LITTLE EXPLORERS B

TEACHER'S NOTES

LOUIS FIDGE

MACMILLAN ENGLISH EXPLORERS

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Introduction

Macmillan English Explorers reading programme introduces, teaches and develops essential reading skills and gives continuity at each age level. *Macmillan English Explorers* contains a balance of whole class teaching, shared reading and individual activities. This approach is based on the educational principles in the National Literacy Framework in UK schools and has been adapted for use with children whose first language is not English.

The reading programme is designed to meet the needs of teachers and children. It has been researched, trialled and tested. The reading books use authentic natural language. They are specially written to include important high frequency words, i.e. words which appear regularly in all reading material. Research has shown how important it is to introduce these words from an early age. *Macmillan English Explorers* controls vocabulary and language structures, which are recycled and repeated regularly. Children are introduced to useful content words in carefully chosen vocabulary groups, topics and settings.

Macmillan English Explorers will help make children want to read and encourages reading as a habit. A variety of text types provide mystery, suspense, adventure, emotion, classic stories, rhymes and poetry and include some non-fiction pages. The enjoyable stories will make the children use their imagination and motivate them. They also teach moral values such as friendship and respect.

Macmillan English Explorers have been specially written to help:

- develop fluency
- build up and extend vocabulary
- develop word recognition skills
- comprehension
- teach phonics
- teach correct pronunciation
- children use their imagination
- offer opportunities for writing.

The reading series does the following:

- controls the use of language to make sure that the stages are clearly graded, and gently increase in difficulty
- uses beautiful illustrations and photographs to support the texts
- encourages class, group, paired and individual reading
- provides the teacher with all the support needed to make sure the children are successful. This includes:
  - detailed teaching notes
  - the stories on **audio CD** or on **cassette** read by a native speaker
  - **wordcards** for printing and photocopying
  - **Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbooks** which provide activities to practise and develop a range of reading skills
  - **Phonics Workbooks** which provide activities to practise and develop phonic skills (see page 17).
- provides suggestions for parents who want to help their children with reading at home.

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Little Explorers

The authors

Barbara Mitchelhill

Barbara trained as a teacher, specialising in English and Drama. She taught in primary schools in the United Kingdom and it was during this period that she began to write for BBC children's programmes and for educational publishers. Barbara is now a full-time writer and has written over 150 books for children who are learning to read, as well as novels for older children. She is also a consultant editor for an educational publisher.

Gill Munton

Gill gained a degree in Art History and then trained as a primary school teacher. She has worked in primary literacy publishing since the 1970s and is now a full-time writer. Gill has written reading scheme books, children's stories and non-fiction for many publishing companies.

Reading books (24 pages)	**Cassette/audio CD**	**Extra support material**
Little Explorers A Teddy's Big Day Daisy the Dinosaur * The Biscuit Man The Big Bad Monster * At the Zoo The New Baby *	Stories on cassette or audio CD	Little Explorers A Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbook Little Explorers A Phonics Workbook Wordcards
Little Explorers B A Party for Teddy * Daisy and Danny Stone Soup * Chicken-Licken A Fun Day Out The School Play *	Stories on cassette or audio CD	Little Explorers B Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbook Little Explorers B Phonics Workbook Wordcards

Reading books

Each reading book contains:

- a section for parents called **Helping your child with reading**. It gives advice to parents who want to help their children with reading at home
- a highly-illustrated, motivating story
- a rhyme or related non-fiction reading text
- a list of vocabulary used in the story
- a list of language structures used in the story.

* These reading books are also produced in Big Book format to assist whole class teaching.

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Cassette or audio CD

Little Explorers stories are on a cassette or audio CD. The stories are read at a natural speed that the children will be able to follow. All the stories are read by native English speakers.

Photocopiable support material

There is a range of photocopiable support material available to download.

Wordcards

All of the words taught in the reading books are on **wordcards**. There are small ones for the children and large ones for the teacher. The summary box at the start of each section of lesson notes tells you which cards you wil need to print out for that lesson. See **Using wordcards** on page 15.

