

Post-Primary Literacy Resources for Teachers

"Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media and digital media."

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, 2011

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Introduction

“Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media.”

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, 2011

All teachers are teachers of literacy. This literacy booklet is designed to support post-primary teachers in all subject areas by sharing best practice in the development of students’ literacy skills. Each aspect of literacy is interlinked with, and dependent on, the other key elements to develop a full range of literacy skills. Thus the development of skills in one key area, such as writing, will have a strong impact on improvements in the other key areas of literacy, such as reading, oral language development and digital literacy.

Pearson and Gallagher, (1983) based their model of the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) on the notion that instruction moves from explicit modelling and instruction to guided practice and then to activities that incrementally position students into becoming independent learners. The teacher guides the students from instruction to independence where the child takes responsibility for the task. The most successful aspect of the GRR is that it is grounded in Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development. This is the distance between the actual development level of a learner as determined by their independent problem solving abilities and the level of potential development through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Using the GRR model, children are given support in the form of scaffolding and differentiate instruction throughout all four phases of the process.

The gradual release of responsibility suggests that the cognitive load should shift purposefully from teacher as model to joint responsibility to independent practice and application by the learner. Graves and Fitzgerald (2003) note the “effective instruction often follows a progression in which teachers gradually do less of the work and students gradually assume increased responsibility for their learning. It is through this process of gradually assuming more responsibility for their learning that children become competent independent learners.” It is important to point out that this model is not linear and a teacher may move back and forth between stages according to the needs of the class/individuals.





Literacy is the business of all teachers (irrespective of subject) and all students (irrespective of ability). This idea is rooted in the distributive model for leadership – the promotion and development of literacy is everybody’s responsibility. Literacy in English is not the same as literacy in Science- a scientist or mathematician does not read in the same way as a student of English might read a novel. The expectation of teachers is that they are aware of the literacy demands of their subject- specific to their subject- and that they address these in class as the opportunities naturally arise.

The explicit teaching of literacy skills across subjects promotes a consistent whole school approach to literacy. The traditional assumption that literacy skills are caught and not necessarily taught has been widely challenged in recent times and there is widespread agreement that such skills need to be demonstrated, modelled and shared with students. In the main, this job has resided with the language teachers but given that literacy permeates all areas of learning, it must be acknowledged that all class teachers have a role in promoting these skills in a way that is appropriate to their subject area. Whole-school approaches to planning for, teaching and assessing these skills ensure that students are receiving consistent messages. Best practice suggests appropriate literacy instruction is implemented throughout the school day and subject areas to provide continued and appropriate literacy development in adolescence (Moje, 2007, 2008; Shanahan and Shanahan, 2008).

Gradual release of responsibility model

(Gallager & Pearson, 1983)

When teaching a new literacy skill to students best practice suggests the use of the gradual release of responsibility model as outlined below.

<p>Step 1: I Do, You Watch</p>  <p>Write the name of the strategy on the board</p> <p>State why and when you might use it</p> <p>Read the entire piece first</p> <p>Using 'think aloud' to model active reading</p> <p>Highlight the important words</p> <p>Reduce to 5 - 6 importance words</p> <p>Remove the original piece of text</p> <p>Using the prompt words recall the main points of the text</p>	<p>Step 2: I Do, You Help</p>  <p>Use the next part of the text or a different piece of text</p> <p>Explain to the class that this time we are going to do it together</p> <p>Read the piece fully first</p> <p>Explain that nothing will be highlighted unless we are all in agreement</p> <p>When students choose a word, ask them to explain why they chose it</p> <p>If class agrees highlight the word/ if not ask for other suggestions</p> <p>Reduce the important words to 5-6</p> <p>Remove the original piece</p> <p>Ask someone in the class to recall the text</p>
<p>Step 3: You Do, I Help</p>  <p>Use the next part of the text or choose a different text</p> <p>Explain to the class that this time they are going to follow the steps in pairs</p> <p>It is important that they read the text fully first</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">choose important words togetherreduce these to 5 -6 important words remove the piece of textwill recall the story orally to their partner	<p>Step 4: You Do, I Watch</p>  <p>Use the next part of the text or a different piece of text</p> <p>Explain to the class that they are now going to do it independently</p> <p>Students will now follow the steps on their own</p> <p>Students may write down their account or present it orally</p> <p>It is important that you ask the students about the strategy and encourage them to reflect on its uses</p>

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy skills allow our students to engage actively with text and discussion in a way that promotes a deeper questioning and understanding of socially constructed concepts such as power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships. Critical literacy encourages students to examine, reflect on, question and challenge the attitudes, values, and beliefs of written texts, visual applications, and spoken words. Becoming critically literate means that students have developed and mastered the ability to read, analyze, critique, and question the messages inherently present within any form of text.

"Kids need to be taught to never take things at face value. Examine. Interrogate. Investigate. In the real world, the solution isn't a cute, neat answer at the back of a textbook."

Goyal, 2012



Critical Literacy: A questioning frame of mind

"Critical Literacy views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text's message to question, examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors. It focuses on power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action. "

Freire, 1970

"When teachers and students are engaged in critical literacy, they ask complicated questions about language and power, about people and lifestyle, about morality and ethics, and about who is advantaged by the way things are and who is disadvantaged."

Comber, 2001

“Critical literacy does not necessarily involve taking a negative stance; rather, it means looking at an issue or topic in different ways, analyzing it, and hopefully being able to suggest possibilities for change and improvement.”

Vasquez, 2004

Central concepts of Critical Literacy

- The world is a socially constructed text that can be read.
- No text is neutral.
- Each person interprets texts differently.
- Critical literacy practices can contribute to change.

Freire, 1968; Wray, 2006; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009; Vasquez, 2010

Why should we teach Critical Literacy?

- The teaching and learning framework requires schools to recognise that they are more than academic institutes, where providing real and meaningful learning environments encourages the students to think more critically and creatively
- Curriculum / programme reform encourages a more critical approach within the classroom
- Critical literacy is a central element of formative assessment and reflective practice
- The development of digital technology and the central role of the internet in information access has led to a shift in control over the authenticity of texts. The support of critical literacy skills will empower students to engage more critically with IT
- Students are social and active agents of learning and teaching. The development of empathy is central to the development of critical literacy

How do we create a classroom culture of critical thinking?

- Questioning / Dialogic Approach
- Discussion and Student-Focused Structured Talk
- Reflection
- Focus on Inquiry-Based Learning / Active Learning Methodologies / Co-operative Learning
- Scenarios
- Teacher as Facilitator and Guide
- Peer Sharing
- Experimentation / Risk-Taking

“We are constantly assaulted by language that is not just unclear, but often deliberately deceptive and manipulative. Students need tools for unmasking the true purposes of language within a particular context so they can both understand its true meaning and, as necessary, free themselves from its pernicious effects.

Temple, 2005

Casting a critical eye - key questions

- Why did the author write this text?
- What techniques did the author use to influence my thinking?
- What are the author's beliefs?
- What makes the author credible?
- Whose voice is represented here? Whose voice is missing?
- What did I learn about myself?
- What action should I take having read this text?

Maiers, 2008; Ontario Education, 2005

The CARS Checklist, Wray, 2007

The CARS Checklist provides some criteria to assist in evaluating the quality of a text.

Credibility Author's credentials Quality control	Accuracy Timeliness Audience / purpose
Reasonableness Fairness Moderateness	Support Documentation Corroboration

Oral Language Development

Speaking and Listening

Being able to speak a word or phrase confidently or express an idea coherently is a crucial foundation for using the language and ideas of learning appropriately when writing, or for understanding them when reading. Every curriculum area is dependent on the spoken word.

Julia Strong

Why support speaking and listening in my subject?

- Promotes higher order thinking
- Develops subject specific vocabulary
- Provides teachers with information about student thinking
- Provides teachers with feedback to help them decide next steps
- Provides teachers with opportunities to give feedback to students
- Supports the growth of students as independent learners
- Develops students' confidence and self-esteem
- Effective communication is a life skill

"You cannot write it, if you cannot say it; you cannot say it if you haven't heard it."

Pie Corbett

Useful Websites

[http://www.pdst.ie/post-primary Literacy Tab](http://www.pdst.ie/post-primary/Literacy%20Tab)

<http://www.talk4writing.co.uk>



Speaking and Listening Checklist

Do our students display positive attitudes towards speaking and listening?

Our students have a positive attitude towards listening and speaking.

What is the quality of our students' speaking and listening?

- Our students display confidence when engaging in listening and speaking activities
- Our students communicate ideas and experiences fluently and clearly, using an expansive vocabulary
- Our students display skill in framing higher order questions
- Our students justify and defend their opinions and present a coherent argument
- Our students display a command of grammar and syntax
- All students (including those at risk of underachieving and those of exceptional ability) are making very good progress from their prior levels of achievement.

Actions

Are teachers supporting the development of student speaking and listening?



At a whole school level

Our teachers have high expectation with regard to students' achievement in speaking and listening.

At a subject department level:

- Subject-specific and individual teacher plans reflect the school's literacy strategy and action plans for improving students' listening and speaking skills
- Agreed approaches to support the development of students' listening and speaking skill that are relevant to their own subject
- Norms are agreed within subject departments for structured group work.

