

# English

## 1: Literacy Overview

### Main ideas

- literacy overview
- the pre-reader; reading readiness
- phonics and spelling
- overview of literacy resources available through *Beacon Media*, (free downloads).

### Outcomes

At the completion of this session teachers will:

- understand the importance of reading readiness in the pre-reader, and be able to suggest activities which encourage this
- have an overview of the reading process
- be able to devise activities that encourage speaking and listening in the classroom
- use puppetry and drama
- be able to guide students through a progressive phonics program
- be aware of strategies for developing accurate spelling

### Content

#### 1. Elements of literacy

##### Reading

- Phonics
- reading for fluency
- digital print

##### Writing

- Handwriting and typing
- Writing your thoughts and ideas

##### Speaking

- show and tell; class talks
- group discussion
- answering questions
- retelling

##### Listening

- to stories told by others
- to a speaker
- to recorded stories and spoken word through technology

#### 2. The pre-reader

#### The importance of vocabulary for literacy development

Children's language skills in kindergarten are strongly related to later academic success.

**Keys:**

**Exposure to varied vocabulary**

Children need to build a knowledge base about the world around them; to know how to use the right word.

**Opportunities to part of conversations**

that use several sentences in a row. e.g. explanations, narratives

**Stimulating home and classroom environments**

good books

varied and stimulating curriculum

**Strategies for encouraging language development in young children:**

**Playful language**

Play involves experimenting with words, rules, ideas.

In play children can use problem-solving strategies, correct mistakes and rethink plans.

Imaginary play involves communication through gestures, words, scripts, roles, and symbols.

Examples: home corner, office centre, restaurants, building constructions, shopping centre / market

**Supporting language development**

Avoid monopolizing conversation.

Provide opportunities for children to talk.

Ask questions.

Avoid closed questions (one-word-answer).

Give children enough time to get the words out.

Listen to children.

Use new words whenever possible.

Use sharing time / show and tell.

**Reading books aloud**

Re-read old favourites.

Ask questions about the story, e.g. "What else could the hungry caterpillar eat?" "Which part of the story did you like best?"

Dramatise the story.

Describe a picture in the book.

**Literacy at home**

Parents can be encouraged to:

Read shop / street signs with children when out in the community

Point to names of produce in the supermarket

Cross items off a shopping list

Make a photograph album with titles  
Read books with children

### **Story telling**

Telling stories is completely different to reading aloud. There are no pictures of text to focus on. The story teller uses voice, body, hands, face and particularly eyes.

Puppets can be used in story telling.

This is a good opportunity to invite members of the community to tell their stories.

### **Story maps**

After listening to a story, children can draw the events that occurred in sequence.

### **Making books**

a) activity based books

Kindergarten and beginners: children can draw a picture of a class event. They verbally dictate a “sentence” about their picture, which is transcribed on the drawing by the teacher. Staple all the pages together and you have a class “Big Book” for class reading.

b) retelling a story

Make a class book by giving different children a part of a story to illustrate. Write a sentence under each drawing and compile the book.

## **3. Mechanics of reading**

**What do students need to be able to do in order to read a text with understanding?**

1. Decode the visual input – recognize the word.
2. Know the meaning of the word - it has to be in the children’s own ‘mental’ dictionary.
3. Understand the meaning of the sentence.
4. Predict what might happen next as they are reading.
5. Organize the information in a text into a structure that can be remembered. (summarize)

### **Decoding:**

Graphemes - written letters

Phonemes - sounds the letter make, e.g. cat = 3 sounds in it.

Digraphs (2 letters = 1 sound: th, ea,)

Letter/sound rules; affixes: read +ing, sub +tropical,

Syllables

Phonetic rules, e.g. final ‘e’ changes mad to made

## **4. Phonics and Spelling**

### **Steps in teaching phonics**

*Support material: Beacon Media – Primary Literacy, “Teacher’s Tool Box”*

## The first year of school:

### 1. Distinguish between *letter name* and *sound name*.

At the age of three or four, children will begin to learn the letter names. Teach the sound names *first*. (There is more than one sound for each vowel, but for a five-year-old, learning the *short* vowel sound is enough to start with.)

a for apple  
b for banana  
c for carrot  
d for dog  
e for elephant  
f for fish  
g for gorilla  
h for horse  
i for insect (not ice-cream)  
j for juice  
k for kitten  
l for lion  
m for mouse  
n for needle  
o for orange  
p for penguin  
q for queen  
r for ring  
s for snake  
t for turtle  
u for umbrella  
v for vase  
w for watch  
x *in* fox (not xylophone)  
z for zebra

### 2. Introduce the sounds using *pictures only* to begin with.

Do not show the symbol until the child can say all the initial sounds when shown objects or pictures. To develop this skill you will need:

- a) a picture collection
- b) an object collection

To make a picture collection, look through magazines and junk mail. Supermarket or department store catalogues are great. Cut out pictures of apples, oranges, toilet paper etc. You may like to stick the pictures on to card to make them last longer.