Word recognition sheet

This is designed to be used for assessment by you and the children. See page 15 for detailed guidance.

Reading certificates

These can be given out to motivate your class.

Word counts

These count how many times a word appears.

Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbook

A Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbook accompanies *Little Explorers B*. The activities focus on the language structures and vocabulary from the stories in the reading books. There are six activities for each reading book. The activities practise:

- vocabulary recognition
- comprehension
- phonic skills
- writing.

Phonics Workbook

A Phonics Workbook also accompanies the *Little Explorers B* reading books. The book introduces simple phonic skills. Workbook B includes activities on:

- the alphabet
- individual letter sounds
- letter formation
- word building.

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Teacher's Notes

The Teacher's Notes Introduction includes a practical introduction to *Little Explorers B*. It contains:

- a description of the materials in *Little Explorers*
- an example of a *Little Explorers* lesson
- advice on how to teach reading which includes
  - – introducing new vocabulary
  - – developing word recognition skills
  - – developing phonic skills
  - – developing comprehension skills
- a guide to assessment
- glossary of terms used in the Teacher's Notes Introduction and Lesson Notes.

Lesson Notes

The Lesson Notes include page-by-page teaching notes showing you how to use the reading books, and when to use the **Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbooks**. There is a language summary and a story summary at the beginning of the notes, and a word list at the beginning of each new lesson. At the end of the notes there are suggestions for follow-up activities.

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How to teach reading

Step 1 Modelled reading
Read the text on the page out loud to the class. Do not stop to explain any words. This gives the children a model for reading any new text.

Step 2 Shared reading
Read the page again. Ask the whole class and/or individuals to repeat parts of the text after you.

Step 3 Guided reading
Read the page in small parts, phrases or sentences.
Help the children to read and understand unknown words. Ask the children questions to help them understand the unknown words and to focus on the text.
Ask the class and/or individuals to read parts of the text and practise the new reading skills.

Step 4 Independent and paired reading
Ask the children to read the story again on their own or in pairs. At this stage the children will find reading on their own difficult and will need a lot of support. You may need to go round the class asking individual children to read a sentence or page out loud.

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A typical reading lesson

One lesson is usually two pages in the reading book. Read this description of a typical lesson before you read the lesson notes for the reading book you are using.

Using the cassette/audio CD

The cassette/audio CD uses the exact words that are in the book. The children can follow the story in the books (or in the Big Book version) as it is being read. You can decide how and when to use the cassette/audio CD. It will depend on your own circumstances and preferences. Here are some suggestions which may help you.

1 You can listen to the cassette/audio CD before the lesson to check pronunciation and intonation.
2 We suggest you read the text to the class before they hear it on the cassette/audio CD. Reading the text to the children will help your relationship with them and you can be more flexible than the cassette/audio CD. You can make the story come alive and use the illustrations. You can decide when to stop, to ask questions, to repeat, to encourage the children to predict, to explain meaning etc.
3 The cassette/audio CD is very useful after you have read the text for the fist time. It is a good model, spoken by a native speaker and reinforces what you have read to them.
4 It is good for the children to listen to the cassette/audio CD on their own, either in class or at home, while they follow the text in their books.

Preparation before the lesson

- Read the pages in the reading book several times. Look at the way the text is arranged on the page and look at how the pictures are used to explain the story. Make sure you know the vocabulary and understand the story.
- Listen to the cassette/audio CD to give you more confidence. This will also help you with pronunciation, intonation and stress.
- Decide how you will present the pages. Will you sit down, walk round the class or stand at the front? Will the children sit round you, or sit at their tables?
- Look at the summary box at the start of each section of lesson notes. Print out all of the wordcards you need and collect the other items you need for the lesson.