At individual teacher level:

- Our teachers provide repeated exposure to new vocabulary and encourage student use of same
- Our teachers demonstrate an appropriate balance of teacher and student talk
- Our teachers provide opportunities for structured co-operative learning activities
- Our teachers engage in appropriate use of 'wait time'
- Our teachers provide opportunities for open, extended discussion
- Our teachers' questioning is clear, includes lower and higher order questions and stimulates students' response
- Our teachers explain concepts clearly and model the effective use of language
- Our teachers provide students with helpful feedback which supports the development of speaking and listening
- Our teachers provide opportunities for peer and self-evaluation of listening and speaking tasks

Samples of speaking and listening activities that may stimulate discussion and critical thinking within your subject area. These strategies may be interchangeable, according to the topic and/or class group.

Pre-topic speaking and listening activities (used to prepare students for listening to and communicating ideas, particularly if they are less confident in oral discussion)	On-topic speaking and listening activities (activities to communicate understanding, listen to the ideas of others and to articulate ideas assertively with conviction and confidence)	Post-topic speaking and listening activity (used to promote further clarification, understanding, discussion and articulation of ideas and opinions)
<p>Ice-breakers / Quick Warm Ups / Memory Games (Chinese Whispers, Name Tags, Birthdays, Scavenger Hunt, Hunt the Square, Twenty Questions, Oldest / Middle / Youngest)</p> <p>Four Corners / Take a Stand</p> <p>I see, I think, I wonder...</p> <p>Brainstorm</p> <p>Just Like Me</p> <p>True / False Statements</p> <p>THINK (Talk / How / Identify / Notice / Keep Thinking)</p> <p>Read Aloud / Think Aloud / Read and Explain Pairs</p> <p>Radio Programme</p> <p>Mime</p>	<p>Role Play, Monologue, Dialogue</p> <p>Walking Debate</p> <p>Presentation (DRAPES: Dialogue, Rhetorical Question, Analogy, Personal Experience, Example, Statistics)</p> <p>Three Step Interview</p> <p>Fishbowl</p> <p>It's a Rap</p> <p>Phone Calls</p> <p>Think – Pair – Share</p> <p>Placemat</p> <p>Thinking Triads</p>	<p>Hot-Seat / Ask the Expert</p> <p>Just a Minute</p> <p>Four Corners / Take a Stand</p> <p>Question and Answer / Five Questions</p> <p>Backward Testing</p> <p>Six Hats</p> <p>Prompt Box</p> <p>Summarisers / Graphic Organisers</p> <p>Group Presentation</p> <p>Exit Pass</p>

Methodologies that support speaking and listening

"Most individuals would agree that no single method, material or strategy will consistently guarantee that students will improve their word knowledge. Therefore, it seems advantageous for teachers to select a variety of approaches".

Brozo and Simpson, 2003



Jigsaw

Jigsaw groups are a very effective way of organising group work. In this scenario, students are arranged into groups and each group is given a different subtopic related to the one topic. They must become 'expert' on their subtopic and agree how they are going to teach it to their classmates. When they are ready, the groups are mixed up so that there is now one expert on each subtopic in each group. They now take turns 'teaching' their subtopic to each person in the group.



Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share can be used as a before or during or after reading/viewing/ listening activity. It incorporates elements of strategies that have been proven to increase learning:

- summarising
- comparing/ contrasting
- restating an idea in a new way
- collaboration
- think time
- using different learning modalities.

Steps in the Think-Pair-Share Process:

1. Teacher asks a question or provides a prompt.
2. Students are given time to think about their responses.
3. Students pair up and discuss their responses.
4. Students **share** with the wider group

Peer Teaching

Peer teaching is a method of instruction that involves students teaching each other subject content. By getting students to peer teach, teachers can afford students the opportunity to:

- Reinforce work knowledge through repeated usage
- Reinforce/ Develop subject knowledge.

How do I do it?

- Get students working in pairs. Student A is given some written information pertaining to a key concept. They are also supplied with 4 headings for a semantic map. Student B is given a different word, different information and a different set of headings.
- Each student works on his/her own word initially and considers what information might go under each heading.
- When ready, student A acts as teacher to student B and encourages student B to fill in as much information about the word as possible. Student A then fills in and explains any gaps in knowledge. The opposite then happens.

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy - Some questions/activities

Level 1: Remembering	Level 2: Understanding	Level 3: Applying
<p>What is the definition for.....?</p> <p>How many.....?</p> <p>Make a list of.....</p> <p>Write an account of.....</p> <p>What happened after....?</p> <p>Tell in your own words.</p> <p>Do a summary.....</p> <p>Make a chart showing</p> <p>Who was it that...?</p> <p>Can you name ...?</p> <p>Find the definition of...</p> <p>Who spoke to...?</p> <p>Which is true or false...?</p>	<p>In your own words retell the story of..</p> <p>Can you explain why...?</p> <p>Can you write in your own words?</p> <p>Can you write a brief outline...?</p> <p>What do you think could have happened next...?</p> <p>Who do you think...?</p> <p>What was the main idea...?</p> <p>Can you clarify...?</p> <p>Compare this with..</p> <p>Construct a model of..</p> <p>Illustrate what you think the main idea was</p> <p>Explain the differences between...</p>	<p>Do you know of another instance where...?</p> <p>Can you group by characteristics such as...?</p> <p>Which factors would you change if...?</p> <p>What questions would you ask of...?</p> <p>From the information given, can you develop a set of instructions about...?</p> <p>Which one is most like...?</p> <p>Create a mural to depict</p> <p>Construct a diagram to show....</p>
Level 4: Analysing	Level 5: Evaluating	Level 6: Creating
<p>Which events could not have happened?</p> <p>If...happened, what might the ending have been?</p> <p>How is...similar to...?</p> <p>Are there other possible outcomes?</p> <p>Why did...changes occur?</p> <p>Can you explain what must have happened when...?</p> <p>What are some of the problems of...?</p> <p>Can you distinguish between...?</p> <p>Explain some of the motives behind...?</p> <p>What was the turning point?</p> <p>What was the problem with...?</p>	<p>How do you know...?</p> <p>What is the evidence...?</p> <p>Is there a better solution to...?</p> <p>Can you defend your position about...?</p> <p>Do you think...is a good or bad thing?</p> <p>How would you have handled...?</p> <p>What changes to...would you recommend?</p> <p>How effective are...?</p> <p>What are the consequences...?</p> <p>What are the pros and cons of...?</p> <p>Why is...of value?</p> <p>What are the alternatives?</p> <p>Who will gain and who will lose?</p>	<p>Can you design a...to...?</p> <p>Can you see a possible solution to...?</p> <p>If you had access to all resources, how would you deal with...?</p> <p>Why don't you devise your own way to...?</p> <p>What would happen if?</p> <p>How many ways can you...?</p> <p>Can you create new and unusual uses for...?</p> <p>Can you develop a proposal which would...?</p> <p>Is there another conclusion...?</p> <p>What would happen if.....?</p>

Bloom's Taxonomy - questioning

Concept	Language
Knowledge: Tell what you know or remember. What is...? Where is...? Which one...?	Who, What, Why, When, Omit, Choose, Which, Name, Select, Find, Match, Name, Label, Show, Recall
Comprehension: Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas. How would you compare...? Contrast...? Which is the best answer...? How would you classify the type of...?	Compare, Contrast, Demonstrate, Illustrate, Rephrase, Show, Classify
Application: Use what you learn in another way How would you use it...? What would result if...? What other way would you plan to...?	Apply, Build, Choose, Construct, Develop, Make, Use of, Organise, Plan, Solve, Model, Identify
Analysis: Look at something closely to find out more about it. Why do you think...? What inference can you make...? What is the relationship between...?	Analyse, Discover, Dissect, Infer, Examine, Survey, Test for, Relationships
Synthesis: Put ideas or parts of things together. What ways could...? Why do you think...? Imagine...?	Build, Combine, Compile, Create Design, Formulate, Imagine, Invent, Predict
Evaluation: Tell if something is right or wrong, good or bad. Do you agree / disagree...? Why do you think...? Decide if...?	Criticise, Decide, Defend, Evaluate, Recommend, Agree, Appraise, Opinion, Disprove

Reading

Reading continues to be a skill central to the teaching and learning process. Many students struggle when they enter post primary school. They are now using textbooks that rely on discipline specific vocabulary, texts are longer and vary widely across subject areas. Word complexity increases; more low frequency words are used. Sentences are now longer and more complex and there is a greater importance placed on graphic presentations. We need to be aware that the literacy skills that our students bring with them from primary school will require support and scaffolding so that they further develop these skills in order that they can cope with the literacy demands of all subjects. The good news is that we can support our students in the process of reading and in further developing this skill.

"Education and reading are circular - the more one has of one, the better the development of the other",

Bozo and Simpson, 2003

In the post-primary setting, there are three key components of reading that combined, support a student in the process of reading; fluency, vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension. These must be taken together, as individually they may not necessarily support students in reading. For example, while fluency and vocabulary knowledge are integral to comprehension, they don't in themselves guarantee understanding. Likewise, vocabulary knowledge and fluency don't in themselves guarantee comprehension. We have all met students who can read with great fluency but do not necessarily comprehend what they have read.

How can I assess the readability of my document or write more clearly? *(This can help evaluate the suitability of school textbooks)*

The SMOG (Simplified Measure Of Gobbledygook) test provides a measure of readability of a text. Readability is an attempt to match the reading level of written material to the "reading with understanding" level of the reader. It does not necessarily equate to a "reading age" of the text.

