

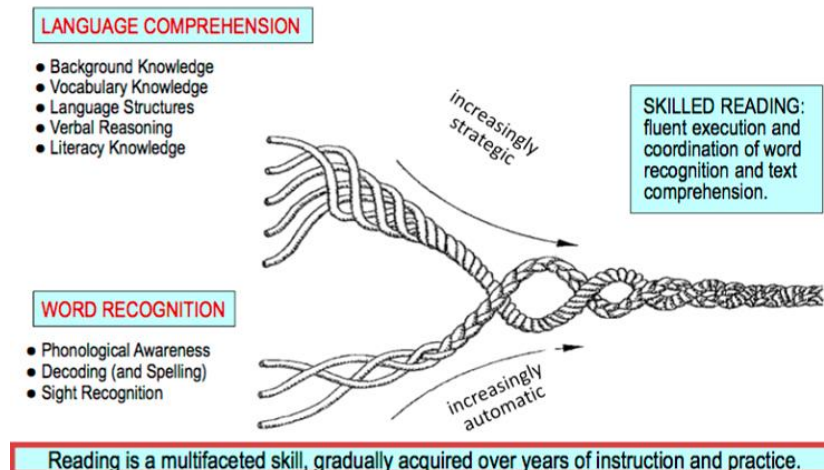
Disciplinary Literacy

As students progress through an increasingly specialised secondary school curriculum, we recognise that there is a growing need to ensure that students are trained to access the academic language and conventions of different subjects as advocated by the EEF. Our literacy strategies are grounded in disciplinary literacy and aim to meet this need, building on the premise that each subject has its own unique language, ways of knowing, doing, and communicating and that these skills need to be explicitly taught by all teachers in all subjects. We must remember that poor reading skills are not necessarily an indication of potential or intelligence nor special educational need.

'Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers of every subject to teach students how to read, write, and communicate effectively.' EEF

This diagram illustrates the complex skill of reading.

Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001)



The students arriving in Year 7 have mastered to differing degrees the 'word recognition' strand of the reading rope but the 'language comprehension' strand is a weak area. This was the findings from the reading assessments for the present Yr 7 at the start of the year and is likely to be even more so for the new Yr 7 in September 2021 as they have had their Yr 5 & 6 disrupted.

The cognitive load on the working memory of students is decreased when their reading becomes more fluent and automatic. This is also the case when students are familiar with the words and background knowledge before they read a text. Familiarity with complex sentence patterns and recognition of the techniques used in texts are also important. Furthermore, comprehension is facilitated by metacognitive skills such as monitoring whether reading is making sense and choosing to act if it does not.

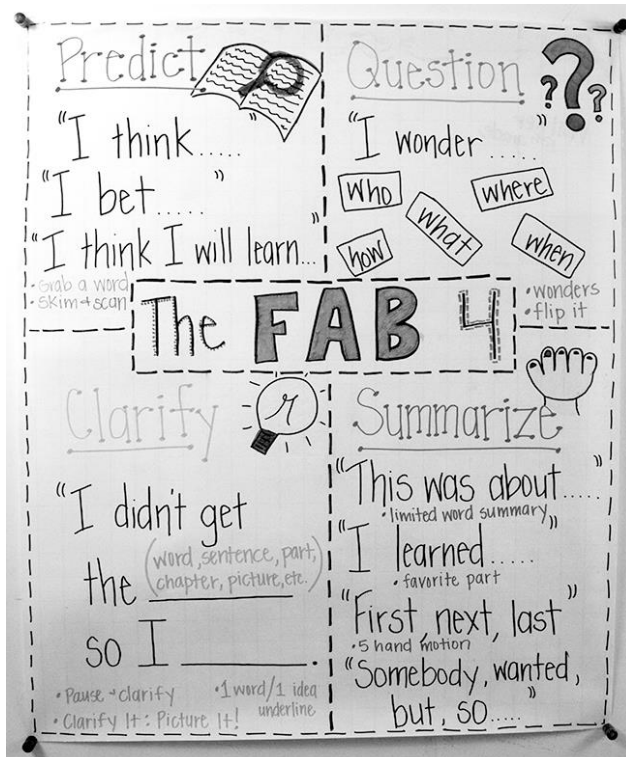
Students express their frustration and difficulties in a variety of ways with comments such as, "I hate reading!" or "This is stupid!". However, if they could, this is how they might describe how comprehension difficulties in particular affect their reading: 'It takes me so long to read something'; 'It's hard to follow along with everything going on'; 'I didn't really get what that writing was about'.