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During the lesson

Before reading

- When you introduce a new reading book to the class, make the children interested in it and excited about it. Show the children the book cover and read the title together. Ask the children to predict:
  – what the story is about
  – who the characters are and what they will do
  – where the story happens.
  Brainstorm anything the children already know about the topic. Elicit the words for the things the children can see on the cover and elicit other vocabulary the children know.
- If you have already started the book and this is a second or third lesson, ask the children:
  – to talk about the characters they have met so far
  – where the story takes place
  – what has happened so far.
- Look at the illustrations and talk about what the characters are doing. Discuss some of the background detail.
- You may wish to teach new vocabulary, especially important content words (see **Introducing new vocabulary** on page 13), before the children look at the pages. If you do, ask the children to find and read these words at the beginning of the modelled reading stage. However, you may prefer to teach these words during the guided reading time when the children will read the words in context. New words can be reinforced after reading (see **Word recognition skills** on page 14).

During reading

Step 1 **Modelled reading:**

- demonstrates fluent and expressive oral reading and reading for enjoyment
- motivates children and helps them to appreciate the value of reading
- allows children to hear vocabulary and grammar in context
- allows you to introduce the story without asking the children to do anything
- introduces the children to the patterns of language and the structure of stories, and helps them to use their imaginations.

- Read the text on the page out loud to the class. Do not stop to explain any words. This will help the children to get the gist of the text and provide them with a model for reading.
- This is a guide to modelled reading:

1 Open the pages of the reading book you are going to read to the class.

2 Explain that the children don't need to understand every word the first time they hear the passage. However, if you have taught some of the content words in ***Before reading***, ask the children to find and read these words now. It is very important that the children believe that they can read some of the text already.

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3 If you are using a Big Book, make sure all the children can see the book.
– If you are reading from an ordinary-sized reading book, make sure the children can hear and see you clearly.
– If each child, or pair of children, has copy of the reading book, make sure they are all on the correct page.
– During the reading make sure all the children are following the words in their books.

4 Read slowly and clearly.
If you are using a Big Book, point to the words as you read them. Move your finger under each word in a left to right direction as you do so. Using a pointer is a good idea when reading from a Big Book.

5 Bring the story to life for the children. There are several ways you can do this:
– vary the speed, tone, and volume of your voice
– use different voices when different characters speak
– make sound effects from time to time
– make regular eye contact with the children
– use hand and body gestures
– mime facial expressions to help convey meanings and feelings.

- You may wish to play the cassette/audio CD of the section of the reading book you are teaching. You can use the cassette/audio CD at any point in the lesson where you feel it will be useful.

Step 2 **Shared reading:**
- is an opportunity for you to read the passage again
- allows the children to read along with you in a safe way, without you stopping to ask questions or to teach specific things.

- Read the page again. Ask the whole class and/or individuals to repeat parts of the text after you.

Shared reading can be done in different ways. These are some options:

1 Read the text again and encourage the children to join in with you.
2 Read one phrase or sentence at a time and ask the class or individual children to repeat it after you.
3 Do both **1** and **2**. You are the best judge of what is right for your class.

Step 3 **Guided reading:**
- shows the children how to use ways of understanding the text and encourages them to learn from you
- helps the children learn how to work out unknown words, learn new vocabulary, develop phonic knowledge, and develop ways of understanding the text.

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- Read the page in small parts, phrases or sentences.
- Help the children to read and understand unknown words. Ask the children questions to help them understand the unknown words and to focus on the text.
- Ask the class and/or individuals to read parts of the text and practise the new reading skills.
- These are ideas for guided reading.

1 Read the text out loud to the class in small stages, e.g. one phrase or sentence at a time.
2 Ask the children to guess from the illustrations and from your gestures, voice and tone, if a particular character is angry, happy, sad etc.
3 When there is a word the children do not know, explain to the class how to work out the pronunciation and meaning.

Strategies for working out an unknown word:
– Is it a word they have been taught before and should know by sight?
– Can the children sound the word out?
– If so, have any of the children heard the word before?
– If not, read the complete sentence again. Does it give any clues to the meaning of the word?
– Read the next sentence. Does it help to understand the meaning?
– Are there any pictures on the page that help?