The easiest way to assess readability is to use an online SMOG calculator, which will calculate the readability level of any text that is pasted into it. It is based on research into different readability tests commissioned by NIACE (National Institute Adult Continuing Education), now known as the Learning and Work Institute and carried out by Professor Colin Harrison at Nottingham University.

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There is also a manual method you can follow to calculate a SMOG level (see below) on longer texts such as books. To get an accurate level, most people recommend taking at least three samples - for example, one each from the beginning, middle and end - and taking the average of the three scores. The formula was developed to help librarians categorise their stock more easily for learners and practitioners and to act as an indication of level of difficulty. There are no simple answers about relating readability levels to adult literacy levels: they do not equate exactly and are not meant to. The adult literacy standards were designed to indicate what specific skills functioned at particular levels, unrelated to age.

As a rough indication, SMOG 9–10 = Entry Level 3, 11–12 = Level 1 and 13–14 = Level 2, but this is far from an exact science and SMOG should only be taken as one indicator among many for the suitability of a text. All readability tests rely on a very rough gauge of the level of reading vocabulary people can expect to acquire by a certain point in their development - they stop generally around the 20 mark. But successful reading is about far more than word recognition - it's about style, content, physical presentation, complexity of intellectual engagement required, learner interest, confidence and skill.

Calculating the SMOG level of a text

1. Select a page of a book
2. Count 10 sentences
3. Count the number of words which have three or more syllables
4. Multiply this by 3
5. Circle the number closest to your answer

1	4	9	16	25	36	49	64	81	100	121	144	169
---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----

6. Find the square root of the number you circled

1	4	9	16	25	36	49	64	81	100	121	144	169
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

7. Add 8 = Readability level

Most people will understand a readability level under about 10.

Analysis undertaken by Niace has shown average scores for newspaper editorials as follows:

The Sun: under 14

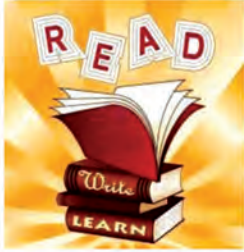
The Daily Express: under 16

The Telegraph and The Guardian: over 17

NB: The original SMOG formula gave a score related to US school grade levels. In this version, the constant added at the end has been changed from 3 to 8, to give a readability level.

Methodologies that support reading

Think Aloud



The 'think aloud' strategy asks students to say out loud what they are thinking about when reading, problem solving, or simply responding to questions posed by teachers or other students. Effective teachers think out loud on a regular basis to model this process for students. In this way, they demonstrate practical ways of approaching difficult problems while bringing to the surface the complex thinking processes that underlie reading comprehension, problem solving, and other cognitively demanding tasks. By verbalising their inner thought process (silent dialogue) as they think their way through a problem, teachers model how expert thinkers solve problems. Getting students into the habit of thinking out loud enriches classroom discourse and gives teachers an important assessment and diagnostic tool.

Pre-Reading Activities / Comprehension Strategies

- Activating Prior Knowledge (KWL, Anticipation Sheet, Effective Questions)
- Setting a Purpose for Reading
- Vocabulary Instruction (Semantic Maps / Visual Word Square)



Semantic Map

The semantic map is one way of pre-teaching concepts that are integral to the topic that you are about to teach whatever the subject. Their use can enable the teacher to:

- Actively engage students with new vocabulary
- Reinforce word learning with repeated usage (getting teacher and student repeatedly using the word)
- Acknowledge the word in other contexts while at the same time establishing what it means in my subject
- Engage student with a subject concept which should increase likelihood of comprehension when reading about the topic

HOW DO I DO IT?

Step one: Identify the words

Identify what are the key concepts that underpin the topic you are teaching. These will be the words you invest time in pre-teaching.

Step two: What do I want the students to know?

Consider four things you want the student to know about the word and write these down. These can become the headings for your semantic map. If the students are familiar with the word in other contexts, it is advisable that this should be acknowledged as one of the headings i.e. Where have we met the word before? / This word in other contexts.

Step three: Working with the students

Place the four headings on the board. Invite students to contribute what they know already about each of the headings. Fill in gaps in their knowledge as they arise. Once the four aspects are completed, you could collectively write a definition of the word or get the students to write their own definition.

During Reading Activities / Comprehension Strategies:

- Explicit Instruction Model
- Determining Importance
- Making Connections
- Monitoring Understanding
- Generate Questions
- Reading to Learn
- Directed Reading Activity

After Reading Activities / Comprehension Strategies

The teaching of **key comprehension strategies** (*making connections, questioning, visualising, inferring, determining importance, summarising, synthesising and self-monitoring comprehension*) can

help students become more purposeful, active readers and learners.

- Graphic Organisers
<http://pdst.ie/publications/ppprogrammes>
- Determining Importance
- Summarise
- Question
- Reflect
- Discuss
- Respond to Text

“Literacy is like a plant that grows in a garden—the soil must first be cultivated before the seed is planted. Once the environment is ready the seed will flourish”.

J.D. Dreissen



Spelling

Spelling is an element of the writing process and is often a concern of teachers in Post Primary Schools. It is important that we consider how it is being explained in our subject area and how we approach it. There are many approaches to the teaching of spelling, adolescent students may find that one works well for them, while they may find another one difficult. It is thus important that they are exposed to as many approaches as possible.

Independent Learning

Individual students should be encouraged to keep their own personal spelling dictionary or notebook. They should note the words that they are consistently misspelling and work on learning how to spell these words. See Brendan Culligan, *Spelling and Handwriting: A Guide for Teachers and Parents* for more on this approach.

Auditory Approach

Phonics is one of the most important teaching methods used to improve spelling. A phonic approach includes a number of key skills, these are knowing the sounds of letters, breaking up words into syllables and recognising patterns. Students should:

- Build up a good knowledge of the sounds made by each letter, blends (for example bl at the start of black and blue, and str in street and string), and digraphs (words with ch, sh, ph, th and wh)
- Sound out and spell the beginning of the word. This will make it easier to locate the word in the dictionary
- Break words into syllables and sound each syllable out one at a time. This is an essential skill in learning to become a more competent speller, especially for longer words, e.g. Photosynthesis.
- Become aware of common prefixes and suffixes for example un, dis, con, ing, ed, tion, ly
- Recognise common morphemes: this will support students' knowledge of prefixes and suffixes and is particularly useful when we consider the Greek and Latin morphemes that arise regularly in science subjects
- Recognise patterns – words that sound the same will usually be spelt in the same way, for example night, right, bright, fight, flight
- Silent letters can often cause a problem but pronouncing the word as it is spelt can overcome this, for example Wed-nes-day, Feb- ru-ary, knife. Sometimes silent letters can be remembered by associating it with another form of the word where the letter can be heard distinctly, for example muscle – muscular, sign – signature

Adapted from www.nala.ie

"Most individuals would agree that no single method, material or strategy will consistently guarantee that students will improve their word knowledge. Therefore, it seems advantageous for teachers to select a variety of approaches."

Brozo and Simpson, 2003

Visual approach

The visual appearance of words can aid students in developing a visual memory of words and support them in remembering how to spell them.

Some visual approaches include:

- Highlighting the difficult part of a word will help the student to remember the word. As the student checks through their spelling notebook, their attention will be drawn to the word or to the part of a word that caused difficulty
- Looking for smaller words within words can help with the difficult part of a word, for example hearing, police, secretary, arranged, piece of pie, strawberry
- Look-cover-write-check. This is a well know strategy for learning to spell that involves looking at the word, covering it, writing it and then checking to see if the word is correct
- Ask your student to try several possible ways of spelling a word to see if one 'looks right'
- Encourage the students to actively notice words when they are out and about such as street names or the names of shops and businesses. Even watching TV or using digital devices can be a good opportunity to notice words on the screen, for example, weather maps, news items, advertisements and sub-titles etc.

Mnemonics

A mnemonic is a memory aid. It can be also used as a strategy to remember how to spell a word.

- For example, a mnemonic to remember how to spell the word necessary is '1 collar and 2 socks', one 'c' and two 's's', (in necessary) as it is a common mistake to forget which letters are doubled.
- You've always got a 'pal' in principal
- Every secretary has a 'secret'
- 'E' for 'envelope' in stationery

Other mnemonics can be created in the form of nonsense stories. These can help trigger the memory for a learner trying to remember a difficult word. They may help the learner to remember some difficult words. It is a good idea to encourage students to create their own nonsense stories around some difficult words.

- For example, if a student found the middle part of the word hospital difficult, tell a story about someone falling into a pit and being brought to hospital
- Another example would be the word accommodation – Telling a story about going on holidays with twin babies who need two cots (cc) and two mattresses (mm), or finally, to create a story about Tom who works in customer service

Adapted from www.nala.ie



Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Once a definition has been established it is not directly entered into memory. Students need multiple opportunities over an extended period of time to encounter the new term in a variety of normal contexts. They need to read, hear, write, and speak words, so that they are internalized and become part of their usable vocabularies.



