



St Christopher's

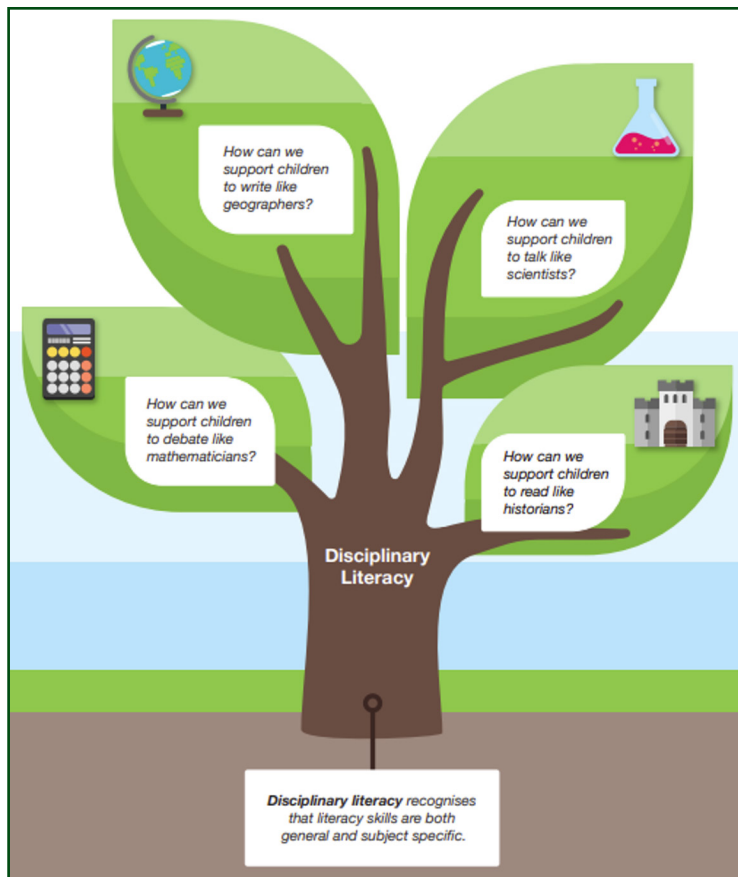
Reading and Literacy Bulletin

Half Term 6 | June 2023

'The reading and writing of Standard English, alongside proficient language development, is the key to unlocking the rest of the academic curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read struggle in all subjects and the wonders of a knowledge-rich curriculum passes them by unread.'

Ofsted Reading Framework 2021

The theme of this half term's bulletin is to begin our pivot from reading to a more holistic literacy strategy. Below is an excerpt from the Teacher's Development Trust's article on leading literacy in school:



Ensuring that teachers recognise that literacy is both general and subject-specific can be challenging, but it is a discipline that cannot be ignored...literacy is not just the responsibility of the literacy leaders and English teachers but a whole school responsibility and that literacy is essential for success across the curriculum.

Pupils need to be able to communicate effectively, to read and write and need the tools to be able to access challenging academic curriculum content in school and beyond. For pupils to advance academically from primary to secondary school, they need to be able to appreciate how scientists, mathematicians, and other experts, for example, use literacy.

To succeed in these disciplines, they must learn how to engage in specialist literacy (disciplinary literacy) beyond general literacy skills. Disciplinary literacy 'adds awareness, insights, and abilities that will allow students to adjust and deepen their literacy practices appropriately to match the specific academic social contexts and intellectual demands of the disciplines.' (Shanahan, 2019)

The EEF consider there to be 7 key priorities for improving literacy in secondary schools. Much of our focus next year – 2023-24 – will be looking at these objectives:

- Prioritise 'disciplinary' literacy across the curriculum
- Provided targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject
- Develop student's ability to read complex academic texts
- Break down complex writing tasks
- Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject
- Provide opportunities for structured talk
- Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students

A more comprehensive approach is found [here](#).