4 If none of the strategies above help, the children will need to be told what the word is and have it explained to them.
5 Regularly elicit answers from the children and reinforce how the English language works.
6 During the reading, check any predictions about the story made at the end of the last lesson.
7 Ask questions which elicit understanding of the text. Use a range of *wh* questions, i.e. *who*, *what*, *when*, *why*, *where*, *how*.
8 Draw attention to the punctuation marks on the page. Discuss why they are there and how they help the reader.
9 Point out:
– recurring language
– grammar patterns
– time markers, e.g. words like *first*, *next* etc.
10 Discuss any special use of language, e.g.:
– vivid adjectives like *big*,
– words in bold print
– onomatopoeic words like BANG!
– speech bubbles etc.
11 Ask the class, or individual children, to read the passage again to practise what has been learnt.
12 Ask the children to tell this part of the story in their own words.

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- Always give the children plenty of time to think, to work out meanings and to understand the text. They need to develop their reading strategies. Praise them regularly.

> ***Step 4*** **Independent/paired reading:**
> - is an opportunity for the children to read the whole story
> - allows the children to practise and reinforce what they have learnt.

- Independent/paired reading is best done at the end of a complete story. Ask the children to read the story again alone or in pairs.
- At this stage independent reading will be limited as the children will need a lot of support. You may need to go round the class asking individual children to read a sentence or page out loud. However, it is very valuable and if you do wish to do it, the following suggestions provide a guide to independent and paired reading.

1 Ask each child to work with a partner, and ask them to take it in turns to read sentences to each other. They can help each other.
2 If you feel they need extra help, the children can read along with the story on the cassette.

After reading

The following suggestions provide some ideas for practising, consolidating and reinforcing what the children have learnt in the reading book.

1 Follow the suggestions made in the lesson notes.
2 Use the support material:
– do an activity using the **wordcards** (see page 16)
– do the **Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbook** page
– do a **Phonics Workbook** page.
3 Let the children take their reading books home to read the page they have studied to and with their parents. It is important for children to be able to practise their reading as much as possible. It is good to involve parents, so they can see how their child is getting on. Make sure the parents understand how to help their children (see **Helping your child with reading** on the inside cover of the reading books).
4 Always give the children an opportunity to predict what they think might happen next in the story.
5 If you have finished the whole story, you could do some of the suggested follow-up activities at the end of the lesson notes for the reading book.

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Introducing new vocabulary

The best way to deal with new vocabulary is in context (see page 10). However, you may prefer to teach new vocabulary before looking at the pages. The two approaches can be combined.

This is a guide to teaching new vocabulary before looking at the pages.

Write the word on the board or show the children the wordcard.

↓

If possible have an example of the object to show the children or draw one on the board.

↓

If drawing is difficult or not appropriate, use mime, e.g. eating a banana, kicking or throwing a ball.

↓

Say the word clearly and ask the class to repeat it.

↓

If some children already know the word, ask them to explain it to the class.

↓

Make up a sentence containing the word in a meaningful context, e.g. *I can throw the ball.*

↓

If necessary, tell the children the word in their native language.

↓

Reinforce and practise the word, using the suggestions in Word recognition skills on page 14.

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Word recognition skills

It is important for children to build up a list of familiar words that they recognise immediately. These words are known as *sight words*. The more *sight words* the children know, the easier they will find it to read.

The reading books control the vocabulary the children see. A limited number of words are recycled and repeated throughout each book. The reading books provide a natural context for the words. This helps the children to learn important sight words.

Word recognition depends on the children's ability to remember a visual picture of the word. This means being able to notice differences in word shapes. Here are some suggestions for helping the children to recognise words.

