



Zimbabwe
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

LITERACY



IGATE Module 5

Comprehension of short
texts



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Revised Module 5 (MoPSE)



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Foundational literacy

Module 5: Comprehension of short texts

Module contents

About these modules	1
Module introduction	3
Unit 1: Finding information and reading narrative sentences	4
Unit 2: Songs and rhymes	12
Unit 3: Very short stories	19
Resources	29
Acknowledgements	46

About these modules

This is the fifth of six Teacher Professional Development (TPD) modules for all teachers working with learners whose attainment in literacy is below their Grade or Form level. The modules are also appropriate for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) – particularly during school placements or practicum.

Module 1: Single letters sounds and first steps in writing

Module 2: The sounds of letter pairs/threes and ‘tricky spellings’

Module 3: Assessment and more on reading/writing words

Module 4: From longer words to short sentences

Module 5: Comprehension of short texts

Module 6: Working with longer texts / Review

The modules were collaboratively developed for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) by The Open University, World Vision, and CARE international. The modules have been tried and tested in hundreds of primary and secondary schools across Zimbabwe, strengthening the teaching of foundation skills and improving learning outcomes. Our thanks to everyone who contributed – especially teachers, school heads, and schools’ inspectors.

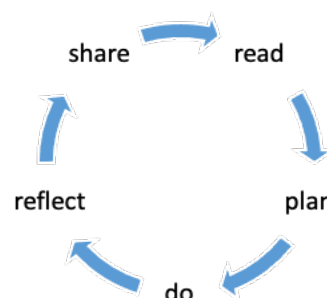
MOPSE’s highest priority is to empower ALL learners through strong foundations in literacy and numeracy. Whatever their Grade or Form, all learners need strong foundations in literacy and numeracy to succeed in other learning areas.

Learners must *learn to read and use number* so they can *read and use number to learn*.

Using the modules

Teachers will benefit most by using the modules within reflective-practice cycles in their schools, as shown below.

Read	an activity.
Plan	how you will use the activity.
Do	the activity with your learners.
Reflect	what did learners learn from doing the activity?
	➤ What worked well?
	➤ What would you change next time?
Share	your experiences with your colleagues.



The modules can be used by

- individual teachers.
- pairs or groups of teachers.
- whole schools.
- cluster meetings or district workshops.

The modules provide classroom activities and guidance for effective use.

Learner attainment

We describe learners who can do an activity confidently and successfully as 'higher attaining' and learners who cannot do an activity well as 'lower attaining'.

No one knows what a learner will be able to do given the chance. Every learner has the potential for growth. Teachers have often been surprised when they found that a learner who was 'higher attaining' for one activity was then 'lower attaining' for another—and vice versa. So we don't label learners with words like 'fast' or 'slow'.

A learner may have different levels of attainment in different learning areas, or in different aspects of one learning area. That's why assessment is a big part of the activities. It is important to find out, as often as possible, what learners know and can or can't do. Then they can be given activities at a level that will help them progress.

Working in groups

Learning takes place as a result of **doing** an activity, **thinking** about it, and **understanding** the ideas it contains.

In order to make sure that all learners are **doing**, many activities are designed so learners work together in pairs or small groups for most of the lesson. Pairs, or groups of four to six learners work best because everyone can take part. The activity will usually need to be demonstrated by the teacher first.

There are several ways in which learners can be put into groups. Teachers should choose the one which works best for the activity and their learners.

1. Learners choose themselves. Sometimes this can result in friends working (or not working!) together, while other learners are left out.
2. Learners at a similar level of attainment work together. This can work well, as learners are working at their preferred pace, but learners who need help have to find it from outside the group.
3. Learners at mixed levels of attainment work together. This type of grouping has the advantage that higher-attaining learners can help lower-attaining ones. This gives lower attaining learners personal and prompt support, and higher-attaining learners a chance to talk about what they have learnt which helps to deepen their understanding.

Introduction: Different types of text

There are many different types of text. We read these different types of text in different ways and for different reasons. When we start reading a text, we normally know what type of text it is, and what its purpose is. This is an important part of understanding what we read. (Next time you start to read a text, think about how much you already know about the text before you actually read it.) Below are the most common types of text.

Narrative

A narrative is an account of a series of connected events. It can be fictional (a made-up story) or factual (telling the story of a sequence of real events). We normally read this type of text by starting at the beginning and reading through to the end. We may read this type of text for entertainment.

Informative

Some texts exist to provide information. For example, a news report, an organisation's website, a Wikipedia article, a travel guide, a business letter. We may not read this type of text from the beginning to the end. Instead, we may search through it, looking for specific information.

Persuasive

Persuasive texts aim to change the reader's beliefs about something. This category includes advertisements, posters with health advice and newspaper opinion pieces.

Personal

Personal texts have a similar purpose to face-to-face conversation, but are written. For example, WhatsApp messages to a single recipient.

Knowing what type of text we are reading and why we are reading it is an important part of literacy. As part of teaching foundational literacy, you need to help your learners start to be aware of different text types, and how they can interact with them. Working with a wide range of different text types can also be fun and motivating for learners, and helps to develop their knowledge of the world.

Foundational literacy

Unit 1: Finding information and reading narrative sentences

Contents

1.1: 'Word detective' with grocery packaging	5
1.2: Add to the sentence	7
1.3: Finish the sentence	10

Key words

early literacy, assessment, reading, writing, sentence formation

1.1: 'Word detective' with grocery packaging

Aim

To develop learners' skills in finding and understanding written information.

What the learners will do

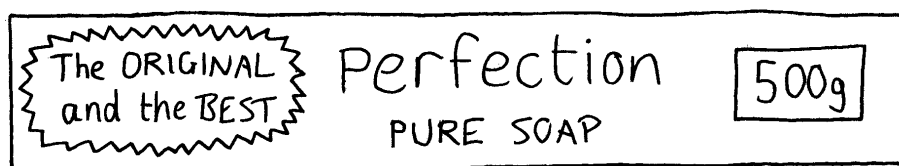
They will find information printed on grocery packaging.

Resources

Collect enough boxes, packets, bottles or tins for each group of four to six learners to have one each to work with. Wash them if necessary. Also, in the previous lesson, you could ask learners to bring suitable things from their own homes.

Activity

1. On the chalkboard, draw a simplified version of a well-known or imaginary grocery package with some words. For example:



2. Ask the questions below to the whole class. When you get correct answers, point to the words on the drawing. This is to make sure the learners understand the questions.
 - *What is in it? How do you know?* (The words and pictures tell you what is in it.)
 - *Which word or words are the most important?* (Usually the biggest words.)
 - *What does _____ mean?* (Ask the meaning of any key words the learners may not know.)
3. Organise the class into groups of four to six learners. Give each group a box, packet, bottle or tin. If possible, give each group the same one.
4. Ask the questions again. Adapt the questions to suit the item (see **Resource A**, page 29). Each learner must write their own answer if they can. Then the learners in each group compare their answers, and choose the group's final answer.
5. Repeat the questions and ask the groups to tell you their answers. Demonstrate the correct answers by pointing to the words on the packaging.

