you should encourage the pair to talk about the story and especially how the pictures show what is happening in the story. This will help them to learn to read with understanding and to follow the story.

In the box on the next page there are four pairs of statements. In each pair, one is true and one is false. Write √ next to the statements you think are true. Write X next to the statements you think are false.

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¹ The CAPS refers to paired and independent reading - English Foundation Phase p. 14, isiZulu Foundation Phase p. 16.
In paired reading teachers should:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make each pair read aloud while the whole class listens to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let each pair read to themselves quietly, so that all the learners are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practising reading without pressure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave the room and let them get on with reading by themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk about the room slowly, listening to each pair and taking note of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>things they are struggling with, so that you can help them later.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop the learners every time you hear them make a mistake, and make them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct the mistake.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give them time to see if they can correct errors on their own, so that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they begin to learn to monitor their own reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important thing in paired reading is that the learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand what they are reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important thing in paired reading is for learners to say the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words correctly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Independent reading**

*Independent reading is when individual learners read on their own*

This is where learners practise reading for and to themselves. Learners start to read by reading aloud (quietly to themselves). But as they get better and better at reading, they should use their voices less and less. By the end of the Foundation Phase they should be able to read a text silently without even moving their lips, and then talk about what they have read. Before they do this, though, they need to practise some mechanical skills.
Independent reading exercises

For very young learners

• Looking at pictures, and finding things in them.
• Looking at pictures, and saying what story they tell (different learners may see different stories in the same pictures).
• Doing letter and word searches:

In this exercise the learners should look for particular words, or pieces of words, that appear a lot in the text. They can do this before they can read. They just have to be able to recognise the one thing they are hunting for, like the letter “a.” In IsiZulu text they could look for letter combinations like “nga” or “izi” or other common combinations. They should practise the mechanical skills of reading as they look. This means they should start from the top of a page and move to the bottom, starting at the left of each line of print and moving to the right. You can give learners a newspaper and ask them to circle what they are looking for every time they see it.

For learners in Grades 2 and 3

The CAPS suggests that for independent reading, learners can read the same reader they read in group reading. This does give them practice in reading, but be careful about using the same text so much that it bores them. If you have other books they can use, perhaps in a classroom reading corner, this is a good time to use them.

Do your best to see who is learning to read quickly and easily and who is struggling with reading in your class. Try to make sure that each learner has something to read that suits their ability. It should not be too easy or too difficult, or too much or too little, and it should be interesting for them. Quicker learners should be allowed to read more independently. Slower learners should be supported and encouraged to read as much as they can manage in the time available without getting anxious.

Check your understanding

In the box below underline ways to organise independent reading that you think would work well and help learners enjoy it. Draw a line through ways to organise independent reading that would not work well.

1. The teacher should be aware of each learner’s progress with reading, and what help and encouragement they need. (This is easier with small classes than with very big classes.)
2. Use independent reading as a punishment, because that will help learners enjoy it.
3. Make independent reading a happy time for the learners, because that will help them enjoy reading.
4. This is not the time for correcting errors. Use it to build learners’ reading confidence.
5. Encourage learners to read silently as soon as they can.
6. Never let learners choose what they want to read.
7. Give learners independent reading time as a special reward, but often make it for things even slow learners can do, like listening carefully.

Don’t forget that different people like different kinds of books. If your school has a library or a book cupboard, let your learners use it often. If they are not allowed to take books out, make it a regular treat for them to go to the library or the cupboard and choose a book to look at. Take note of what books each child chooses and praise their choices. If they have chosen a book they can’t make any sense of, help them to find one with pictures they like or something they can read in it. After they have spent time looking at books, let the learners talk about what they found in the books. Let them choose different kinds of books and give them a lot of encouragement and praise for whatever they have found.
TEACHING PHONICS AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS
IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

Children need to know a lot when they learn to read:
• They need to know how to speak the language they are learning to read in.
• They need to be aware that the language is made up of sounds.
• They need to be able to identify and play with the sounds of that language.
• They need to know that these sounds are represented by letters.

Phonemic awareness

Different languages have different sounds and different ways of writing those sounds down. For example in English there are 44 sounds, including 20 vowel sounds and no clicks. English has some sounds that are not found in many other languages, like “th” in “with”.

