



TI-AIE

## Developing and monitoring reading

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## What this unit is about

This unit is about resources and practices to help your students develop the key skills of reading aloud and reading silently in English, and the transition from reading aloud to silent reading.

When you listen to your students read aloud in English, you can monitor their reading ability. Reading aloud allows students to practise their pronunciation and develop confidence in using English.

Reading silently is quite an advanced skill for students, whether they are reading in their first or second language. It normally develops after they have been read aloud to, and then from reading aloud alongside someone else. Reading silently is therefore a goal to work towards as students become more mature and independent readers.

This unit will introduce you to the practice of organising students for guided reading in ability groups. This may be a new idea to you, or you may already be doing aspects of guided reading. You will look at reading cards as a resource to encourage and monitor reading.

## What you can learn in this unit

- To develop reading aloud in English with your students.
- To develop your students' silent reading in English.
- To organise guided reading in English.

## 1 Developing reading aloud in English with your students

Start by thinking about what you do now to develop your students as readers in English.

### Activity 1: Audit your reading routines

It's not only important for you to read aloud in English to your class – your students should have opportunities to do this as well.

Think about your own classes. How often do you do the following activities – never, occasionally or often?

**Table 1** How often do you do activities?

Activity	Never	Occasionally	Often
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I read aloud from the textbook or the board. The students silently follow along with me.			
I read aloud from the textbook or the board. The students repeat immediately after me.			
I read aloud from the textbook or the board. The students read aloud along with me.			
I listen to students read aloud in small groups, by ability, while the rest of the class is working quietly.			
I call on students read aloud and the whole class listens.			
I ask students to read a text silently and I observe them.			
I ask students to read a text silently and I ask them questions about it.			

All these are effective methods and it is good practice to vary them in your classroom reading routines. But the more exposure that students have to spoken English, the better. So it is very good practice to read aloud and to have students read aloud – along with you, immediately after you or with you just listening to them. In each of these instances, you can observe and assess students' reading skills.

What are the routines you use most often? What are the benefits of these routines for you as a teacher and for the students as learners of English?

Now look at the routines you don't use, or use very little. What are the challenges for you, as a teacher, in implementing these practices? Is it a matter of confidence, resources or class size? The activities and resources in this unit aim to develop your confidence to widen your reading routines in the classroom.

## 2 Getting your students to read aloud

In the case study that follows, a teacher takes steps to monitor and evaluate students' reading.

### Case Study 1: Mr Govinder encourages students to read aloud

*Mr Govinder is a Class V English teacher.*

Our English textbooks have lots of short stories in them. I used to always read these stories aloud to my students and have them silently follow the stories in the book as I read. Sometimes, though, I noticed that they could not follow the story or had no idea what the text was about when I asked them questions about it.

I wanted to monitor whether or not they could understand what they were reading. One way to do this, I thought, was to have the students read aloud from the textbook, particularly after we had all read the story once together. I could only call on three or four students per day, but I thought that if I did this every day, most students could have at least one turn every two weeks. In this way, they would have regular opportunities to read aloud and hear each other read aloud.

I used to think that if I had taught my students well, they would not make mistakes while reading aloud. But I noticed that the students who read without mistakes were actually just pretending to read, reciting the text from memory. And I realised that if they were just memorising what I had read to them, they weren't actually learning anything. The students who were really reading and understanding tended to read a lot slower, made mistakes and had difficulty reading some words. I realised that those 'mistakes' actually showed that learning was taking place.

But students don't like to make mistakes, so I have to encourage them to keep trying and praising them regularly while they were reading.

Sometimes when a student comes across a word that is hard for them to read, they may be tempted to skip over it. But I try to encourage them to take a bit of time to look at the word and understand what it means. Once they have read and understood the word, I ask the student to go back to the beginning of the sentence and read it again. Repeated readings of difficult words and phrases seem to result in improvements in the students' speed, accuracy and expressiveness when they read aloud. That's why it's important that students get to read texts that are interesting, so that they feel motivated to read them again and again.

However, I find that if a student is stumbling repeatedly when reading something, there is no point in having them continue with it. So I make a note to myself that the student needs further support with reading and I choose a simpler text for them to read the next time. I then work with them in a one-to-one session when I can. I've noticed that students' reading abilities are most likely to improve if they are given texts where they are familiar with the majority of words and phrases.