1. Encourage the children to look at word shapes and talk about any interesting features they have, e.g. if the word *look* is being taught, draw attention to the *oo* in the middle and the fact that it has a tall letter at the beginning and end.
2. Compare a word shape with another similarly-shaped word, e.g. if the children know the word *book*, look at how similar *look* and *book* are.
3. Wherever possible give the children an example of the word. Nouns can be associated with pictures. Verbs like *run* and *jump*, and words for describing position like *in* and *here* can be demonstrated using mime.
4. A lot of the most-used sight words, e.g. *the*, *it*, *was*, have meanings that depend on other words in the sentence. These are best taught in context.

Teaching new sight words

This is a guide for teaching new sight words.

Present the unknown word in a whole sentence.

↓

Discuss the word and its pronunciation, and explain its meaning.

↓

Write the individual word on the board or show the wordcard.

↓

Look at the word's shape and any particular visual features it has.

↓

Ask the children to find the word again in the sentence.

↓

Practise and reinforce the word in a variety of different ways. Repetition helps the recognition of the word to become automatic.

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Word recognition record sheet

This is a guide for using the sheet:

Print out one sheet and write all the words from the book on it. The words are at the back of each reading book.

↓

Use this wordsheet as a test sheet. Stick it onto a piece of card.

↓

Photocopy one of these wordsheets for each child in the class and write the child's name at the top.

↓

While you are using a reading book, show your test sheet to each child. Point to the words the children have read in the reading book so far (see the **Word list** at the beginning of each set of lesson notes). Encourage the child to read the words you point to.

↓

Tick (✔) the words the child can read and cross (✘) the words they can't read on their individual wordsheet.

↓

Write the date of each test on their wordsheet.

↓

Keep all the wordsheets in a folder so that they make a record of each child's progress.

Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbook activities

Many of the Comprehension and Vocabulary Workbook activities teach and reinforce vocabulary.

Using wordcards

The wordcards contain all the words used in the stories. There are large copies of the words to be used when you want all the children to see them, and small copies for individual use by the children for many of the activities listed below. You may wish to give each child their own set of small cards for personal use. It is a good idea to stick the words onto card and laminate them for extra strength, or print them onto thin card.

Activities with wordcards

Once the sightwords have been introduced and taught, a selection of these activities can be used for practising and reinforcing them.

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Picture-word matching Choose two words from the word list that are in a picture from the reading book you are using. Find the matching wordcards. Hold up the book and point to each picture in turn. Encourage the children to point to the correct wordcard each time and to say the word. Increase the number of words and pictures as the children become more confident.

Comparing words Look for similarities and differences in word shape by comparing two or three words at a time.

Word recognition Choose a few sight words and hold the wordcards up one at a time. Tell the children to say each word as it is shown. This can be made into a competitive game by dividing the class into two teams and each team taking it in turns to try and recognise a word. The team which recognises most words is the winner.

Word-word matching Choose two or three words. Make sure you have got two copies of each wordcard. Hold up each wordcard and ask the children to say what the words are. Stick one of each card on the board and give the others to children in the class. Ask the children to match their card with one on the board and to read it. Increase the number of pairs of words as appropriate.

Sentence building/matching There are two activities the children can do.

a Write a simple sentence on the board. Invite one child for each word to come to the front. Give each one a wordcard and ask them to match it with a word on the board.

b Make a sentence with the wordcards. Read it to the class. Do not let them see it. Invite one child for each word in the sentence to come to the front. Give each one a wordcard in random order. Ask them to re-arrange themselves to make the sentence.

Labelling pictures Ask the children to label pictures from the reading book with the wordcards.

- Choose a picture from the reading book you are using and decide which characters, objects or actions you want the children to match.
- Give the children the corresponding wordcards and ask them to match each one with the correct character, object or action in the picture.

Memory game Choose five to ten wordcards and stick them on the board.

- Ask the children to say each word out loud. Then tell them to close their eyes.
- Remove one wordcard. Ask the children to open their eyes. See who can tell you which word has been removed.
- Repeat the game removing a different word each time.