Now you will need a filing system. You can collect 26 containers, all the same size, stackable to save space. Label each container with a letter name a-z, (use lower case).

Alternatively you can make a picture-pocket hanger from fabric

Using your filing system, ask the child to place the right picture in the right pocket or container. Do not teach the sounds in alphabetical order. Children will find it easier to catch the sounds if taught in this order:  
m t s p a r i d c f h n l e b o g j u k v w x y z qu

The reason for this is:

- a) There are some sounds that receive more emphasis in the English language and therefore the ear is more attuned to these.
- b) The first word a child learns is often 'mum'.
- c) Some sounds are more difficult to say.
- d) Similar sounds like *b* and *d* should be learned well apart.

### **3. Introducing symbols**

Once the child has mastered the initial sounds, then introduce the symbols. At this stage, children can also learn to write the symbols. Remember to call them by their sound names and not their letter names.

Once children are thoroughly familiar with the sound names, then introduce the letter names, always mentioning both together. For example:  
The letter **a** sounds like *a* in apple.  
The letter **b** sounds like *b* in ball.

### **4. Introducing the capital letter symbols**

Do this only after the child is thoroughly familiar with the lower case symbols. When introducing capital letters, always show them along side the lower case. For example:  
Aa

Look at capital letters in names of people you know.

### **5. Sound blending**

Now the child is ready to start sound blending consonants with vowels.  
ba, ca, da et  
be, ce, de etc.  
bi, be, de etc  
bo, co, do etc.  
bu, cu, du etc.

### **6. Three letter words that can be sounded**

Next the child can try making three letter words using the sounds you they learned.

e.g. cat, hat

Make a game where you ask the child to guess the word you are sounding. (Use aural skill only. Don't show the written symbol when first introducing the sound).

Say very quickly, but with separate sounds: *c-a-t* or *t-o-p* etc. Children enjoy trying to guess the words.

### **7. Introduce 'th', 'sh' and 'ch'.**

## The second year of school and beyond

By the second year of school children should be ready to start four letter blending.

1. **Consonant blends - di-graphs** e.g. frog, clap
2. **Consonant blends - tri-graphs** e.g. scrub, scrap, splash, sprint, struck, three

### 3. Introduce word families.

Children are encouraged to use the ears to listen for words with the same sounds.

Start with the long vowel sounds e.g. make cake. Ask the children to listen for the 'a' sound which is the same in 'bake and 'cake'.

Words in the same family do not have to rhyme.

e.g. 'same and 'cake' are in the same family because they both have long 'a'.

You will need to refer to short vowel and long vowel sounds often, so make sure the child is familiar with this terminology.

### Beacon Media phonics resources:

- *Bible Land Phonics* for initial sounds
- Then follow with *Progressive Phonics*

### Reinforcement and repetition

#### Children can:

1. Read through word family lists daily.
2. Clap the syllables.
3. Write dictation sentences which include the words in your weekly list.
4. Write the words in sentences.
5. Learn rhymes.
6. For verbs, add endings, *s*, *ed*, *ing*
7. For nouns, make plurals.
8. Use Cloze activities, (filling in the missing word).

I ate a \_\_\_\_\_.

I will \_\_\_\_\_ a cake.

Missing words: cake, bake

## 4. Overview of Beacon Media phonics resources

- a) Bible Land Phonics
- b) Progressive Phonics

### Activities –

Look at the Beacon Media phonics resources

Play games using the Bible Land Phonics: cards / sorting activities using picture pockets.

## **Assessment task**

Design a matching activity for initial sounds. You will need to make one set of cards with pictures only, and another set of cards with lower case letters.

For an example, see [www.beaconmedia.com.au](http://www.beaconmedia.com.au) – Primary Literacy, Teacher’s Tool Box – “Make your own picture pocket chart”.

You may choose to make a pocket chart like this, or another system of your own design, e.g. containers labeled with alphabet letters; clothes pegs labeled with alphabet letters. You do not have to copy the Beacon Media design, but you may if you wish.

Try out the activity with a group of children. Submit a photo of your activity and write a brief description of how you used it.