Good readers are extremely active as reading involves thinking and metacognitive skills of self-regulation. As subject teachers, we need to teach the reading strategies to support the

active engagement with the texts and reading material in our lessons. These reading strategies can be modelled and practised to develop students as independent, strategic readers. These strategies need to be adapted for each subject, modelled and explicitly taught within subject lessons.

Reciprocal Reading strategies break down what a good reader does when reading and comprehending reading material. These strategies can be adapted for each subject:

- Activate prior knowledge and establish context of text - this may require some pre-teaching
- Predicting - skim, scan,
- Questioning - metacognitive strategies of monitoring their own understanding
- Clarifying - closer reading. rereading small sections of text
- Summarising - identifying key points

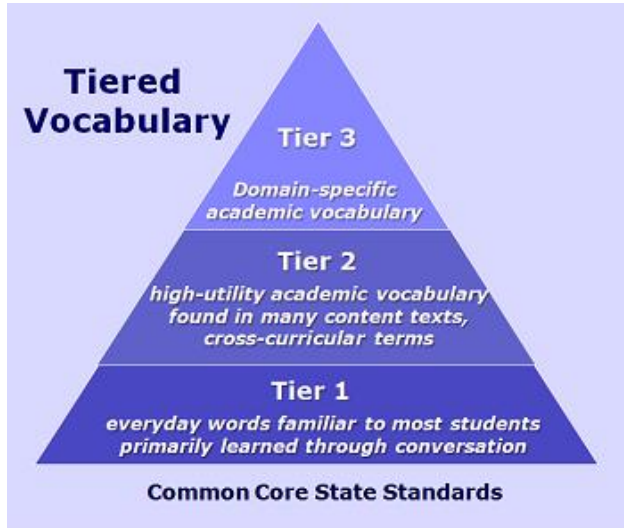


A way of deciding on how to adapt the reading strategies for your own subject area and gaining insight into the literacy demands of your subject, advocated by the Durrington Research School, is to read the texts that students are expected to read and 'think aloud' about the reading processes that subject experts go through during this process. From this, subject teams could create a list of what Shanahan and Shanahan call 'reading facilitators', or explicit instructions for how to read a text in specific subjects. These could then be crystalised into a set of reading guidelines for students to use as they encounter subject-specific texts.

CULTIVATING 'WORD CONSCIOUSNESS' (Quigley)

'Word consciousness' is an "awareness and interest in words and their meanings". The teaching of word parts (morphology) and word histories (etymology) are some of the most well-evidenced methods of explicit vocabulary teaching.

Vocabulary can be categorised into three tiers (see below). Tier 3 vocabulary is taught by departments but it is the deficit of Tier 2 vocabulary that becomes most apparent during transition from primary to secondary school.



Tier 3 vocabulary is taught within subject lessons and is now embedded in SoL.