Word chain Invite one child to come out the front. Give him/her a wordcard. The child reads the card out loud.

- Invite another child to the front. He/she has to read the first child's wordcard and then the one he or she is given.
- Continue adding other children until there is a line of ten children. Then repeat using different words and children.
- If a mistake is made, all the children have to sit down for you to start a new chain.

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Phonic skills

What is phonics?

Phonics is the connection between the sounds of English and the ways the sounds are written down. In phonics we teach children the sounds and how to use them to read and spell words, and pronounce them.

Why do we teach phonics?

- Teaching phonics helps children become better readers, spellers and writers.
- Phonics gives children rules to use when reading, writing and pronouncing new words.
- Most words in English are regular phonic words (such as *cat* and *sheep*). They follow the rules. They can be pronounced, read and spelt correctly by using phonics.

How many sounds are there?

- All words are made up of letters.
- There are 26 letters in the alphabet.
- These letters can be written down in different combinations.
- There are just over 40 sounds which together make up every word in the English language.

What are phonemes?

- The sounds (or different letter combinations) in English are called *phonemes*.
- Some phonemes are single letter sounds. For example, the word *cat* is made up of three phonemes *c-a-t*.
- Some phonemes are made up of two or more letters which together make a single sound. For example, the word *sheep* is made up of three phonemes *sh-ee-p*. Notice that in this word the letters *sh* and *ee* each make one sound (or phoneme).

Vowel phonemes

phonemes	sample words	phonemes	sample words
/æ/	c**a**t	/ʊ/	l**oo**k, c**ou**ld, p**u**t
/e/	p**e**g, br**ea**d	/ɑː/	c**ar**t, f**a**st
/ɪ/	b**i**g, want**e**d	/ɜː/	b**ur**n, sh**ir**t, t**er**m, h**ear**d, w**or**k
/ɒ/	l**o**g, w**a**sh	/ɔː/	t**or**n, d**oor**, w**ar**n
/ʌ/	m**u**g, l**o**ve	/ʊə/	s**ur**e, p**ur**e
/eɪ/	p**ai**n, d**ay**, g**a**te, st**a**tion	/ə/	wool**l**en, broth**er**
/iː/	sw**ee**t, h**ea**t, th**ie**f, th**e**me	/aʊ/	d**ow**n, ab**ou**t
/aɪ/	tr**ie**d, l**igh**t, m**y**, sh**i**ne, m**i**nd	/ɔɪ/	b**oi**l, j**oy**
/əʊ/	r**oa**d, bl**ow**, b**o**ne, c**o**ld	/eə/	st**air**s, b**ear**, c**are**
/uː/	m**oo**n, bl**ue**, gr**ew**, c**u**be	/ɪə/	f**ear**, st**eer**, h**ere**

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Consonant phonemes

phonemes	sample words	phonemes	sample words
/b/	**b**ark	/s/	**s**un, hou**s**e, **s**cience
/d/	**d**ig	/t/	**t**op
/f/	**f**an, **ph**oto	/v/	**v**est
/g/	**g**ate	/w/	**w**atch
/h/	**h**ouse	/z/	**z**oo, plea**s**e, i**s**
/j/	**y**es, **y**ellow	/ð/	**th**ere
/k/	coo**k**, **q**ui**c**k, an**ch**or	/θ/	**th**in
/l/	**l**ion	/tʃ/	**ch**eese, ca**tch**
/m/	**m**ouse, co**mb**	/ʃ/	**sh**ip, mi**ss**ion, **ch**ef
/n/	**n**ot, **kn**ife, **gn**aw	/dʒ/	**j**am, **j**oy
/p/	**p**aint	/ŋ/	si**ng**, thi**n**k

Pronouncing phonemes

Some phonemes are difficult to pronounce on their own without adding an extra sound, as in /b/ pronounced /bə/. This /ə/ sound is known as *schwa*. When you are speaking to a class and you have to exaggerate the sound the *schwa* becomes more obvious. As far as possible, try to minimise this extra sound.