IMPROVING LITERACY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
Summary of recommendations

Education Endowment Foundation

- 1** Prioritise 'disciplinary' literacy across the curriculum
 - Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of success in later life.
 - Disciplinary literacy is an approach to teaching literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.
 - All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.
 - School leaders can help teachers by ensuring processes are in place to ensure that all teachers use general approaches.
- 2** Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject
 - Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.
 - Effective approaches, including those based on etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.
 - Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary which students are likely to encounter in everyday speech.
 - Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum plans.
- 3** Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts
 - Teaching focused on teaching reading in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction that is sequenced more effectively.
 - To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.
 - Reading strategies, such as identifying core knowledge, prediction and questioning can improve student comprehension.
 - Strategies can be embedded through modelling and shared writing, supported by gradually released to provide independence.
- 4** Break down complex writing tasks
 - Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction that is sequenced more effectively.
 - Teachers can break writing down into planning, modelling and co-writing, and can support students by modelling each step.
 - Targeted support should be provided for students who struggle to write fluently, as they affect writing quality.
 - Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and shared writing, to release students to write.
- 5** Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject
 - Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.
 - Reading helps students gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, while writing can deepen students' understanding of texts.
 - Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.
 - Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students' writing, particularly when focused on meaning.
- 6** Provide opportunities for structured talk
 - Talk matters, both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.
 - High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.
 - Accountable talk is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and all employees have felt can be subject specific.
 - Teachers can support and encourage modelling high quality talk, for example including vocabulary and metacognitive reflection.
- 7** Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students
 - Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.
 - Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need in a planning approach.
 - Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.
 - Creating a co-ordinated system of support is a significant challenge, requiring both specialist input and whole school leadership.

EEF: 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools'

The first step towards considering disciplinary literacy might be to discuss, with colleagues, questions that surround literacy in each subject, such as:





What is unique about your subject discipline in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening? What is common with other subject disciplines?

How do members of this subject discipline use language on a daily basis?

Are there any typical literacy misconceptions held by students, for example, how to write an effective science report?

Are there words and phrases used typically, or uniquely, in the subject discipline?

Alex Quigley resource on 'teaching sentence variation':

 <h3>Sentence Combining</h3> <p>Sentence combining is the combination of two or more sentences into one complex sentence.</p> <p>e.g. The Great Fire of London began on Pudding Lane in the bakery of Thomas Farriner. The fire worsened due to the long, hot summer.</p> <p><i>Is revised to...</i></p> <p>During a long, hot summer, the Great Fire of London likely began in the bakery of Thomas Farriner.</p>	 <h3>Sentence Shrinking</h3> <p>Sentence shrinking is the controlled reduction of sentence length for clarity or for rhetorical impact.</p> <p>e.g. It hadn't rained for months so that farmers had to find new technologies to water the crops..</p> <p><i>Is reduced to...</i></p> <p>Hydration technology was used to water the crops.</p>
 <h3>Sentence Expanding</h3> <p>Sentence expanding involves the development of a sentence by adding additional clauses.</p> <p>e.g. He is a total monster.</p> <p><i>Is added to...</i></p> <p>He is a total monster, stomping through the school, screaming at petrified pupils.</p>	 <h3>Sentence Signposting</h3> <p>Sentence signposting is the crafting of conjunctions to clarify and connect across and within sentences.</p> <p>e.g. 'First... in addition...To conclude....' 'Due to... particularly... so that...' 'Notably... however... In short...'</p>


How can school leaders prioritise disciplinary literacy?

Secondary teachers are likely to have experienced a significant amount of training focused on literacy, or been asked to support new whole school literacy initiatives, yet many teachers feel ill-equipped to improve literacy outcomes in their subject area. Teachers have recognised the importance of literacy and strategies promoted as 'literacy across the curriculum', but this, often, does not translate into the successful application of literacy in their subject discipline.