Assessment

Use the answers that the learners give in stages 2 and 4 to judge how well the class can do the activity. Does it seem that most learners could answer, or is it just a few? Encourage 'quiet' learners who do not often answer questions to answer this time. In this way, you will learn more about the literacy skills of the whole class, not just the same few learners who always volunteer to answer questions.

Into practice: Using grocery packaging with a low-attainment class

Most of Mrs Siziba's learners are still not very familiar with English and still have a very low level of attainment in literacy, but they recognise letters and some English words on grocery packaging. Mrs Siziba knows that becoming familiar with letters and words on packages will help them to read these letters and words in other texts, such as stories and websites or on signs. She also knows that it will make her learners more curious and inquisitive about the written words around them. In addition, when learners copy words from packages, they learn to write letters and words more confidently and accurately.

Mrs Siziba collected some empty boxes, packets, bottles and tins from her own home. She also asked her neighbours for any that they could give her. She brought them to school to use for reading and writing activities.

In the next lesson, her class played '**Word detective**'. A few learners could write whole words as answers, some could write only a few letters with lots of mistakes, and some could not write anything. Mrs Siziba made sure that the learners who could not write anything did not feel bad about this.

After the questions, the learners in each group compared their answers (from what they wrote or from memory) and then decided on their group's final answer. Mrs Siziba discussed these answers with the whole class. The 'winner' was the group with most correct answers.



This activity helped my learners to understand one of the many reasons why being able to read is a useful and necessary skill, as they recognised much of the packing from their everyday lives. It was a fun activity, too!

1.2: Add to the sentence

Aim

To develop learners' skills in reading whole sentences.

What the learners will do

They will add words one at a time to build up short sentences.

Resources

Resource B (page 30) gives ideas for sentences for the activity. For a reminder of some useful grammar words, see **Resource C** (page 31). Please note that grammar words such as 'adjective' and 'adverb' are used here for teachers' reference only. It is not intended that you use them with your learners.

Activity

1. Write a very short sentence in the simple past tense on the board. Use simple words you think the whole class will understand. Although short, it must be a complete grammatical sentence with a noun and a verb. For example:

The dog ran.
2. Check the learners understand. Perhaps get them to act the sentence. For the example above, you could ask a volunteer to act being a dog and running.
3. Point to the space between *The* and *dog*. Ask for suggestions for words which could go into this space. You want the learners to suggest simple adjectives which make sense in the sentence. In this example, *brown*, *big*, *nice*, *old*, *friendly* etc. Write good examples on the board, and get the class to say the sentence together while you point at each word in turn.



4. Ask for another word that can go in the same space, and repeat the process. For example:

The big brown dog ran.

5. Ask the class a question so you can add a suitable adverb to the sentence. For example: 'How did the dog run?'

The big brown dog ran quickly.

6. Point to the space before the adverb. Ask the learners to suggest a word that could go in the space. For example:

The big brown dog ran very quickly.

7. (Optional) If the class has a higher level of literacy, you could continue the sentence in other ways. For example:

The big brown dog ran very quickly out of the house and into the street.

8. Now give the class a similar very short sentence. For example:

The man shouted.

The learners work in pairs. They must try to think of a longer version of the sentence.

9. Repeat the process described above to build up a longer version of the sentence, based on suggestions from the learners. For example:

The angry old man shouted quite loudly.

You may want to do this for more than one version of the sentence if plenty of good suggestions are coming from the learners.

Of course, very many other simple sentence types are possible. For example, you could use a verb which is usually followed by an object (in the example below, the object is 'chicken').

We ate.

We ate chicken for lunch yesterday.

See **Resource B** (page 30) for more ideas, and/or use your own. Repeat the activity 'little and often': in other words, do it with just three or four sentences, but repeat it (with different sentences) in future lessons.

When the learners have become more confident, get them to copy the long version of the sentences into their notebooks.

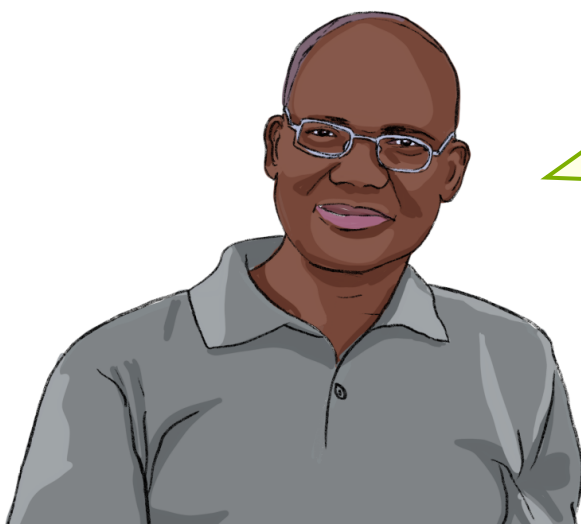
Assessment

Check the sentences the learners have written in their notebooks. Are there many errors? What types of error are there? Do some learners seem to be writing a lot more confidently than others? Use the information you collect to plan future lessons. For example, if some or many learners are not yet writing evenly and in fairly small letters, they may need more activities for practising handwriting.

Into practice: Getting less confident learners to contribute ideas

Mr Utseya knows there can be problems with activities such as 'Add to the sentence', which invite contributions from learners and use 'hands up'. The more confident learners put their hands up eagerly, while the less confident learners mostly do not. One way around this is to ignore the learners with their hands up, and to ask a learner who has not raised a hand. However, this is not ideal, as that learner may really not have anything to contribute, and may feel embarrassed about being asked to do so in front of the rest of the class.

So Mr Utseya often uses the 'speak once' rule. He makes the class understand that each person can only speak once. When a learner has made a suggestion or answered a question, they cannot raise their hand again. In this way, the more confident learners gradually stop raising their hands. This encourages the less confident learners to raise their hands. Eventually, only the least confident learners are left. Mr Utseya hopes that these learners will feel encouraged to contribute, but he does not force them to do so if they really do not want to. He makes a note of who they are, so he can make a special effort to encourage them to contribute in the future.



When everybody (or everybody who wants to) has spoken, I start the 'speak once' rule again from the beginning. Now everybody can raise their hands again.

1.3: Finish the sentence

Aim

To develop learners' skills in reading whole sentences.

What the learners will do

They will add words one at a time to build up short sentences. The activity is similar to **Activity 1.1**, but this time the learners work in groups and rely more on their own ideas.

Resources

Each group will need a blank sheet of paper and pens/pencils.