In isiZulu there are 60 sounds including 5 vowel sounds and 18 clicking sounds. People sound funny if they try to speak isiZulu and cannot make the right clicking sounds. They might say “Ngithanda ukudla amakhanda” when they mean “Ngithanda ukudla amaqanda”.

The smallest units of sound in words are called phonemes. For example, in the English word “cat” there are three phonemes. In this word, each letter stands for one phoneme (c + a + t), but in many English words this is not so. The isiZulu word “ikati” has five phonemes, and each letter stands for one phoneme (i + k + a + t + i).

Bigger units of sound in words are called syllables. A syllable is a part of a word that has one vowel sound. It may or may not have consonants before or after the vowel. The English word “cat” is made up of just one syllable. The isiZulu word “ikati” has three syllables (i + ka + ti). The isiZulu word “inja” has two syllables (i + nja). A good way to work out how many syllables there are in a word is to clap as you say each vowel sound. “Cat” has only one clap, and “ikati” has three claps.

For some practice in telling the difference between phonemes and syllables, count the phonemes and syllables in the English and isiZulu words in the table below. Check what you get against the answers in the upside-down box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>No. of phonemes</th>
<th>No. of syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>animal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isilo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inja</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giraffe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indlulamithi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imvu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elephant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indlovu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonemes Word</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>indlovu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>elphant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>imvu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>indlulamithi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>bhore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>inja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>dob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>iliso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>amimal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers:
When we talk about learners being aware of phonemes (being able to break words into their smallest sounds), this is called “phonemic awareness”.

Phonemic awareness is not the same as phonics which we talk about later. Phonics is how sounds are written down. Phonemic awareness means that you know how sounds make up words in a language.

You do not have to be able to read to develop phonemic awareness.

The best way to remember the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics is that phonemic awareness involves hearing and speech, but phonics involves hearing AND reading and writing. Another way to remember the difference is that with phonemic awareness “you can do it in the dark”. But you need light to do phonics because you have to see what you are reading or writing.

Children who have good phonemic awareness learn to read better than children who don’t. That is why it’s important to improve the phonemic awareness of learners by letting them play with the sounds in words. You can start to do this with children from a very young age, especially at pre-school - children love to play with sounds, so this is a good chance to have fun with them.

**Ideas for developing phonemic awareness**

To do this, you play sound and word games with the children. Below are some examples.

Don’t forget that the focus is on the sounds of the language. When you give children instructions, remember to say the sounds that make the word - not the names of alphabet letters.

**Syllable games to play with children**

Clap your hands once for each syllable

- Clap once for each syllable in your name, e.g. Pau-la.
- Clap once for each syllable in your friend’s name, e.g. Si-phu-me-le-le.
- Clap once for each syllable in the name of our school

Below are the animal names we used above (with some more) broken into syllables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>isiZulu words</th>
<th>English words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>isilo</td>
<td>animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inja</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indlumithi</td>
<td>giraffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indlovu</td>
<td>elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inkomo</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umuzi</td>
<td>home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umuntu</td>
<td>person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i + si + lo</td>
<td>an + i + mal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i + nja</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i + ndlu + la + mi + thi</td>
<td>gi + raffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i + ndlo + vu</td>
<td>el + e + phant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i + nko +mo</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u + mu + zi</td>
<td>home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u + mu + ntu</td>
<td>per + son</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Words that sound the same

Children love rhymes and rhyming words. Working with rhymes and words that sound the same is fun. It also helps children develop a better understanding of the sounds in their language.

The main thing to remember is that it is the last part of the word that makes words rhyme.

In English words can be broken down like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cat</td>
<td>c + at</td>
<td>(cat rhymes with hat, sat, mat, chat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stand</td>
<td>st + and</td>
<td>(stand rhymes with hand, grand, band)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brown</td>
<td>br + own</td>
<td>(brown rhymes with clown, noun, frown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In isiZulu words can be broken down like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hamba</td>
<td>h + amba</td>
<td>(hamba rhymes with bamba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gijima</td>
<td>g + ijima</td>
<td>(gijima rhymes with ima)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geza</td>
<td>g + eza</td>
<td>(geza rhymes with beza)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phuza</td>
<td>ph + uza</td>
<td>(phuza rhymes with vuza)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thanda</td>
<td>th + anda</td>
<td>(thanda rhymes with phanda)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The beginning of the word before the vowel part of the word, is called onset.