In content vocabulary instruction, there are at least four factors to keep in mind when making instructional decisions:

- the students we are teaching
- our instructional purposes in teaching each of those words
- the strategies we employ to teach the words

Types of Words

Known word - New Concept **Attract** (Science)

Known Concept - New Word **Avarice**

New Word - New Concept **Biotechnology**

Considerations when Teaching Vocabulary:

- Stimulate students' interest in and awareness of words
- Begin by working out what you want students to know
- Make it a regular activity
- Teach more by teaching less (2 - 4 words per lesson)
- Multiple exposure to new vocabulary (12 - 18 times)
- Teach synonyms, antonyms and alternate meanings of words
- Teach specialized vocabulary in the content areas
- Show students what to do when they come across new words



"Subject literacies are best taught by subject experts who apprentice students into meaning-making in their disciplines, as well as engaging in explicit instruction in order to empower students to learn interactively with texts."

Brendan McMahon, 2014

Vocabulary Instruction



(Shanahan and Shanahan, 2005)

This model from Shanahan and Shanahan 2005, demonstrates how important it is to build a literacy progression and the development of specialised reading skills within subjects, utilising explicit vocabulary instruction.

Tier 2 words are important for students to master and understand deeply.

Whole school vocabulary.

Why? Because academic words such as justify, expand, maximum, and barren are found in many content area texts such as social studies, Science, Mathematics, English, and History texts.

Understanding these terms greatly increases comprehension of academic texts. – whole school approaches.

Accountable word consciousness – what words do we want to implicitly teach them and why?

Morphemic analysis, Etymology e.g. Aqua.

Background - Beck & Mc Keown (2005)

Tier One - Basic words

- E.g. chair, bed, happy, house

Tier Two - Words in general use, but not common

- E.g. concentrate, absurd, fortunate, relieved, dignity, convenient, observation, analyze, persistence

Tier Three - Rare words limited to a specific domain

- E.g. tundra, igneous rocks, weathering, totalitarian, cellular respiration, genre, foreshadowing

For further examples, refer to JCSP website: www.jcsp.ie

Vocabulary Strategies

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES AROUND VOCABULARY	
1.	Dedicate a portion of classroom lessons regularly to explicit vocabulary instruction.
2.	Use repeated exposures to new words in multiple oral and written contexts and allow sufficient practice.
3.	Give sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts through activities such as discussion, writing and extended reading.
4.	Provide students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.
5.	Select a variety of approaches to increase word knowledge .

Approaches to deepen understanding of specific meanings	Approaches to promote independent word learning
Semantic Map Peer Teaching of semantic Map Active demonstration of meaning/ concept Matching Activities Find a synonym or antonym	Use of context clues Morphemic Analysis Use of dictionaries Glossaries Use of fix up strategies

20 Most Frequent Prefixes in School Texts

1. un	1. Not	11. pre	1. Before
2. re	2. Again	12. inter	2. Among, between
3. in/im/ir/il	3. Not, without	13. fore	3. Front, superior
4. dis	4. Removal of, negative	14. de	4. Down, away
5. en	5. Put into or on	15. trans	5. Across, beyond
6. non	6. Absence, negation of	16. super	6. Beyond, over and above
7. in/im	7. In or into	17. semi	7. Half, partly
8. over	8. Excessively, completely	18. anti	8. The opposite, against
9. mis	9. Bad, wrong	19. mid	9. The middle of
10. sub	10. At a lower position or nearly	20. under	10. Beneath, below

Writing



What are the Writing Demands of my Subject?

Consider the demands made on your students when writing in your subject area. Some possible points might include:

What are the writing demands of my subject?	Do the students know what good written work in my subject looks like? If so, do they know why it is good?
Do I use writing checklists / rubrics with my students?	How are students making the leap from my correction of their work to their understanding of their writing issues?
Do the writing tasks I set benefit my students' learning?	What are the most commonly used connectives in my subject?

"The idea is not that content-area teachers should become reading and writing teachers, but rather that they should emphasize the reading and writing practices that are specific to their subjects, so students are encouraged to read and write like historians, scientists, mathematicians, and other subject-area experts."

Biancarosa & Snow, 2000)

Possible Connectives for Writing Tasks

To indicate order... To begin with Next Firstly, Secondly, etc. On second thoughts In conclusion Finally In spite of all	To infer... In other words In that case Otherwise This implies Frankly	To reformulate... In other words That means That is to say I mean Another way of stating this is Another way of putting it is It would be better to say
To express concession... Although Even if Even though Besides Anyhow, anyway In any case At any rate	To refer to... With regard to With reference to Referring to As to, as for According to the latter / the former	To compare to... Likewise Both Whereas While the first might indicate Similarly As for Equally As well as
To express reason / purpose... Therefore That is why For this reason Hence Because So Since As On account of So that	To express place and space... On the right To the left Nearby Between Among Here / there / where In the distance Straight ahead In front of / behind	To add an idea... Moreover Furthermore Also And Similarly Likewise Too Equally In the same manner Besides In addition to
To express condition or consequence... If Unless Suppose that In case of Providing that On condition that Consequently Hence Thus Accordingly As a result It follows that	To express opposition... But However Nevertheless Otherwise On the other hand On the contrary Yet Still Maybe Perhaps Instead Except for Despite	To express time... When Before / After Now While Since As long as / As soon as No sooner than Subsequently Eventually Initially Previously Recently Meanwhile Lately At last From now on Time and again Often Afterwards

Forms of Writing - Checklist

Forms of Text	Geography	History	Science	Maths	Other
Informational					
Description					
Reports					
Summaries					
Notes					
Expositions/ Debates					
Interviews					
Instructions					
Letters					
Invitations					
Greetings					

Comments from Chief Examiners' Reports 2012 - 2013

Encourage students to develop their responses beyond simple statements through explanations, descriptions and the use of examples.

Geography, 2013

Make sure, particularly at Higher Level, that the higher-order conceptual skills of analysis, design, synthesis and evaluation are expressed in the folio.

Construction Studies, 2012

Candidates should avoid the use of schematic or stock answers in the written examination in favour of developing good understanding and a personal response supported by evidence.

Art, 2013

There is evidence in the answering of many candidates of shallow, uncritical learning.

Biology, 2013

Research should be analysed and linked to the assignment requirements. Students should avoid transcribing directly from class textbooks.

Home Economics, 2011

Provide opportunities for students to develop their skills at applying and adapting their knowledge and understanding thus improving their ability to respond to different examination questions.

Environmental Studies, 2012

Adopting a process approach to writing, whereby students learn to research, plan, draft, re-draft and edit their writing would be of significant benefit to all students of English.

English, 2013

Learn the different meanings of similar-sounding or similarly spelled terms and work on accurate explanation of these terms.

Science, 2013



The Writing Process



It is important to note that the writing process is not necessarily strictly linear, and as teachers we can move from particular parts of the process to others over time. The process is fluid, and there will be times in our teaching and treatment of particular areas in our subject where we may only be focusing on a particular aspect of the process.

Scaffolding Writing

Scaffolding involves helpful, structured interaction between an adult and a student with the aim of helping the student to achieve a specific goal.

There are four stages through which a particular text type can be made explicit and taught to students:

1. Building knowledge of the topic
2. Modelling the text type
3. Joint construction
4. Independent writing

Stage One: Building Knowledge of the Topic

The aim here is to build up background knowledge so focus is primarily on content and the academic language required for the task.

This stage involves the processes of planning and translating, involving strategies that use speaking, listening, reading, research, note taking skills, brainstorming, activation of prior knowledge, etc.

Organising Writing

Helping students to organise their writing before they begin can clarify their thinking and improve the quality of their writing.

"[Scaffolding] refers to the steps taken to reduce the degree of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill he/she is in the process of acquiring"

Bruner, 1978



"Simply correcting the spelling of a poor piece of writing results in a correctly spelled poor piece of writing – the piece of writing itself is not substantially improved."

Gibbons, 2002

Stage Two: Modelling the text

This stage aims to build up students' understanding of the purpose, overall structure and language features of the particular text being focused on through model texts.

What can be modelled?

- What to write
- How to start
- How to revise and edit
- How to choose relevant information
- How to present information and ideas
- Use of word banks, wall charts etc.
- How to experiment with writing
- How to write a new form of text



"What they can do collaboratively today becomes what they can do independently to-morrow."

Lewis & Wray,
2000

Stage Three: Joint Construction

- Students give suggestions/contribute ideas while the teacher scribes, and together the teacher and students discuss how the writing can be improved
- Teacher and students discuss the structure, more appropriate vocabulary, consider alternative ways of wording and focus on language accuracy

"The joint construction stage is teacher-guided, it should not be seen as teacher dominated"

Pauline Gibbons

Stage Four: Independent Writing

- Students write their own texts, individually or in pairs
 - As students write, remind them about the process of writing, first draft, self-editing, feedback, redrafting, final text
 - Students write a first draft and proof read/check it with their partner
- Final draft is written for an audience (publish/present)

"Simply allowing students to write a lot will not necessarily provide sufficient practice in the various types of writing required"

Reppen, 2002

Adapted from Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning, Gibbons, 2002.

The Writer's Toolkit

- Graphic organisers
- KWL Charts
- Writing Checklists
- Bloom's Taxonomy / Prompt Questions
- Writing Frames
- Keywords
- Semantic Mapping
- Dictionary / Thesaurus
- Digital tools: Padlet, etc.