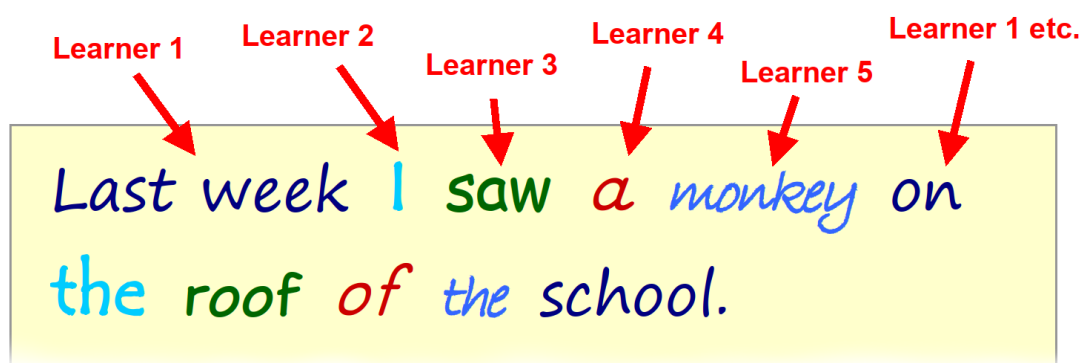
Useful starting words for the activity:

Yesterday	This morning	Last week
Last month	Three hours ago	Last year
A few days ago	A long time ago	100 years ago

Activity

Ideally every learner will be able to write. If some learners in the class cannot write, each group will need a 'secretary' who can write reasonably well.

1. Organise the class into groups of four to six. Choose a 'secretary' for each group if necessary (see above). Give each group a sheet of paper.
2. Write the start of a sentence with a time in the past – see the **useful starting words** above. In each group, Learner 1 (or the 'secretary') must copy it onto the top left corner of the paper.
3. Learner 2 must add one word to continue the sentence. Then Learner 2 passes the paper to Learner 3, who must add another word, and so on. If you are using 'secretaries', each learner must say the next word instead, and the secretary writes it.



4. When every group has produced a complete sentence, check the sentences for any errors. See **Into practice** below for more details.
5. The groups pass their pieces of paper to another group to read. Then the pieces of paper are passed on again until every group has read every sentence.
6. Repeat with different starting words (see **Resources** above).

Assessment

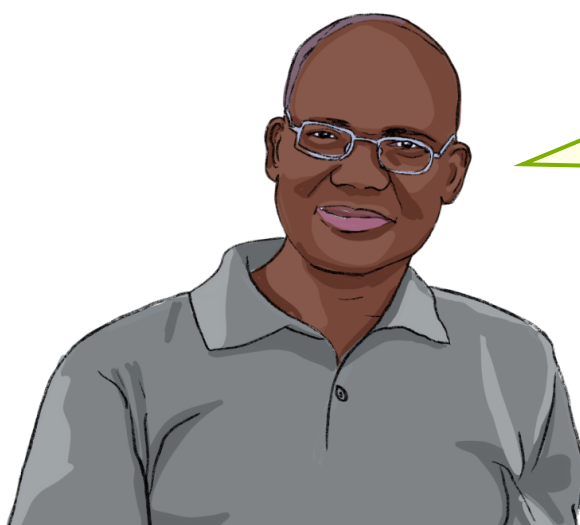
While you visit the groups as they work, judge how well the learners are able to complete the task. See **Into practice** below. Collect the completed sentences too - this will give you a permanent record of the learners' writing skills at that time.

Into practice: Dealing with errors

When Mr Utseya started using 'Finish the sentence' with his class, he noticed that there were a lot of errors in the sentences that the groups produced. There were spelling mistakes and also some grammar mistakes. For example, *Last week I see a elifent*.

When each group has completed a sentence, Mr Utseya visits the group and checks their sentence. First, he praises them for completing a sentence. Then he points to a mistake, but he does not say what the mistake is. He just says: 'What is the problem with this word?' Very often, somebody in the group notices the problem, and can say the correct alternative. Then the group corrects that part of the sentence.

If nobody in the group can identify the error, Mr Utseya gives the correct version, but he does not write the correction himself. Instead, he helps the group to write the correction for themselves.



We learner better if we correct our own mistakes, rather than have somebody correct them for us!

Foundational literacy

Unit 2: Songs and rhymes

Contents

2.1: Read while you sing	13
2.2: Find the missing words	15
2.3: Put the lines in order	17

Key words

early literacy, phonics, assessment, reading, writing, songs, rhymes

2.1: Read while you sing

Aim

To develop learners' reading skills by using songs and rhymes.

What the learners will do

They will read and sing a song or read and say a rhyme together.

Resources

Resource D (page 32) features some suitable songs/rhymes.

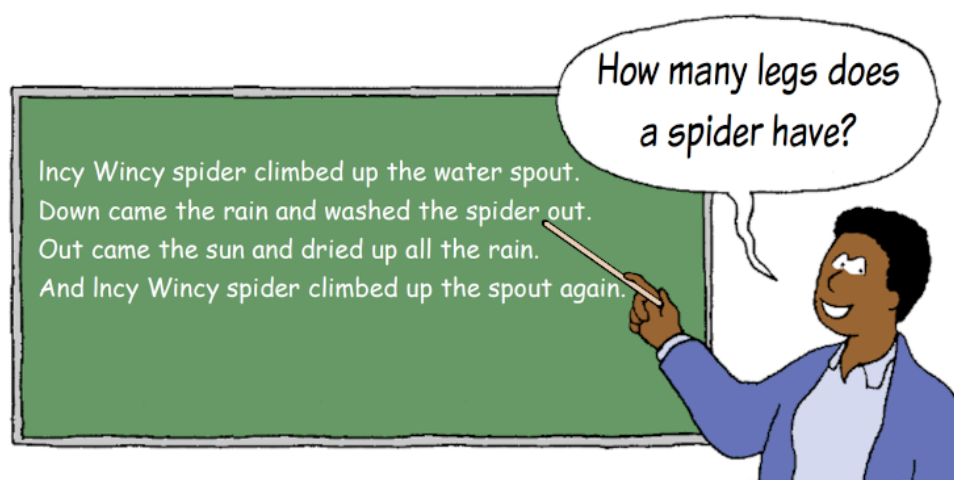
Write the song in large clear letters on a large sheet of paper/manila. You may need to write each verse on a separate sheet. The advantage of doing this rather than writing with chalk on the board is that it tends to be clearer and you can keep it to use again in the future – both for yourself and for lending to other teachers.

However, if copying onto paper or manila is not possible, copy the song onto the board in large clear letters. Ideally, do this before the lesson begins.

Whatever method you use, make sure the letters are large enough to be clear and easy to read from all parts of the classroom. If you have any learners with vision difficulties, make sure they will be able to read it, perhaps by getting them to sit at the front of the classroom.

Activity

1. Talk through the words of the song/rhyme with the class: point at each word and say it clearly. Ideally, point with a stick or pencil, so you don't need to block anybody's view. Teach the meaning of any words you think may be unfamiliar to the learners. You could do this by demonstrating, drawing a quick sketch on the board, describing the meaning in simple words, asking a question or translating into the learners' home language.