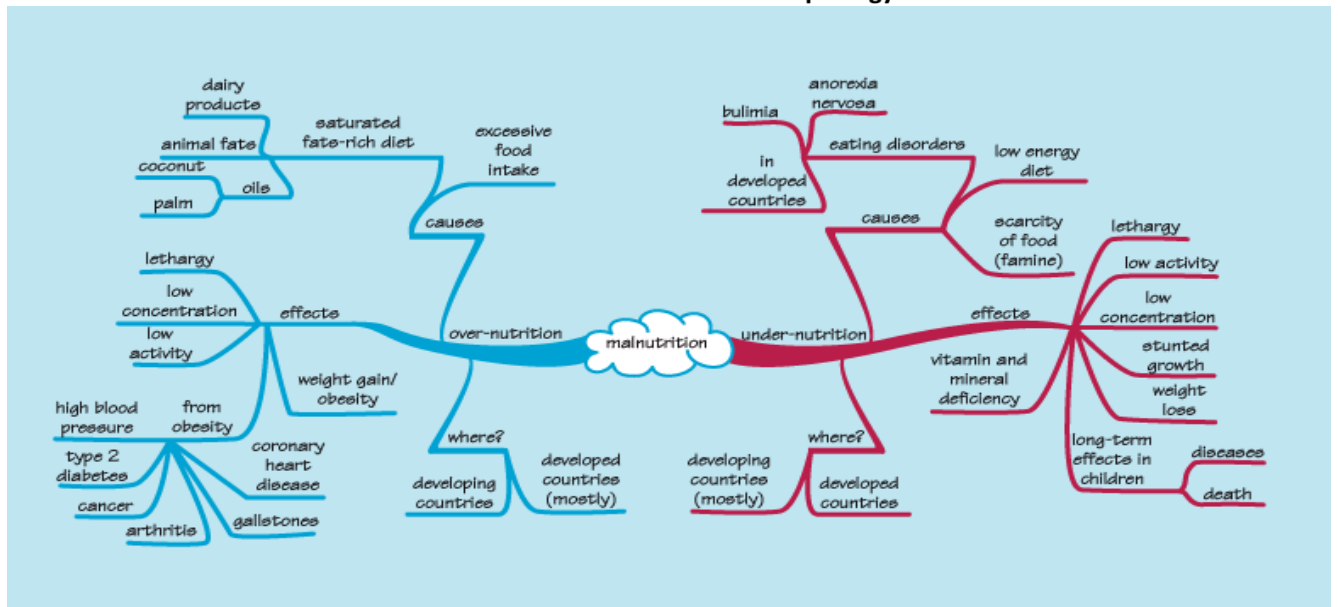
Tier 2 vocabulary will be a focus for the Be Word Savvy initiative alongside prefixes and suffixes. We can also become more aware of the Tier 2 words used in our own subjects.

All subject teachers are asked to reinforce where possible the week's Be Word Savvy focus and the spelling rule introduced in English.

The etymology of... etymology

From the Greek words 'etymos', meaning 'true', and 'lógos', denoting 'word' - it means then a 'true word'.

1. What other words to you know include the suffix 'ology'?
2. How is the word 'morphology' linked?



This word schema supports putting words into context and making connections for students to build knowledge not just separate words and facts. How could this be used in your subject?

Becoming more word conscious as teachers, we can ask ourselves these questions and use these strategies as appropriate:

Select

- *How difficult is this reading material to understand?*
- *What words are most important to understand the text or topic?*
- *What words are unlikely to be part of a child's prior knowledge?*
- *What words lack helpful, directive contexts?*
- *What words appear repeatedly in a text and a topic?*
- *What words are interrelated and help children know additional words?*
- *What words are frequently encountered in many subject disciplines ['Tier 2' words]?*

Explain

1. **Say the word carefully** (remember the importance of 'phonemic awareness?').
2. **Write the word** (this offers opportunities to reference common sounds or letters in the word).
3. **Give a student friendly definition** e.g. **obtuse**– *not very sensitive or slow to understand.*
4. **Give multiple meaningful examples** e.g. *the prince was being deliberately obtuse.*
5. **Ask for student examples and clarify multiple meanings or any misconceptions.**

Explore

- *Explore the etymology and common word parts to explore meaning.*
- *Explore any common word families, interesting synonyms or antonyms for the word/s.*
- *Explore how the word may be used differently in different disciplines.*
- *Explore multiple-choice questions that offer examples of the word in use.*
- *Explore understanding of the word with peers in 'think-pair-share' fashion.*
- *Explore understanding with children restating the meaning of the word/s in their own words.*
- *Explore further questions prompted by the word.*
- *Explore more examples of the word in use.*
- *Explore related images or ideas evoked by the word.*
- *Explore strategies to remember the word or concept e.g. mnemonics.*

Consolidate

- *Test and learn.*
- *Using the word in the world.*
- *Research and record.*

Being an Active Reader

Strategies for students:

- Use a ruler or pencil to keep track of where you are in the text.
 - Follow punctuation: stop when there is a full stop. Pause if there is a comma, or semi-colon; or colon:
 - Make sure you look up any words you are not sure of.
 - Read the text aloud but quietly to yourself if this helps. (in exams you will not be able to make a noise - can you practise reading it in your head?)
 - Use your overlay if you have one.
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- Skim read the text - this means to read it to understand the overall idea.
 - Look at headings/subheadings/ pictures to help you.
 - Scan the text slowly to find specific information you need to answer questions.
 - Highlight or underline key words in the question, and then do the same in the text if you are allowed to.

Solving Problems



Does the sentence make **sense**?

Do I **understand** what I am reading?

Do I need to **reread** that part?