Writing Strategies

- Activation of prior knowledge
- Questioning / Bloom's Taxonomy / 5 W and a H
- Group writing tasks
- Create an audience (Hot seat / Ask the Expert, etc.)
- Brainstorming
- Self-monitoring / Peer feedback strategies

Writing Activities

Building Knowledge	Modelling the Text	Joint construction	Independent Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphic Organisers Brainstorming Vocabulary activities e.g. stop the bus, lists, Scrabble, Connect4, word search, crossword, Wordle, bubbl.us, keyword activities etc. Word lists, phrase lists, word race, dictionary & thesaurus work, spelling & vocabulary activities Lengthen / shorten sentence Survey Short passage / Ad/ Text message draft Springboards to help inspire ideas & knowledge: images / texts/ media / other input / class dialogue etc. Questions as a springboard (e.g. 5W+H) Free writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active listening e.g. listen and draw diagram / image/ fill in the grid Modelling / copying Dictation Cloze tests / Gapped text Rearrange structure of sample text (sentence, paragraph, points etc.) Use alternative words or phrases to those underlined in example Good examples from other students Reading texts as good examples Genre – Text type – Structure-Style Paired word with images / prompts 	<p>Teacher as guide / scribe / prompter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will we begin? Is that the best way to say it? Is there a better/more effective/ richer way to say that? Can anyone think of a better/more accurate/more concise word or phrase? Is there anything you would like to change/move? Can anyone see anything that needs fixing? Can you remember what the examples we looked at earlier were like? What do you think we should talk about next? Is the language/spelling/grammar accurate? Etc. <p>Joint construction with other students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paired writing/finish the sentence/ Tennis/Concertina Group/ Paired work Writing Frames Dice/Images etc. 	<p>Individual writing or in pairs (still a process)</p> <p>Scaffolding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft Self-editing Feedback from teacher/peers Redraft Final draft <p>Clear success criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genre, text, type Aim of the passage Language, Accuracy, Richness Message, Subject Imagination <p>Writing tasks linked to students' experience</p> <p>Authentic contexts</p> <p>Creative writing (developing personal writing style)</p> <p>Mind maps</p> <p>Incentives of a final 'published' text (these can also serve as 'models' and resources for other classes in the future)</p>

Writing Checklist

Do our students display a positive attitude towards writing?

- Our students have a positive attitude towards writing
- Our students display a high level of motivation when engaged in writing tasks



What is the quality of our students' writing?

- Our students use expansive and subject-specific vocabulary to express ideas and experiences in their subjects
- Our students have proficiency of writing in appropriate genres in different subjects
- Our students display the ability to understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create subject knowledge in their written work
- Our students can edit and refine their own and others' writing
- Our students can use digital media effectively to present their work in all subjects
- Our students write with an appropriate standard of spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation
- All students (including those at risk of underachieving and those of exceptional ability) are making very good progress from their prior levels of achievement in writing.

Actions

Are teachers supporting the development of student writing?

At a whole school level

- Our teachers have high expectations with regard to students' achievement in writing
- Literacy-rich environment which displays students' written work on corridors and classroom walls.



At subject department level:

- Subject specific and individual teacher plans reflect the school's strategy and action plans for improving students' writing skills.
- Department Plans demonstrate consistent approaches for the teaching of writing genres that are relevant to the subject area.
- Teachers identify and explicitly teach the features of the various genres relevant to their own subject areas.
- Writing is regularly used in lessons and homework to support students' learning
- Explicit spelling strategies are taught in a consistent manner in all subjects
- Word processing packages are explicitly taught and incorporated into writing
- A range of structured activities are used to support writing: co-operative learning, differentiated writing frames, graphic organisers, self-edit/peer-edit sheet/learning logs.

At individual teacher level:

- Our teachers engage in pre-writing activities and provide writing models where appropriate to engage students in writing tasks
- Our teachers teach the skills of planning and drafting
- Our teachers set clear and purposeful writing activities and provide clear rubrics for writing when appropriate
- Our teachers link writing activities to the real world when possible
- Our teachers explicitly teach students how to summarise and make notes in all subjects.

Eleven Elements of Effective Writing Instruction

1. **Writing Strategies:** planning, revising, and editing written work
2. **Summarisation:** explicit and systematic teaching of how to summarise texts and how to make notes effectively
3. **Collaborative Writing:** students work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their written work
4. **Specific Product Goals:** assigns students specific, reachable goals for their writing tasks
5. **Word Processing:** uses IT equipment as instructional supports for writing assignments
6. **Sentence combining:** involves teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences
7. **Prewriting:** activities designed to help generate or organize ideas for written work
8. **Inquiry Activities:** engages students in analysing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task
9. **Process Writing Approach:** interweaves a number of writing instructional activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalised instruction, and cycles of writing
10. **Study of Models:** provides students with opportunities to read, analyse, and emulate models of good writing
11. **Writing for Content Learning:** uses writing as a tool for learning content material

Adapted from Writing Next, 2007

Cross-Curricular Approaches to Writing

The following are some Writing activities that schools have employed that encourage and support cross-curricular collaboration in the area of writing.

- Wild Writing Week
- Make-A-Book
- Six Word Story
- Cliff-Hangers
- Props, Prompts and Purpose
- How Do You Do That?
- School Speeches
- My Subject Blog
- Presentation Portfolios / E-Portfolios



Useful Websites:

www.pdst.ie (graphic organisers)

www.jcspliteracy.ie

www.adlit.org (comprehension strategies)



List of Whole School Initiatives

Literacy

Author in Residence
Book Review
Calligraphy/Penmanship Initiative
Debating
Dictionary Work
Digital Storytelling
Oral Language Development
eBooks
Keywords
Literacy in your Classroom
Primary Picture Books
Reading Corner
Reading Corner Top Up
Reading Programme in the English Classroom
Red Wall
School Base Literacy Initiative
Spelling Challenge
Storytelling

Reading

Paired Reading
Paired Reading Top Up
Readalong
Readalong Top Up
Reading Aloud
Reading Challenge
Reading challenge Top Up
Who Wants To Be a Word Millionaire?
Who Wants to be a Word Millionaire? Top Up
Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)
Drop Everything and Read Top Up
The Reading Medley



The Wellread National Award is an initiative designed and organised by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). It aims to create heightened awareness about the importance of creating a culture of reading in school communities for our young people as part of their personal and academic development.

The Wellread National Award is an initiative that seeks to involve all relevant stakeholders who impact on student learning including students, teachers, ancillary staff, parents, board of management and the wider community in a range of reading and associated activities.

This national award is aimed at fostering and nurturing a reading culture in your school and will bring about an overall improvement in students' literacy skills in a fun and engaging way.

For more information please visit www.wellread.ie and you can follow us @LiteracyLink1



Common Greek and Latin Morphemes

Latin Root	Definition	Example
ambi	both	
aqua	water	
aud	to hear	
bene	good	
cent	one hundred	
circum	around	
contra/ counter	against	
dict	to say	
duc/ duct	to lead	
fac	to do; to make	
form	shape	
fort	strength	
fract	break	
ject	throw	
jud	judge	
mal	bad	
mater	mother	
mit	to send	
mort	death	
multi	many	
pater	father	
port	to carry	
rupt	to break	
scrib/ script	to write	
sect/ sec	to cut	

Common Latin Morphemes

sent	to feel; to send	
spect	to look	
struct	to build	
vid/ vis	to see	
voc	voice; to call	

Common Greek Morphemes

Greek Root	Definition	Example
anthropo	man; human; humanity	
auto	self	
bio	life	
chron	time	
dyna	power	
dys	bad; hard; unlucky	
gram	thing written	
graph	writing	
hetero	different	
homo	same	
hydr	water	
hyper	over; above; beyond	
hypo	below; beneath	
logy	study of	
meter/metr	measure	
micro	small	
mis/miso	hate	

Common Greek Morphemes

mono	one	
morph	form; shape	
nym	name	
phil	love	
phobia	fear	
photo/phos	light	
pseudo	false	
psycho	soul; spirit	
scope	viewing instrument	
techno	art; science; skill	
tele	far off	
therm	heat	

Reproduced with permission from Corwin Press.

Some Examples of Greek and Latin Morphemes in Science

Root/Word	Meaning	Found In
Adipo	Fat	Adipose Tissue
An	Without	anaerobic
Ante	In front	Anterior
Anti	Against	Antibody
Aqua	Water	Aqueous
Arterio	Artery	Artery
Arthro	joint	Arthritis
Auto	Self	Auto immune
Bio	Life	Biology/biomolecules
Blast	Germ	Blastocyst
Bronch	Windpipe	Bronchus
Bucca	Mouth	Buccal cavity
Card	Heart	cardiovascular
Chloro	Green	Chlorophyll
Chromo	Colour	Chromatography
Chym	Juice	Chyme
Cide	Killer	Pesticide
Circa	Around	Circumference
Columella	Little column	Columella (fungi)
Corpus	Body	Corpuscles
Cyst	capsule	Blastocyst
Cyt	Cell	Cytology
Dent	Tooth	Dentition
Derm	Skin	Epidermis/dermal
Di	Two	Diatom
Ect	outer	Ectoderm
Endo	inside	Endoderm
Epi	Above	Epidermis
Exo	Outside	Exoderm
Erythro	red	Erythrocyte
Gaster	Stomach	Gastric
Gen	Come into being	Genetics
Haem	Blood	Haemoglobin
Hetero	Different	Heterozygous
Homo	Same	Homozygous/Homeostasis
Hydro	Water	Hydrotropism/ Hydrophobic