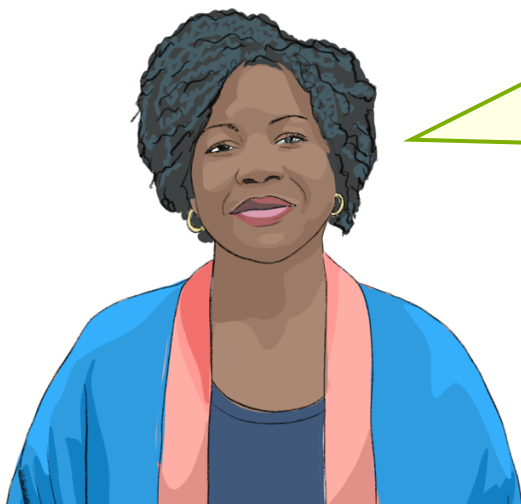
2. (For songs) Teach the words again, now with the tune of the song. Sing one line while you point at each word, and get the class to sing it again with you. Repeat for the other lines.
3. If the song has actions (see **Resource D** for these, page 32), demonstrate them for the class, and get them to follow your example.
4. Lead the class in singing the song or saying the rhyme all together, again while you point at each word when it is sung or said (and with the actions if there are any). You may find the activity works better if you get the class to stand while they do this.
5. Lead the class in singing/saying it again, but this time only point at the words. The class must follow your finger as they sing/say the words. Perhaps get them to clap while they sing or chant.
6. Perhaps repeat the song/rhyme again, but do not spend a large amount of time singing the same song over and over again.

Assessment

Write about six of the longer, more difficult words from the song/rhyme on the board. Point at one word, and ask the class to read and say it together. Judge from how confidently they respond how well they can now read the word. This will help you to judge the average level of reading skill for the class at this time.

Into practice: Choosing a song or rhyme

Mrs Shamu sometimes uses songs and rhymes with her class. She knows that it is important to choose a suitable song or rhyme. If the song or rhyme has too many unfamiliar words, then the class won't be able to understand it, and the activity will be confusing and not enjoyable for them. The same is true if it is about a topic which they have no knowledge of. Many different songs and rhymes can be found on the internet, and Mrs Shamu searches the internet for 'songs and rhymes for young learners' on her phone.



It's worth putting some time and thought into choosing a song or rhyme that's really suitable for the class. When an activity with a song or rhyme goes well, the learners really enjoy it!

2.2: Find the missing words

Aim

To develop learners' reading skills by using songs and rhymes.

What the learners will do

They will read and sing a song or read and say a rhyme, and fill in the missing words.

Resources

As for **Activity 2.1**, write the song in large clear letters on a large sheet (or sheets) of paper/manila or copy the song onto the board in large clear letters. (See **Resource D** for ideas, page 32.) It should be a song or rhyme you have not used with the class before. For each pair of rhyming words, leave out the second word and replace it with a line. For example:

Mary had a little lamb,
Its wool was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to _____.

He followed her to school one day
Which was against the rule,
It made the children laugh and laugh
To see a lamb at _____.

Activity

1. The learners work together in pairs or small groups of up to six. Explain that you have written the words from a song or rhyme. Tell them to read the song/rhyme silently, and to guess the missing words. Each group should try to agree the words for the spaces and write them down. It may be that they can do this because they already know the song/rhyme, but otherwise they should try to work out the missing words from the context.
2. Go through the song/rhyme word by word as described for **Activity 2.1**. When you come to a missing word, invite suggestions.
3. Continue to use the song/rhyme as described for **Activity 2.1**.

Assessment

Ask the rest of the class to do a quiet activity, like silent reading. Ask a group four to six randomly chosen learners to join you. Write some of the longer, more difficult words that you used in the activity on a piece of paper, and ask a learner to read it. Repeat with other words and learners. Judge from how

confidently they respond how well they can now read the words. This will help you to judge their current level of reading skill.

Into practice: Physical actions with songs and rhymes

Mrs Shamu very much likes teaching literacy songs and rhymes that come with a set of actions. The learners love doing the actions, and doing some physical activity helps to keep them energetic and focused on the lesson.

However, not all songs and rhymes come with a set of actions. For these, Mrs Shamu gets the class to stand up and do a non-specific action with the rhythm of the song or rhyme. Sometimes this is clapping and swaying to the rhythm. Sometimes it is stamping together on the floor. Sometimes she asks the learners to move their arms from a horizontal position to a vertical position in time with the rhythm.



These physical actions make the activity more fun for the learners. There are two other benefits too:

- Some learners in the class still have very low levels of literacy, and struggle to read the words while they sing or chant. However, they can join in enthusiastically with the physical actions, and this helps them to feel that they are participating fully in the lesson.
- There is a girl in the class who has a hearing impairment. She is not completely deaf, but Mrs Shamu knows that her hearing is very limited. Seeing and doing physical actions – including feeling the vibrations in the floor created by the other learners – helps her to participate fully in the activity.

2.3: Put the lines in order

Aim

To develop learners' skills in reading both single sentences and whole texts.

What the learners will do

They will arrange lines of words to make a song or rhyme.

Resources

Each group of two to four learners will need a verse from a song which has been cut up into lines. (See **Resource D** for ideas, page 32.) For a more challenging activity, use a song/rhyme you have not used with them before. For an easier activity, use a song/rhyme they are already familiar with.

*A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see.
But all that he could see, see, see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.*

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea

To see what he could see, see, see.

But all that he could see, see, see

Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.



Activity

1. Organise the class into groups of up to six learners. For each group, put the first line of the song on their table. Hand out the other lines of the song so that they are distributed randomly among the learners in each group.
2. The learner who believes they have the second line must put it down after the first line. If the rest of the group agrees with this, then another learner puts down the next line, and so on.
3. When all the lines are on the table, if the group feel that they are not in the right order, they rearrange them. Otherwise, they must tell you that they have finished.

4. Check the order of the group's lines. If they are not correct, tell the group they must try again.
5. When all the groups have put their lines in the correct order, proceed with singing the song or chanting the rhyme as described for **Activity 2.1**.

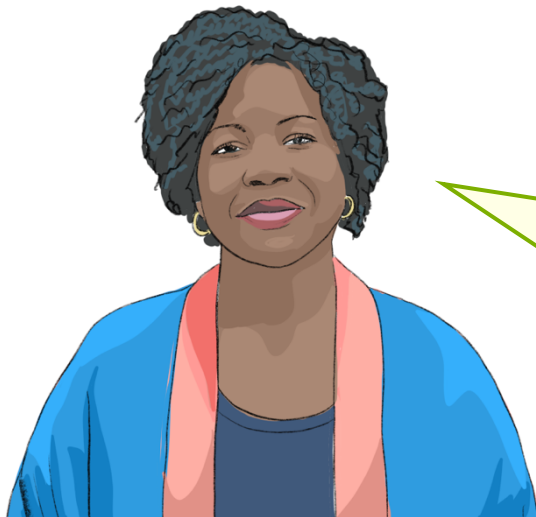
Assessment

Ask a group of four to six randomly selected learners to join you. One at a time, show them one of the strips from the song or rhyme, and ask the learner to read it. Assess how well these learners are able to do that. This will help you to judge the average level of literacy for the class. It may also draw your attention to any learners who are significantly below the average attainment level of the class.