- **Auditing existing literacy practices, attitudes,** and resources in school—involving both teachers and students; this could include an evaluation of existing literacy policies and roles such as the literacy coordinator.
- **Creating subject specific literacy plans,** rooted in the discipline, that address barriers to accessing the curriculum related to reading, writing and communication
- **Supporting teachers to define effective reading, writing, and talk in their subjects;** for example, history teachers might discuss what reading strategies are deployed by historians to appraise historical sources.
- **Evaluating the quality and complexity of existing reading materials in school,** assessing the degree of academic challenge such texts pose to our secondary school students as they progress through school; relating this to baseline data of students' reading ability.
- Ensuring that the development of disciplinary literacy is coherently **aligned with curriculum development**—for example, in Art, that the development of drawing skill is paired with teaching students how to make high quality annotations utilising specialist vocabulary

Revisit: Oracy in the classroom – an ‘Oracy scaffold’ to help stimulate productive debate

DEBATE LANGUAGE: Professional Speaking Skills



CLARIFICATION & INFORMATION REQUESTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you mean...?• What do you mean?• What does that mean?• Could you clarify...?• Could you repeat that?• Could you explain that (in more detail)?• What's the difference between X and Y?	OPINION & PARTICIPATION REQUESTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you think about...?• I'd like to know Q's opinion about...• Let's hear what Q has to say about this.• Let's consult other group members before proceeding.	DISAGREEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'm afraid I don't agree because...• I'm sorry, but I have to disagree because...• I see your point, but...• No, I don't think that's true because...• I completely/totally disagree.• I take your point, but...	AGREEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I agree with Q's point because...• That's a good point.• I think Q has the right idea.• I'd like to add something to that.• I completely/totally agree.• I fully support that stance.
INTERRUPTING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excuse me,...• I'm sorry,...• Before you go on,...• I'd like to add something.• I'd like to comment on that.• Can I say something?• May I interrupt for a moment?• I have a question about that, if I may.	SUPPORTING & EMPHASIZING A POINT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By that, I mean...• What I mean is...• An example of this is...• To be more specific,...• I want to stress/highlight...• I'd like to emphasize...• The crucial/essential/fundamental point is...	REPHRASING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In other words,...• That is to say,...• To put it another way,...• The point I'm making is...• What I'm suggesting is...• What I meant to say...• Let me put it another way.	CONNECTING IDEAS & SUMMARIZING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q said that..., and I'd like to add...• Returning to the previous topic,...• In light of what was said earlier,...• In other words, you're saying...• If I understand you correctly, you're saying...
EXPRESSING CERTAINTY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It seems to me...• I imagine...• As far as I know,...• I think/believe...• I'm pretty sure/certain...• I'd like to say/point out...• I'm positive/sure/certain/convinced that...	STAYING ON TOPIC <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think we're getting off topic.• Could we go back to...?• Perhaps we should return to the topic at hand.	FOLLOWING UP A QUESTION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That's not really what I was asking. My question is about...• Perhaps I didn't make my question clear. In fact what I asked was...• I think you've answered a slightly different question. What I would like to know is...• I understand that but what I actually had in mind was...• Sorry, I'm still not clear about...	REFERRING TO RESEARCH <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work of Q shows/indicates/reveals that...• Q argues/points out/makes clear that...• In a study of X, Q found that...• Q has drawn attention to the fact that...• According to Q,...• In an article by Q,...

Find the original post and read more [here](#).

Further reading:

- [‘What is Disciplinary Literacy and Why Does it Matter?’](#) by Timothy and Cynthia Shanahan (2012).
- [Explicit Vocabulary Teaching 3: Because, But, So](#) – TomNeedham (wordpress.com)
- [Does writing *really* matter in art and design?](#) (theconfidentteacher.com)
- [The Grammar Gap](#) (theconfidentteacher.com)
- [Tracking in Classrooms: What I Really Think \(and Wrote\)](#) | Teach Like a Champion
- [Comprehension Skills or Strategies](#) | Shanahan on Literacy

Check out our Library resources:

[Recommended Reading for KS3](#) | [Challenging Reading for KS3](#) | [A Guide to Support Reading at Home for Parents](#)