Some Examples of Greek and Latin Morphemes in Science

Hyper	Above	Hypertonic
Hypo	Below	Hypotonic
Intra	Within	Intracellular
Iso	Equal	Isotonic
It is	Inflammation	Arthritis
Leuc	White	Leucocyte
Lymph	Clear Water	Lymph Fluid
Mat	Mother	Maternal
Meso	Middle	Mesoderm
Micro	Small	Microbiology/Microscope
Monos	One	Monocular
Nephr	Kidney	Nephron
Neuro	Nerve	Nerve
Nutrire	To nourish	Nutrition
Ology	Study of	Biology
Opt	Vision	Optical
Ost	Bone	Osteoblast
Ovum	Egg	Ovary
Photo	Light	Photosynthesis
Photo	Light	Photosynthesis
Phyll	Leaf	Chlorophyll/mesophyll
Plasm	Liquid	Cytoplasm
Poly	Many	Polysaccharide
Pseudo	False	Pseudopod
Pulmo	Lung	Pulmonary
Retina	Net	Ret
Soma	Body	Chromosome
Spec	See	Specimen
Stasis	Stay	Homeostasis
Tox	Poison	Toxin
Troph	Food	Autotroph/Heterotroph
Uni	One	Unicellular
Zoo	Animal	Zoology

Keyword Journals

Key Word Journals are a highly effective resource for students, so long as they are used as a support and consolidation of vocabulary instruction strategies in the classroom across all subject areas. The following strategies all support and enhance the use of Key Word Journals:

- Semantic Map
- Peer teaching
- Active demonstration of meaning/concept Matching words
- Use of dictionary
- Finding a synonym or antonym
- Multiple opportunities to engage with the keywords
- Use of visuals (where appropriate)



Sample Cross-Curricular Active Literacy Strategies

Oral literacy/speaking & listening – oral text types

- Listening & speaking posters
- Pair and small group work – think/pair/share/square, placemat exercise, jigsaw, role cards
- Dictation
- Questioning – use Bloom’s Taxonomy outcome verbs and prompt questions & wait time
- Discussions/extended conversations
- Oral reports & presentations
- Storytelling and anecdotes
- Arguments and informal debates
- Interviews
- Meetings
- Interest talks – well briefed and prepared guest speaker & worksheet
- Cloze tests – to consolidate vocabulary - **discuss** possible solutions/blank spaces
- Peer teaching

Comprehension/reading strategies

Pre reading

- KWHL chart – build on prior knowledge
- Explicit Vocabulary Instruction (EVI) - keywords list/notebook, “Google notebook”
- Web 2.0 Tools for vocabulary development - freerice.com, studystack.com, instagrok.com, animoto.com
- Visual word square/semantic map
- Anticipation/prediction exercise
- Cloze tests – to consolidate vocabulary - **discuss** possible solutions/blank spaces
- School/student dictionary – model good practice & encourage students to use it

During reading

- Skim – get the gist
- Fix it up strategies: re-read, underline, read ahead, read back, look at pictures/diagrams for clues, break up words, use dictionary, read aloud, ask for help!
- Visualise – pictures, symbols
- Determining importance (selecting key words/concepts), summarising - highlighter/post-its
- SQ3R – to study in detail, survey, question, read, review, recall
- Graphic organisers – record main points information

After reading

- Cloze tests – **discuss** possible solutions/blank spaces
- Scan – finds specific information
- Mindmaps – recall/summarise, use pictures and colour
- Graphic organisers – recall main points information
- BUG – answer questions, **box** what you are asked to do, **underline** important words and **go** back over to make sure you answered the question

Genre

Note: check out the format used by other subject departments

- **Letter** - of application, thank you, complaint.....
- **Recount:** Scene setting / re-telling events / closing
- **Report:** Describe the way things are / were
- **Procedure:** Recipe / instructions/ illustration / diagram
- **Explanation:** Series of logical steps to explain something
- **Persuasion:** Promote point of view – statement /argument / reiteration
- **Discussion:** Different view-points – statement one side /other side / recommendations in summary
- **E-mail/blog** – protocol and etiquette

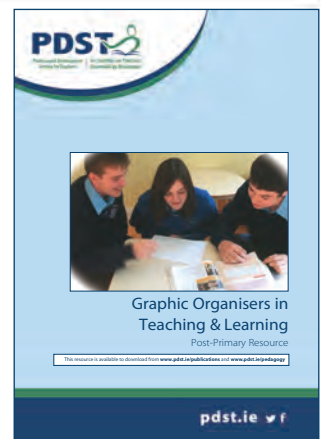
Tools for effective writing

- Graphic organisers
- KWL Charts
- Writing/Editing Checklists
- Bloom's Taxonomy / Prompt Questions
- Writing Frames
- Keywords
- Semantic Mapping
- Dictionary / Thesaurus
- Digital tools: Padlet, iNote, etc.

Writing Strategies

- Activation of prior knowledge
- Questioning / Bloom's Taxonomy / 5 W and a H
- Group writing tasks
- Create an audience (Hot seat / Ask the Expert, etc.)
- Brainstorming
- Self-monitoring / Peer feedback strategies

See 'Graphic Organisers and other Literacy, Numeracy and AfL Strategies in Teaching and Learning' for further details, exemplars and templates.



3 2 1

3	Things I Found Out
2	Interesting Things
1	Questions I Still Have

Improving Oral Literacy

Placemat Technique

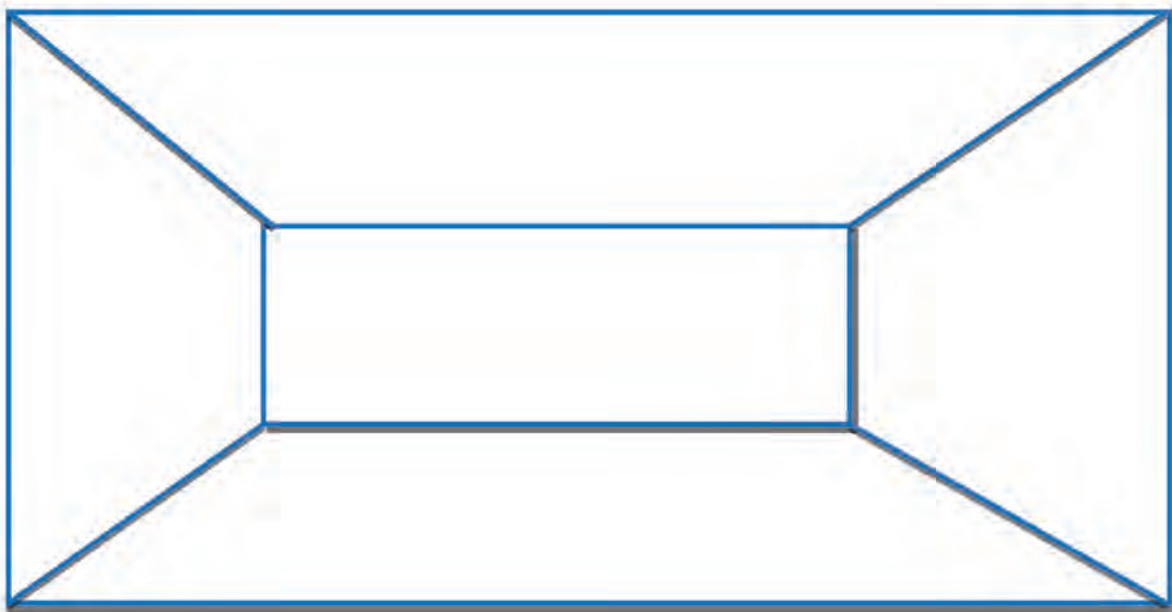
The Placemat Technique can be used with a wide variety of questions and prompts or for a wide range of learning goals, e.g.

- To encourage students to share ideas and reach a consensus about a topic/idea
- To activate the prior knowledge of a topic among students
- To help students share problem-solving techniques
- To take group notes during a video or oral presentation
- To summarise learning after the class and/or to be used as an opening review for the subsequent lesson