Into practice: Repeating songs and rhymes

Mrs Shamu's students really enjoy singing familiar songs. However, she realises that the class doesn't really learn anything from singing the same songs over and over again.

She repeats songs when she thinks that some of the learners have not yet fully understood all of it. When a song is familiar to the class and everybody understands the words, the next time she wants an activity based on a song, she chooses a different one.



By using different songs instead of just repeating old favourites, the class can learn from reading the words in the new songs.

Foundational literacy

Unit 3: Very short stories

Contents

Introduction	20
3.1: Answer questions about a story	21
3.2: Put the story in the right order	24
3.3: Story corners	26

Key words

early literacy, reading, writing, assessment, stories

Unit 3 Introduction

This unit is based on very short stories with just a few sentences. These are useful for teaching literacy as a 'stepping stone' to help learners move on to reading longer stories. They also feature in early literacy tests and exams. In the next module (Module 6), you will find some activities based on longer stories.

In the activities in this unit, the emphasis is on understanding the whole story, not just the words and phrases in it.

3.1: Answer questions about a story

Aim

To develop learners' ability to read and understand a narrative text.

What the learners will do

They will answer comprehension questions about a very short story.

Resources

If possible, for each group of two to five learners, copy the story (see **Resource E**, page 37) onto a big sheet of paper or manila. Make the text as big as you can on the page, and use bold, clear letters. Also copy the story onto the board before the lesson. Again, use big, bold letters for this. Check that it is easy to read from the back of the classroom.

If it is not possible to make paper versions, just copy the story onto the board. However, the advantage of making copies on paper/manila is that you can use them again, and you can lend them to other teachers.

Activity

1. This format is similar to **Activity 2.1: Read while you sing**. Read through the story with the class: point at each word and say it clearly. While you do this, try to keep the natural intonation ('rise and fall of the voice'). Teach the meaning of any words you think may be unfamiliar to the learners. You could do this by demonstrating, drawing a quick sketch on the board, describing the meaning in simple words or translating into the learners' home language.
2. Lead the class in reading the story aloud all together, again while you point at each word when it is said.
3. Lead the class in reading it aloud again, but this time only point at the words, and stay silent. The class must follow your finger as they say the words together.
4. Organise the class into pairs or groups of up to six. Give each group a copy of the story. If this is not possible, the learners must look at the version on the board instead. (In this case, there is no need to organise them into groups.)
5. Tell the class to listen to your questions (the questions given in **Resource E**, page 37) and to think silently about the answers. Ask each question slowly and clearly, and then repeat it. Allow a moment or two of thinking time after each question. Encourage the learners to look at the story again to find the answers.
6. Tell the class you are going to ask each question again. When you have asked it, count down '3, 2, 1'. After '1', everybody must call out the answer

at the same time. If the answer does not come confidently from the class, repeat the question and count down again. You want everybody in the class to call out the answer confidently.

7. *(Optional, for higher-attaining classes)* Ask the questions again. This time the learners write answers in their notebooks. They should do this in groups of up to six, and agree their answers before they write. Everybody must write the same answer. Visit each group, look at one learner's sentences and draw the group's attention to any errors for them all to self-correct in their versions. (See **Into practice 1.3 Dealing with errors.**)

Assessment

Judge the learners' ability to read the story successfully from how confidently the learners respond in stage 6. When you do stage 6, move around the classroom. This will help you to notice who is responding confidently and who is not. See also **Into practice** below.

Into practice: Using stories to assess learners individually

Mr Zhou uses stories to assess learners' literacy skills individually. He gives the rest of the class another activity to do, and asks one learner to come and sit with him at a desk as far away as possible from the rest of the class.

He chooses a story from **Resource E** (page 37) which the class has not seen before. He shows the story to the learner, and says, 'Here is a short story. Please read it aloud. When you finish, I will ask you some questions about it. If you come to a word you do not know, go on to the next word.'

He listens to the learner reading, and then asked the questions. He gives the learner a score out of five, based on this scale:

- 0:** Could not read the story or answer any questions.
- 1:** Could read some words and phrases; could not answer the questions.
- 2:** Could read the story with a lot of hesitation and some missing words, and answered some of the questions correctly.
- 3:** Could read the story with hesitation, and answered most of the questions correctly.
- 4:** Could read the story fairly confidently, and answered most of the questions correctly.
- 5:** Could read the story confidently, and answered all the questions correctly.

Over the course of the school year, I did this with all the learners in my class, and recorded the results. This was very helpful for judging the literacy level of my class overall, seeing their progress and for finding out which learners need extra help.



3.2 Put the story in the right order

Aim

To develop learners' ability to read and understand a narrative text.


What the learners will do

This activity has a similar format to **Activity 2.3 Put the lines in order**. In this version, the learners will put the sentences of a story in the correct order.

Resources

Each pair or group of up to six learners will need a story that has been cut up into sentences. See **Resource E** (page 37) for details.

<i>Shamiso was walking to school when she heard a loud noise high up in the trees.</i>
<i>She thought it was someone shouting.</i>
<i>She looked up into the trees to see who needed help.</i>
<i>There wasn't anyone there.</i>
<i>It was only a big brown bird.</i>



Activity

1. Organise the class into pairs or groups of up to six. For each group, put the first sentence of the story on their table. Hand out the other lines of the story so that they are distributed randomly among the learners in each group.
2. The learner who believes they have the second sentence must put it down after the first sentence. If the rest of the group agrees with this, then another learner puts down the next sentence, and so on.
3. When all the sentences are on the table, if the group feel that they are not in the right order, they rearrange them. Otherwise, they must tell you that they have finished.
4. Check the order of the group's sentences. If they are not correct, tell the group they must try again.
5. When all the groups have put their sentences in the correct order, you may wish to proceed with reading the story aloud together and answering the questions, as described for **Activity 3.1**.

Assessment

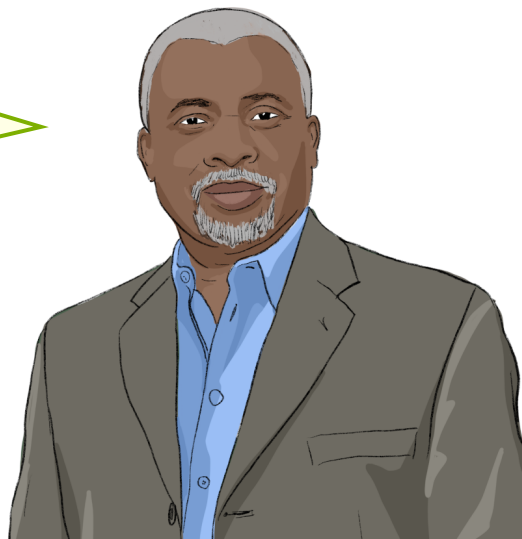
Walk around the classroom during the activity, and notice if any learners are not participating confidently. Make a note of which learners may need extra help with literacy and/or boosting of their confidence to help them to join in more fully with activities.