What do we need to teach?

We need to teach children to:

- **hear** and identify the separate sounds that make up a spoken word
- **learn the letters** (or combinations of letters) that represent different phonemes
- **pronounce** English words correctly by making these sounds themselves
- **read** words by separating them into phonemes or sounds. This is sometimes called *sounding out* words.
- **spell** words by putting the correct phonemes together. This is sometimes called *word building*.

Phonics Workbooks A and *B* teach phonic skills systematically, in a clear, developmental way. They have been written specially to complement *Little Explorers*.

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Comprehension skills

Introduction

When we are reading, we use two things to help us understand the text:

- what we can see on the page, e.g. the print, the punctuation and the pictures
- what we know, e.g. our background knowledge about language and the world.

Comprehension skills can be divided into two stages:

1 Literal comprehension

This is understanding the ideas and information clearly given in the text. It is important that the children have a good understanding of this level of comprehension. Comprehension activities ask the children to recognise or remember:

– the names of characters, time or place of the story
– the order in which things in the story happen
– the reasons for what happens.

2 Thinking beyond the literal level

At this stage comprehension activities ask the children to use their thinking skills and imagination to understand ideas not on the printed page. This stage includes:

- inferential comprehension (using ideas and information not in the text, but understood from intuition and personal experience).
- evaluative comprehension (using thinking skills, intuition and experience to give personal opinions).

At this early stage children may be asked:

– why they think a character is behaving in a particulary way
– to predict what might happen next
– to decide whether the story could really happen or whether it is fantasy
– to decide whether the character was right or wrong, good or bad etc.
– to talk about how the text makes them feel, e.g. happy, sad
– to consider why the characters behaved like they did or why things in the story happened.

NB In the early stages of reading, it is important for children to develop good literal comprehension skills. However, where possible, children should be encouraged to talk about why they think things in the story are happening and offer their personal opinions about a text.

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Assessment

Introduction

Regular assessment of reading is important because:
- it helps us look at the children's progress
- it helps compare how different children are progressing
- it gives you information to help with future teaching and to help you decide which skills to focus on
- it gives you evidence of the children's achievement
- it gives you information to use for discussion with the child, parents or other teachers (especially useful at the beginning of a new school year).

Assessment can be carried out:
- *informally* In everyday classroom activities you will be able to listen to the children's reading in a general way and notice any difficulties.
- *formally* By focusing on one particular skill, e.g. reading aloud, answering comprehension questions, phonic skills etc., you can check progress by listening to the children.

The following list shows some important skills used in the early stages of reading. The list is arranged in sections, going from the easiest skill to the most difficult in each section.

It is impossible to say when particular skills should be achieved. This depends on a lot of things, e.g. individual personality and ability; the amount of experience the children have had of reading and speaking English; the teaching they have received etc.

Look at the list regularly to:
1 make sure you are not leaving any of these skills out of your teaching
2 check how the children in your class are progressing.

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Some essential reading skills

Concepts about books and print

- Knows how to hold a book correctly.
- Knows where to start a book.
- Knows to read from left to right.
- Knows to read from top to bottom.
- Recognises parts of a book, e.g. cover, title, contents page.
- Knows pictures can tell a story.
- Talks confidently about pictures in a book.
- Knows print carries meaning.
- Knows words are separated by spaces.
- Knows words are made up from letters.

Word recognition skills

Visual memory

- Recognises own name.
- Recognises a few sight words.
- Recognises common environmental print.
- Recognises some letters.
- Differentiates the difference between two words by shape.
- Matches spoken words to print.
- Matches some words 1:1.
- Beginning to notice patterns within words.
- Has good stock of sight words (30+).

Use of context

- Guesses unknown words without use of context.
- Uses picture cues to help read unknown words.
- Uses sentence context to help read unknown words.
- Uses background knowledge to tackle unknown words.
- Tackles unknown words, using a variety of strategies.