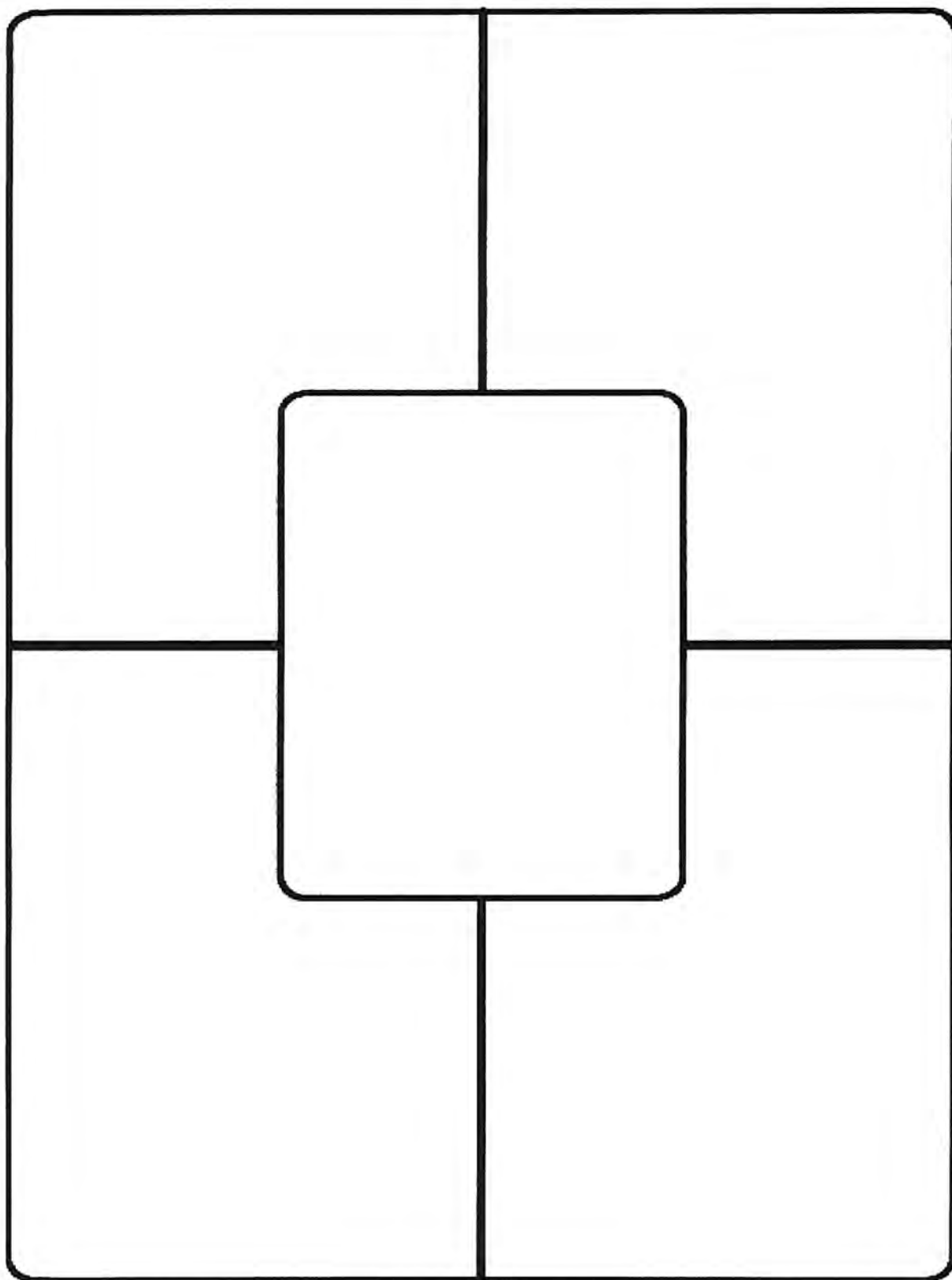
Groups of four students are ideal for the placemat technique but it can also work with 3 – 6 students by amending the template.

Tips

- 1) Discuss, record and post a labelled diagram of the Placemat on the board so that students always have a visual reference of the organisation and required actions.
- 2) Consider the composition of the small groups and vary the membership according to the students' learning styles and interaction, subject-matter expertise, etc. Some groups will require more teacher support in carrying out the task in other groups.
- 3) Use the placemats as a record of collective student thinking and post the ideas for other groups to see.



Placemat



Graphic Organisers

Graphic Organisers provide a visual method of developing, organising and summarising students' learning. They help to structure disjointed information. They facilitate the learning process by providing a scaffold for the development of ideas and the construction of knowledge. Visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners all benefit from using the organisers. High quality teaching in mixed ability classrooms is also facilitated.

Highest quality results are achieved when one organiser is shared by a small group of (2/3/4) students with diverse abilities and learning styles. Leadership is distributed in the group with each student having a leadership role to fulfil. Roles of Recorder, Timekeeper, Turntaker, Summariser, Reporter, Clarifier, Checker etc. are distributed among the group.

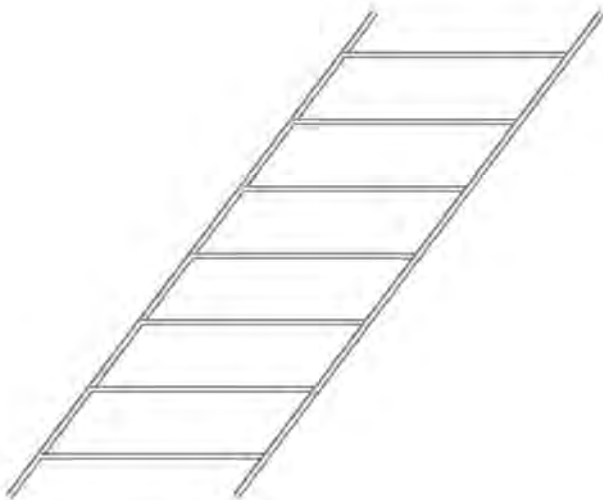
Some organisers are more applicable to the different aspects of the learning process than others, for example: collecting information, comparing and contrasting, developing ideas, sequencing information, summarising and extending thinking and learning. Some are also more relevant to different subjects and topics than others. They can all be used at the various stages of the learning process:

- Pre-teaching
- Introducing a topic
- Teaching a topic
- Independent learning
- Study and revision
- Preparing answers to examination questions.

They scaffold learning and help to build students' confidence. Graphic organisers also facilitate formative assessment as students can clearly see how much they understand.

Some examples follow e.g. Ranking Ladder, Double Venn Diagram.

Ranking Ladder



This ladder can be used to prioritise or rank ideas and/or information. It can also be used for topics with a series of stages or steps. It is suitable for subject matter with a definite beginning and end.

At the pre-teaching stage the teacher can have pairs/triads of students fill in any information they know about the topic on the correct step. The teacher can monitor the results and then focus the teaching more accurately on the needs of the class.

Active learning can be facilitated if the teacher provides the information in jumbled form and students work together to rank the information correctly.

Suggestions from teachers

History

- Becoming a Knight
- Cortés and the Aztecs
- Life of George Washington
- Rise and Fall of Third Reich
- Work of an archaeologist

Business

- Writing a letter
- A business transaction
- Making a complaint
- Recruitment
- New product development
- Calculate net pay
- Household Budget
- Bank Reconciliations

Home Economics

- Digestion of proteins
- Production of cheese
- Milling flour
- 10 steps of HACCP
- Making a Christmas wreath
- Design Brief
- Yoghurt making

Music

- Answering an examination question on harmony
- Writing a melody
- Scales
- Musical Eras
- Composers

Mathematics

- Order of operations
- Solving a triangle
- Proving a theorem
- Difference Equations
- Differentiation from first principles

Geography

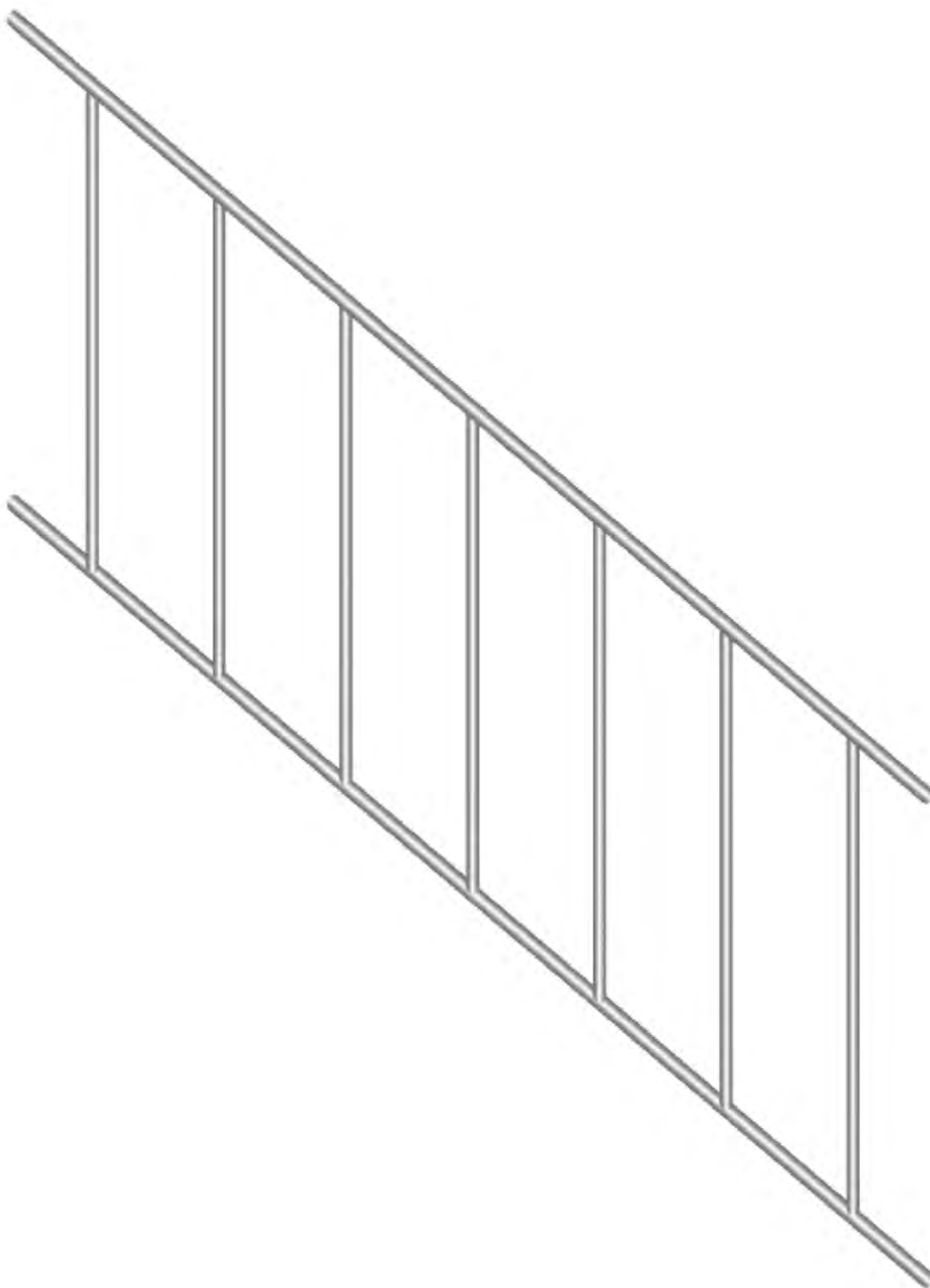
- Cloud formation
- Formation of an ox-bow lake
- Volcanic eruption
- Formation of a waterfall
- Water cycle