Into practice: Writing examples for learners to copy

Mr Muganhu often uses activities in which he needs to visit groups to check on their progress. He noticed that sometimes a group who were working well together suddenly became quiet and shy when he joined them. He thought about why this happened, and then realised the problem. The learners thought he was coming to judge what they were doing, and they might be in trouble if they weren't doing it well. Of course, this was not true at all. He only wanted to check they understood the activity, and to offer any help if they needed it.

Now when he visits a group, he makes sure he smiles and has a friendly, relaxed manner. Sometimes he just stands with a big smile on his face and watches what the group is doing. Other times, he makes a friendly comment when he approaches, such as: 'I can hear you're having fun!', 'Very good! I can see you're doing this very well!', or 'Are you all enjoying this activity?'.

This makes the learners feel more relaxed about my presence, and they carry on working together on the activity as well as they can!



3.3 Story corners

Aim

To develop learners' ability to read and understand narrative texts.

What the learners will do

Over the course of the activity, they will read and understand a number of very short stories.

Resources

This activity uses several stories at the same time. Some or all of the stories can be stories that the class has already worked with in previous lessons – in this case, the activity may be easier for the learners.

You will need enough stories for every learner to have a sentence (See **Resource E**, page 37)

Each story must have five sentences (stories 1 - 10 in **Resource E**, page 37). The first sentence from each story will be fixed to the wall, so that leaves four other sentences per story. For example, if you have 30 learners, you will need eight stories (28 learners with one sentence and two confident learners each with two sentences from one story).

You will also need enough sticky tape or sticky stuff to fix all the sentences to the walls. Before the lesson, fix the first line of each story around the classroom walls at the learners' eye height.

Activity

1. Give each learner a sentence from a story. (If necessary, give one or two confident learners two sentences from one story.)
2. The learners walk around reading the first lines of the stories. When they find a first line which they think goes with their sentence, they stay there.
3. Visit the learners who have stopped, and check they have stopped at the right place. If not, tell them to carry on looking. Towards the end, remind learners who have not yet found their stories that every story has exactly five sentences, and that they can look at other learners' sentences for help. Finally, help anybody who is still unable to find their story to get to the right place. (You may find it helpful to carry this book, so you can check which sentences go with which story.)
4. When there are four learners at a story, they must fix their sentences to the walls in the correct order to make the story. When they have done this, check the order is correct.
5. When all the stories have been completed, the learners walk around the room reading the stories. Ask them questions about the stories to check

they have understood, and ask them to share their thoughts about which stories they liked, and why. You may wish to leave the stories on the classroom wall for a few weeks.

Assessment

This activity can be very useful for assessing your learners' skills in reading single sentences and understanding longer texts. You will be able to see who is having problems doing these things. Make a note of which learners may need extra help.

Into practice: Displaying stories on classroom walls

Ms Gomo and her colleagues display lots of written material on the walls of their classrooms. There are phonics posters, popular sayings, posters about health and hygiene, and other things. Ms Gomo noticed that her learners often look at these written materials between arriving in the classroom and the start of a lesson, and if they are in the classroom between lessons.

Ms Gomo thought, 'Why not put stories on the wall too?' After she did **Activity 3.1 Story corners**, she left the stories on the wall for the rest of the school term. She also put more stories on the wall. She wrote short versions of traditional animal stories on manila and fixed them to the wall. She even added some simple pictures. Then she found more stories at <https://www.africanstorybook.org/> and <https://www.storyberries.com/> and copied them and fixed them to the walls. Now the walls of her classroom are like a mini library with lots of short stories!

Every time she adds a new story, many of her learners read it with great interest. She has even seen some confident readers reading the stories aloud to less confident readers.



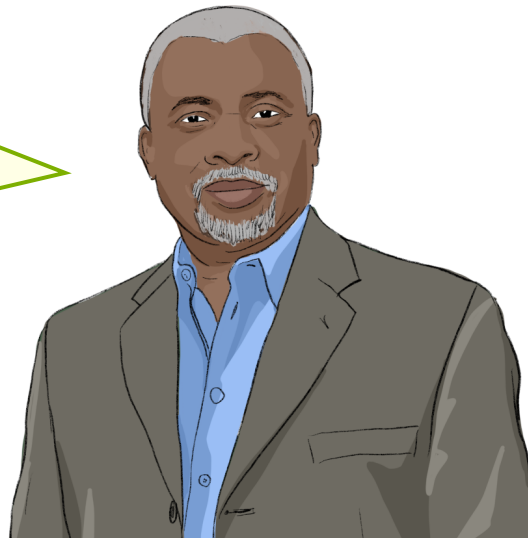
My colleagues in school really liked my idea and have started creating their own stories. This makes less work for everyone: a teacher can leave a story on the wall for a few weeks, then swap it with another teacher's story from a different classroom. In this way, the stories can be seen by all the learners in the school!

End-of-module Reflection

When you have completed this module, and tried out the activities in class, reflect on what you have learnt from it. You can do this by yourself, but if you can, it is better to do so with other teachers in your school or cluster. Perhaps you can meet after school or set up a WhatsApp group to work with teachers who are some distance away.

- Which activities worked best with your learners? Why do you think they worked well?
- What will you do differently as a result of reading this module?
- How did the activities in this module move what your learners can do forward? What do you predict will come in Module 6, the final modules?
- Choose one activity from this module. Think about how it relates to each part of the Connections diagram on page 1.

I've noticed that my learners are starting to take pleasure in being able to read songs, rhymes and stories. I think being able to read for pleasure is starting to be really motivating for them!



Resource A: Example questions about grocery items

Adapt these questions as necessary. You may need to ask some or all of them in the learners' home language. If you do, ask them again in English.

- What is in this box/packet/bottle/tin?
- Where can you buy this?
- Who uses it?
- Can we find out what country it comes from?
- What does _____ mean? What are some other words that mean the same?
- Which word or words are the biggest?
- Which words are written more than once?
- Which word is used the most?
- How much does it weigh? (grammes/kilogrammes)

There are many other questions you could ask. For example, if there are pictures of people on the package are they male or female, young or old? Why are these particular people on the package? If there is more than one language, which languages are they?

Resource B: Ideas for Activity 1.2

Basic sentence	One possible longer version	One possible even longer version
The girl walked.	The young girl walked to school slowly.	The young girl walked to school slowly along a bumpy path.
I sat.	I sat down on a big red chair.	I sat down quickly on a big red chair and read a book.
We spoke.	We all spoke to the teacher.	We all spoke to the teacher in the classroom yesterday.
The children sang.	The children sang a song together loudly.	The children sang a song about animals together very loudly.
The monkey jumped.	The grey monkey jumped onto the table.	The small grey monkey jumped onto the table and stole a banana.
Everybody drank.	Everybody drank lots of water.	Everybody drank lots of water because they were very thirsty.
The elephant went.	The old elephant went into the trees.	The big old elephant went into the trees and disappeared.
My grandmother cooks.	My grandmother often cooks chicken and sadza.	My grandmother often cooks chicken and sadza for all the people in my home.
I woke up.	I woke up early this morning.	I woke up very early this morning because I heard a noise outside.
My friend wrote.	My friend wrote a story about a lion.	My friend wrote a very nice story about a friendly old lion.