There are many rhymes in English like:

Hickory, dickory dock
The mouse ran up the clock.

IsiZulu rhymes of this kind are not so common but here is an example:

Mbombela
Mbombela wes’ti mela
Wenzan’ uthishela

Rhyming games to play with children

e.g. in English (you can write more examples in the spaces but you do this orally with the children)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What rhymes with cow?</th>
<th>allow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What rhymes with bat?</td>
<td>chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What rhymes with round?</td>
<td>hound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rhymes are not usually used in isiZulu songs or sayings. But there are words in isiZulu that do rhyme, and thinking of them would help children develop phonemic awareness.

e.g. in isiZulu (you can write more examples in the spaces but this is oral work)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What rhymes with nami?</th>
<th>wami</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What rhymes with umfana?</td>
<td>umntwana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What rhymes with uvolo?</td>
<td>idolo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Blending activities**

You can get the learners to blend phonemes, syllables, or rhymes. You don’t have to use these terms with them. You can just call them sounds. You start with very simple words with Grade R and Grade 1.

**Blending phonemes (remember to say the sound and not the letter of the alphabet)**

**English**

Put these sounds (phonemes) together:

- s + t + o + p makes the word
- m + ou + th makes the word

**isiZulu**

Put these sounds (phonemes) together

- u + m + a makes the word
- i + s + i + gq + e + bh + e + z + i makes the word

**Blending syllables**

**English**

Put these syllables together:

- un + der + stand makes the word
- ex + pla + na + tion makes the word

**isiZulu**

Put these syllables together

- qo + nda makes the word
- cha + za makes the word
- i + nca + si + se + lo makes the word

**Matching activities**

You can use matching activities to draw learners’ attention to the sounds of words. They have to listen carefully and also listen carefully to your instructions.

Which two of these three words start with the same syllable?

- sandwich
- sandbag
- handbag

Which two of these three words end with the same syllable?

- umfana
- intombazana
- umfokazi

You must make sure that you use words that are at the right level for the learners in your grade.
Activities for isolating sounds

Examples:

What sound do you hear at the beginning of sack?
What two sounds do you hear at the beginning of black?
Everyone whose name starts with s stand up.

Which of these words have the same sound at the end? Which have the same sound at the beginning?
ball
book
pen
picture
run
sack

What sound do you hear at the beginning of thula?

Which of these words have the same sound at the end?
  gijimani
dweba
wozani
abafana

Practise making some activities to isolate sounds in words that the learners in the grade you teach will know.

Substitution activities/Substituting sounds

Substitution activities are where you replace one sound in the word with another sound.

What word do you get if you replace b- in book with l-?
What word do you get if you replace h- in hambile with l-?
What word do you get if you replace -na in lona with -la
What word do you get if you replace -ile in hambile with -ani?

Practise making some activities to substitute sounds in words that the learners in the grade you teach will know.

Segmentation activities/Breaking words into syllables and phonemes

Say the parts you hear in this word:

Dog: This word has just one syllable (separating into syllables)
  It has 3 phonemes: d - o - g (separating the syllable into phonemes)

Houses: This word has 2 syllables: hous + es (separating into syllables)
  It has 5 phonemes: h + ou + s + e + s (separating the syllable into phonemes)

Izindlu: This word has 3 syllables: i + zi + ndlu (separating into syllables)
  It has 6 phonemes: i + z + i + n + dl + u (separating the syllable into phonemes)

Practise making some activities to segment sounds in words that the learners in the grade you teach will know.
Deletion activities

Say bluebird without the blue (syllable deletion)

Say friend without the fr- (onset deletion)

Say Pete without the p- (phoneme deletion)

Say bulala without the bu- (syllable deletion). Talk about how the meaning changes.

Say bumba without the b- (onset deletion). Talk about how the meaning changes.

Say qandisa without the q- (phoneme deletion). Talk about how the meaning changes.

Phonics

Phonics builds on phonemic awareness and is about the sounds of the language and how the sounds are written down. Each language does this differently, even if the same alphabet is used.

Some languages like isiZulu have very regular phonics (this means that the sounds are always spelt in the same way).

Some languages like English have very irregular phonics (this means that the same sounds are written in many different ways).