Word analysis

- Knows names and sounds of some letters (10+).
- Knows and can say alphabet.
- Knows most initial letter sounds.
- Uses initial letter sounds to help read unknown words.
- Can identify final letter sound in words.
- Can blend short, phonically-regular words.
- Recognises rhyming words.

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Comprehension skills

- Can use pictures to aid comprehension.
- Can recognise and use punctuation to help comprehension.
- Can activate and relate background knowledge to help.
- Can re-tell main gist of story read to him/her.
- Can recognise and recall specific details stated in text.
- Can sequence the order of events or actions.
- Can recognise cause and effect.
- Able to reorganise information or details.
- Can make and confirm predictions.
- Can infer reasons for character's behaviour.
- Can express personal feelings about the text.

Appreciation and response to fiction books

- Can follow simple text by finger pointing.
- Can concentrate and listens attentively when story being read.
- Joins in familiar parts of text in shared reading.
- Can memorise and read simple sentences.
- Can self-correct when makes a mistake in reading.
- Responds to rhythm, rhyme and repetitive patterns in text.
- Can read simple known text with fluency, expression and understanding.
- Enjoys talking about stories.
- Can express personal opinions about texts and illustrations.
- Enjoys reading aloud with others.
- Is confident when reading unfamiliar texts at appropriate level.
- Enjoys reading aloud on own.

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Glossary of terms

This glossary contains explanations of some of the technical words used in the Teacher's Notes. It also contains explanations of non-technical words that may be unfamiliar.

compound word a word formed from two other words, e.g. *seaside*

context the other words in a sentence which gives a word meaning

context clues the words and pictures on a page that help us work out what another word on the page means

contraction making a word shorter, usually using an apostrophe, e.g. *I'm*, *he's*

controlled vocabulary specially chosen words, which are recycled and repeated throughout a book

CVC word a word which is made up of a consonant-vowel-consonant, e.g. *dog*

digraph when two letters appear together and make a single sound, e.g. *ch*op (consonant digraph), m*oo*n (vowel digraph).

environmental print words which are seen around us every day, e.g. on notices, posters, signs etc.

gist the main ideas in a piece of writing or speaking

high frequency words words that appear frequently in all reading material

onomatopoeia a word which sounds like what it describes, e.g. *buzz*, *hiss*, *bang*

phonemes the sounds (or different letter combinations) in English

phonically regular word words such as *cat* and *sheep* that can be pronounced, read and spelled correctly by using phonic rules

phonics the understanding of the link between the sounds of English and the ways these sounds are written down

picture clues details in a picture that help us understand the text by providing clues to context and meaning

prefix a group of letters that can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, e.g. *happy – unhappy*

prepositional phrase a phrase made up of a preposition and the noun or pronoun that comes after it, e.g. *in the car*, *near her*

reading strategy When we read, we use a combination of reading strategies, e.g. word recognition, phonics (using letter sounds), contextual (using knowledge of meaning gained from the context of the text), grammatical knowledge etc.

recurring language specially chosen words and structures which are used regularly throughout a book to reinforce them

schwa /ə/ the most common sound in the English language used for vowels in unstressed syllables: *mother* /mʌðə/, *around* /əraʊnd/

sight words and sight vocabulary familiar words that children recognise immediately are known as *sight words*. The more sight words the children know, i.e. the bigger their *sight vocabulary*, the easier they will find it to read.

sounding out words separating words into phonemes or sounds during reading

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suffix a group of letters that can be added to the end of a word. There are two types of suffix:

1 suffixes which change the tense or status of the word, e.g. from present to past *walk – walked*; from singular to plural *lady – ladies*.
2 suffixes which change the type of word, e.g. from noun to adjective *colour – colourful*.

time marker words like *first*, *next*, *then*

vivid adjective words like *big*, *bad*

word building spelling words by putting the correct phonemes together

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