Resource C: Some useful grammar words

For teachers' reference only. These words are not intended for use with Primary level learners.

noun

Describes a thing

Examples: *dog, river, mobile phone, city, star, teacher, love, friendship, literacy.*

verb

Describes an action

Examples: *have, run, think, understand, identify, disappear*

adjective

Describes a noun

Examples: *good, young, empty, terrible, popular, humorous, scientific*

adverb

Describes how an action happens

Examples: *slowly, fast, well, carefully, confidently*

adverb of frequency

Describes how often an action happens

Examples: *always, often, usually, sometimes, never*

adverb of degree

Describes the degree to which an adjective is true.

Examples: *quite, very, really, extremely*

preposition

Describes how one thing relates to another.

Examples: *in, on, under, next to, through, around, during, for, by, to*

conjunction

Words that join ideas

Examples: *and, but, or, because, although, until, if*

Resource D: Songs and rhymes

For the tunes of the songs, use the internet links below or search online for the title of the song plus 'YouTube'. For example, search for: *Old MacDonald had a farm YouTube*. In this way it is usually easy to find videos with the words and music.

Highlighted words are especially likely to be unfamiliar to learners, and are essential for understanding the song/rhyme. The meanings will need to be checked and taught if necessary. Of course, other words may be unfamiliar too.

1. Old MacDonald had a farm

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0389hrx>

Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!
And on this farm he had a cow, E-I-E-I-O!
With a moo moo here and a moo moo there,
Here a moo, there a moo,
Everywhere a moo moo,
Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!

Repeat the verse with other animals and noises. For example:

dog (woof woof), **hen** (cluck cluck), **pig** (oink oink), **goat** (bleat bleat), **cat** (meow meow)

To avoid writing the whole song, leave the spaces for the animals and the noises blank. Write these words nearby, and point to them when you come to the gaps.

Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!
And on this farm he had a _____, E-I-E-I-O!
With a _____ here and a _____ there,
Here a _____, there a _____,
Everywhere a _____,
Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!

cow	moo
dog	woof
hen	cluck
pig	oink
goat	bleat
cat	meow

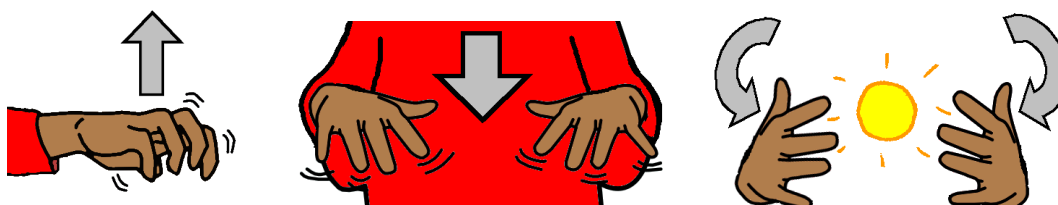
2. Incy wincy spider

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0389xgn>

Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.
And Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again.

ACTIONS

Hand as spider rising
Hands as rain falling
Make shape of sun
Hand as spider rising



3. A Sailor went to sea, sea, sea

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p062gbz3>

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see.
But all that he could see, see, see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.

ACTIONS

Mime looking into the distance for lines 2 & 3.



4. Mary had a little lamb

(rhyme only, no tune)

Mary had a little lamb,
Its wool was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.

He followed her to school one day
Which was against the rule.
It made the children laugh and laugh
To see a lamb at school.

5. The bear went over the mountain

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0386qjc>

The **bear** went over the **mountain**,
 The bear went over the mountain,
 The bear went over the mountain,
 To see what he could see.
 But all that he could see,
 But all that he could see,
 Was the other side of the mountain,
 The other side of the mountain,
 The other side of the mountain,
 Was all that he could see.

So he went back over the mountain,
 He went back over the mountain,
 He went back over the mountain,
 To see what he could see.

But all that he could see,
 But all that he could see,
 Was the other side of the mountain,
 The other side of the mountain,
 The other side of the mountain,
 Was all that he could see.
 All that he could see!

6. One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06kksyq>

One, two, three, four, five,
 Once I caught a fish **alive**.
 Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,
 Then I **let it go** again.

ACTIONS

Count to five on fingers

Mime catching a fish with a fishing rod

Count from six to ten on fingers

Mime throwing the fish back into the water

Why did you let it go?
 Because it bit my finger so.
 Which finger did it **bite**?
 This little finger on the right.

Wave little finger of right hand.

7. The animal fair

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p037ry91>

*This song has some quite difficult words. Make sure the learners know the meaning of **fair**, **beast**, **bunk** and **trunk**.*

I went to the animal fair
 The birds and **beasts** were there.
 The big baboon by the light of the moon
 Was **combing** his **golden** hair.
 The monkey fell out of his **bunk**,
 And slid down the elephants' **trunk**.
 The elephant **sneezed**
 And fell to her knees
 But what **became** of the monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey...

8. Ten in the bed

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06kkx2l>

To write this on paper or on the board, you only need to write the main verse once with a space for the number. Then hold a card with the number for that verse over the space.

There were **ten** in the bed
 And the little one said,
 'Roll over! Roll over!'
 So they all rolled over
 And one fell out.

There were **nine** in the bed...

Etc. down to '**two** in the bed'.

Final verse:

There was **one** in the bed
 And the little one said,
 'Good night!'

There were **seven** in the bed
 And the little one said,
 "Roll over! Roll over!"
 So they all rolled over
 and one fell out.

9. Five little monkeys

Again, you only need to write the verse once with a space for the number, and then fill the space with number cards.

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed.
One fell off and **bumped** his head.
Mother called the doctor and the doctor said
'No more jumping on the bed!'

*The repeat the verse with
'**Four** little monkeys...'
down to 'One little monkey...'*

10. Five currant buns

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06kl174>

Again, you only need to write the verse once with a space for the number, and then fill the space with number cards.

Five **currant** buns in a **baker**'s shop.
Big and **round** with a **cherry** on the top,
Along came a boy with a dollar one day,
Bought a currant bun and took it away.

*Repeat the verse counting four times, down by one each time (**four** currant buns, **three** currant buns...)*

You can find the words for many more songs and rhymes at these websites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06kbsbz> (includes music)

<http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/songs> (words only)

Resource E: Stories and questions for Activities 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3

Highlighted words are especially likely to be unfamiliar to learners, and are essential for understanding the story. The meanings will need to be checked and taught if necessary. Of course, other words may be unfamiliar too.

STORY 1: Shamiso hears a noise

Shamiso was walking to school when she heard a loud noise high up in the trees. She thought it was someone shouting. She looked up into the trees to see who needed help. There wasn't anyone there. It was only a big brown bird.

- Where was Shamiso going?
- What did she hear?
- What did she think the noise was?
- Was there a person in the trees?
- What was making the noise?