For example if you take the long oo, sound in English, this can be spelt in five different ways:

- moon
- blue
- grew
- tune
- through

In isiZulu a similar sound, u, is always spelt in the same way:

- umuntu
- ufudu
- uphuthu

In some ways, phonics in isiZulu is easier, especially when it comes to vowels. However isiZulu phonics can also be complicated when there are three or four or five consonants written together:

- -ngq-
- -ngx-
- -ntsh-
- -ntshw-

isiZulu spelling still stays regular even when there are four consonants written together. This does make it easier to spell well in isiZulu, but only if you can hear the different phonemes very well. Second language speakers of isiZulu struggle especially with deciding whether consonants such as t and k are followed by an h or not. They make mistakes such as spelling words like “themba” and “lethu” without the h.

It is very important for children to learn phonics as this is one of the main ways in which they learn to read and to spell. However, it is very important to make sure that phonics does not become meaningless “chanting” and drilling. A good knowledge of phonics helps children become independent learners because with it they can work out new words for themselves, and how to spell words they have never written before.
The old fashioned way to teach reading was for children to chant or recite syllables:

- ma - me - mi - mo - mu
- ba - be - bi - bo - bu
- etc.

This works well in African languages, and many children were taught to “read” stories aloud using their knowledge of phonics. But unfortunately they were not often taught to read for meaning and it became a meaningless drilling exercise.

The Workbooks have many sections on phonics, but it is important always to remember that the overall purpose of reading is for meaning. Always try to connect the phonics with words and sentences that mean something.
CONCLUSION

Teaching reading in the Foundation Phase is a very important job. If you do it well, you will give your learners a great start in their schooling and learning. You can make your job much easier and more enjoyable if you make sure that they have fun and enjoy learning to read.

Remember that your Workbooks have many stories and ideas that you can use for shared reading and for phonics. If your school has a book cupboard or a library, find books that are at the right level for your reading lessons. This will also make your job easier.

We hope you have got some good ideas from this Guide.

If your learners enjoy learning to read you will give them a great start in their schooling
UJojo nesiqu sikabhontshisi


Asinamali yokudla. Leliya lizimuzimu lisithathele isikhukhukazi sethu.

Hambisa inkomazi emakethe uyoithengisa ukuze sithole ukudla.

UJojo nomama wakhe babehlupheka kakhulu. Umama wakhe wamtshela ukuthi ahambise inkomo emakethe ayoyithengisa.
Endleleni, uJojo wahlangana nomnini silaha, owamkhombisa ubhontshisi omhlolu owawunomlingo. UJojo wamnika inkomazi wathatha ubhontshisi onomlingo.

Ngizothenga le nkomo ngalo bhontshisi onomlingo.

Kodwa umama wami uthe ngimtholele imali.


Umuphe inkomoyo yethu ngenxa kabhontshisi omhlulu?
Ngakusasa kwasekumi isiqu esikhulu esiphakeme sikabhontshisi sildula indlu. 
UJojo wagibela kuso waya phezulu kakhulu.

Ngenkathi uJojo ephezulu, wabona ukuthi izimuzimu lahlala khona lapho phezulu. Wabona ihabhu likayise kanye nesikhukhukazi sakhe. UJojo wathatha igolide wehlika nalo ngaso isiqu sikabhontshisi.
Ngosuku olundelayo wagibela futhi uJojo esiqwini eseyolanda ihabhu liKayise. Wayibona inkukhu kayise eyayizalela amaqanda egolide.

UJojo wathatha ihabhu nesikhukhuKazi. Lavuka izimuzimu! Lamsukela lamgijimisa uJojo.

Kufanele ngilande izinto zikababa.

Hishi hishi he! Nginikelwa yindodana yomlimi.

Uzithathe kubaba wami lezi zinto.

UJojo wehla ngesiQa sikabhontshisi ngenkathi izimuzimu liza ligijima emva kwakhe.

Ngiphe inkukhu!
“UJojo wabiza umama wakhe. Weza egijima nembaz o umama kaJojo.

Woza nembaz o, mama!

O, uyitholile inkukhu kababa wakho.

UJojo nomama wakhe bahlala kahle okokuphela.

Ngijabulile ukuthi uthole izimpahla zikababa wakho.

Asisahlupheki manje.

Umama wakhe wasicanda isiqu ngejubane. Ngaphambi kokuthi izimu limbambe uJojo, sawa isiqu sikabhontshisi.

Canda isiqu, mama! Sicande!