English

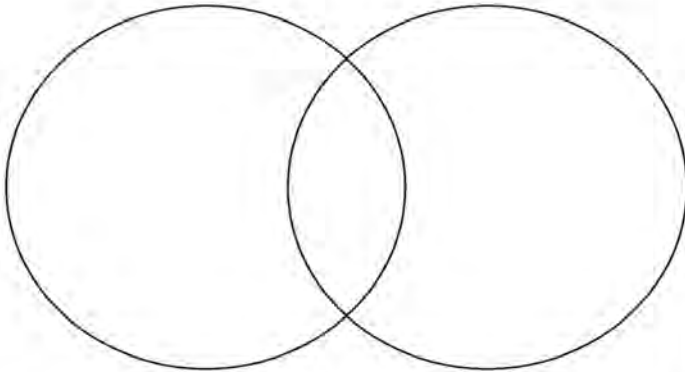
- Descent of a tragic hero into calamity, e.g. Macbeth's descent into evil
- Trace the theme of a poem — thread of thought, main idea
- Stages of a Novel

Religion

- Stages from slavery to Passover
- The development of Islam
- From the Passion to Pentecost



Double Venn Diagram



The double Venn is a simple and highly effective model for examining the similarities and differences between two items. Students work in small groups to compare and contrast. One student records the agreed information in the organiser on behalf of the group.

Students of all abilities and learning styles can work together and contribute according to their interest, learning style and ability. No student is held back and the class does not move too fast for any student.

Students are actively involved in the learning. They learn to agree, disagree, listen, explain and help each other. They orally process the learning. These soft skills need to be encouraged and actively taught in the classroom.

Suggestions from teachers

English

- Two poems
- Relationships in texts
- Essay planning
- Tabloids/Broadsheets
- Capulets/Montagues

Gaeilge

- Comparáid idir dhánta/scéalta/charachtéir
- Comparáid idir téamaí e.g. An saol mar atá is mar a bhí
- *Faoiseamh a Gheobhadsa* Comparáid idir saol na tuaithe agus saol na cathrach
- Accusative/Dative case

Religion/Mathematics

- Two religions e.g. Judaism and Christianity
- Decimals (percentages)
- Fractions

Home Economics

- Comparing ovens
- Mould reproduction
- Accommodation
- Nuclear/extended family
- Commercial/Homemade food

Music/Art

- Baroque music vs. art (Hallelujah vs. St George and the Dragon)
- Set vs. Choice songs
- Musical eras
- Romanesque/Gothic

Technical Subjects

- Metals and alloys
- Ferrous/Non-ferrous metals
- Hard/Soft woods

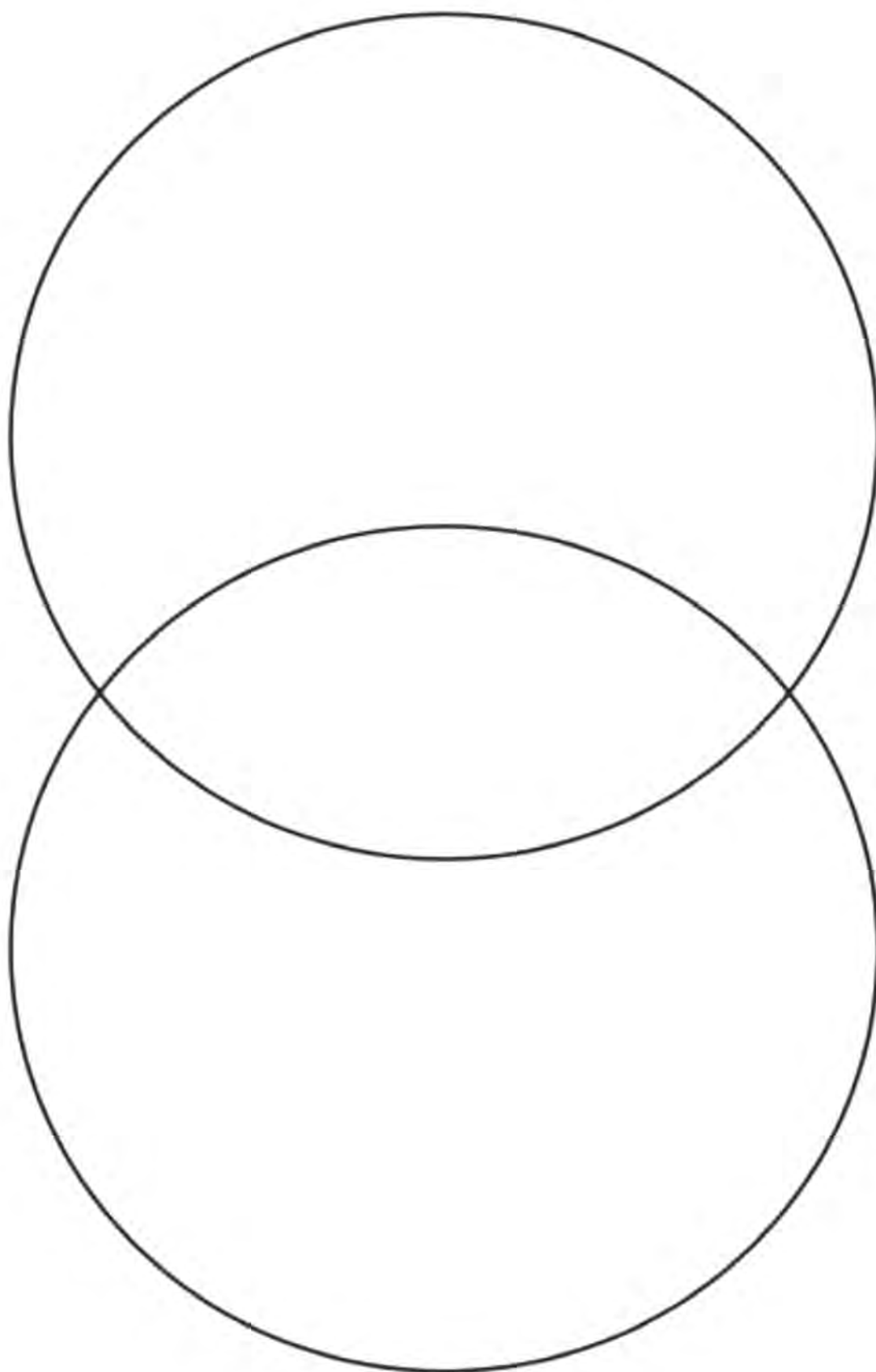
History/Geography

- Luther and Calvin
- Munster and Leinster Plantations
- Italian renaissance artists
- War of Independence/Civil War
- Mesolithic/Neolithic ages
- Photograph/OS Map

Science

- RNA v DNA
- O₂ v CO₂
- Photosynthesis v respiration
- Plant cell v animal cell
- Male v female endocrine system
- Mitosis v meiosis
- Endocrine v nervous control
- Circulatory/Lymphatic system

Double Venn Diagram

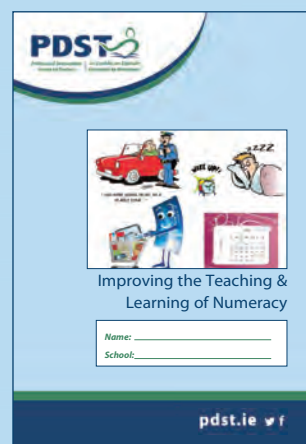
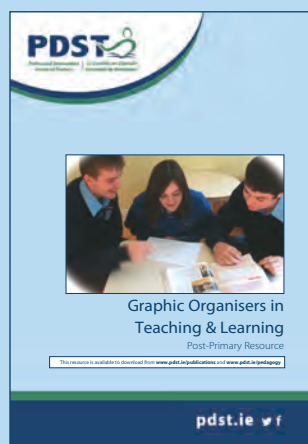
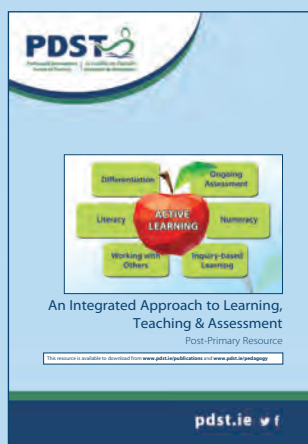


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