Example of the story divided into individual sentence cards:

Shamiso was walking to school when she heard a loud noise high up in the trees.

She thought it was someone shouting.

She looked up into the trees to see who needed help.

There wasn't anyone there.

It was only a big brown bird.

STORY 2: A present for an aunt

Thabo wanted to give his aunt a **present**. He knew she liked fruit, but he didn't have any money to buy fruit. Then Thabo had a good idea. He could draw a picture of some fruit for her. The next day, Thabo gave his aunt her present, and she liked it very much.

- What did Thabo want to do?
- What did he know his aunt liked?
- Why couldn't Thabo buy his aunt any fruit?
- What idea for a present did he have?
- What did Thabo's aunt think about the present?

STORY 3: A dog in the classroom

One day Marita was at school. A small black and white dog walked into the classroom. Nobody knew whose dog it was. Then the headteacher came into the classroom. She said, 'Why is my dog here?'

- Where was Marita?
- What animal came into the classroom?
- What did the dog look like?
- Who came into the classroom next?
- Whose dog was it?

STORY 4: Two sisters learn to cook

Mercy and her sister Precious lived with their grandmother. Their grandmother was a very good **cook**. Mercy and Precious often helped their grandmother in the kitchen, and they learned to cook too. When they left school, they opened a **restaurant** in their town. Everybody said it was the best food they had ever tasted!

- Who did Mercy live with?
- What was Mercy 's grandmother good at doing?
- What did Mercy and her sister often do?
- What did they learn?
- What did they do when they left school?
- What did people say about the restaurant?

STORY 5: Vimbai goes to wedding party

Vimbai's family went to her cousin's **wedding party** in another village. They all went in a big **taxi** together. There were lots of people at the wedding party, and there was lots of food to eat. After they ate, they danced and sang some songs. When they got back home, they were all very tired but happy.

- Whose wedding party was it?
- Where was the wedding party?
- How did Vimbai and her family get to the wedding party?
- How much food was there?
- What did the people do after they ate?
- How did they feel when they got back home?

STORY 6: Thabo's toy car

Talent made a toy car out of **tin cans** and **wire**. He showed his friends his car, and they all wanted to make one for themselves. After his friends made their cars, they played a game. They had a car **race** under a tree near his home. Talent didn't win the race, but he was very happy because his friends all had fun.

- What did Talent make?
- Who did he show the toy car to?
- What did his friends want to do?
- What did his friends do after they all made their own cars?
- Where did they play the game?
- Why was Talent happy?

STORY 7: A surprise for Hambo

Hambo lived in a village a long way from school. Every day he walked for an hour to get to school, and he was often tired when he arrived. One day, his **uncle** visited his family and told Hambo that he had a **surprise** for him. It was a bicycle. His uncle said, 'Now it will be easier for you to get to school.'

- Where did Hambo live?
- Why was Hambo often tired at school?
- Who visited Hambo one day?
- What was the surprise?
- What did Hambo's uncle say?

STORY 8: 'Snake in the grass'

One day Glory decided to teach her two little sisters and her brother a game. The game was called 'Snake in the Grass'. First she found some rope and she asked her sisters to hold one end each. Glory's sisters moved the rope low on the ground like a snake, and her brother jumped over it. They enjoyed the game and they played it for a long time.

- How many brothers and sisters has Glory got?
- What is the name of the game she taught them?
- What thing did her sisters and brother need to play the game?
- How did Glory's sister move the rope?
- What did Glory's brother do in the game?

STORY 9: Goat footprints

(a little more challenging than stories 1–8)

Tsitsi and her little brother Mufaro often took their family's goats away from their home to find food. One day, Tsitsi realised that they were a long way from home. She couldn't remember how to get back, and her little brother started to cry because he was hungry. Then Tsitsi saw the footprints of the goats on the ground. It was easy to follow the footprints back home.

- Why did Tsitsi and her brother take the goats away from their home?
- What did Tsitsi realise one day?
- Why did Mufaro start to cry?
- What did Tsitsi see on the ground?
- How did they find their way back home?

STORY 10: A dancing game

(a little more challenging than stories 1–8)

A group of friends were playing a dancing game together. In the game, everybody made a big **circle**. One person danced in the middle while the others **clapped** their hands and sang a song. When the song finished, the person in the middle **pointed** at the next dancer. The game was a lot of fun, and by the end everyone was tired but happy.

- What game were the friends playing?
- What shape did they make in the game?
- What did the person in the middle of the circle do?
- What did the other people do?
- Who chose the next person to dance in the circle?
- How did the people feel after the game?

STORY 11: Twins

(more challenging, with seven sentences)

There were two sisters called Danai and Aneni. They were **twins**. When people saw them, they didn't know which was Danai and which was Aneni. When they were at school, it was easier to **tell the difference**. Danai liked talking a lot and she was always laughing in class. Aneni was quieter and didn't speak so much. They were both very **clever** girls, and they liked reading stories together.

- Why didn't people know which was Danai and which was Aneni?
- Where was it easier to tell the difference between Danai and Aneni?
- What did Danai like doing?
- How was Aneni different to Danai?
- What did they both like doing together?

STORY 12: Nomusa's scarf**(more challenging, with seven sentences)**

Nomusa was walking to school. She was feeling sad because she had lost her scarf. The scarf was very special, because her grandmother made it for her. Then she heard some monkeys in a tree. They were playing with her scarf! She shouted at the monkeys, and they dropped the scarf and ran away. Nomusa smiled and picked up her scarf.

- Where was Nomusa going?
- Why was she feeling sad?
- Why was the scarf special?
- What did she hear in the tree?
- What were the monkeys doing?
- What did Nomusa do next?
- What did the monkeys do next?

STORY 13: The mbira players**(more challenging, with seven sentences)**

Tonderai loved music. He always sang to himself when he walked to school. Everybody called him 'the singing boy'. One day, he went with his family to a cousin's wedding party. There were some mbira players there, and they showed him how to play some simple tunes. It was difficult at first, but Tonderai was a quick learner. Now he knew that he wanted to be a mbira player when he was older!

- What did Tonderai love?
- What did he do when he walked to school?
- What did everyone call him?
- Where did he go with his family one day?
- What did the mbira players show him how to do?
- What does Tonderai want to be when he is older?

STORY 14: The big baobab tree

(more challenging, with seven sentences)

Near Zendaya's home there was a very big **baobab** tree. It gave a lot of fruit every year. Zendaya thought the fruit looked like **bats** sleeping in the **branches**. The **trunk** of the tree was very **wide**, and it looked as though the whole tree was **upside down**. Zendaya's grandmother remembered playing there when she was very young, and collecting the fruit. Zendaya's grandmother sometimes told the children that a **giant** threw the tree from the sky. Then the tree grew with its branches under the ground and its **roots** in the air.

- Where was the baobab tree?
- How much fruit did it give?
- What did Zendaya think the fruits looked like?
- What looked as though it was upside down?
- What did Zendaya's grandmother remember?
- What did Zendaya's grandmother tell the children about the tree?

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