

Routes to literacy – Reading for information Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Routes for Learning (RfL) routemap

Summary statement
Learners share simple routines facilitated by adults which increasingly reference objects and actions. They respond to a familiar reader's voice – its tone, pattern and stress – to share dramatic aspects of a story or rhyme. (Assessment activities and teaching strategies for items in this column can be found in the <i>Routes for Learning</i> materials.)

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Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Next steps A

Summary statement
Learners are increasingly able to access information conveyed in two-dimensional form (visual/tactile) and begin to link this with sounds and key events in familiar stories.

Seek out 'representational' items, e.g. pictures, photos, tactile/flip flap books, etc.	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide the learner with a broad range of 'everyday' objects including a variety of books and other 'representational' items. Observe the ways in which the learner interacts with their environment.	The learner explores objects using a variety of strategies, including examining them visually. The learner goes to, or reaches for, books, magazines, catalogues, etc., in order to look closely at the pictures, feel the textures and/or manipulate the pages.

Show increased attention to some book(s), while discarding others	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide the learner with a variety of books and other visual material representing a range of different sizes, styles, materials, types of binding and relative proportion of print to pictures.	The learner focuses more on some items and/or attends to them for a slightly longer period, even if this is still relatively fleeting.
Teaching strategies (to move learner to this step)	
Encourage the learner to sample the range of items as a pleasant, shared activity. Follow their line of interest, 'read' or comment on an extract from each, but move on to something else as soon as the learner wants to. Observe and record the items, styles, etc. which they seem to like the best. Return to these on other occasions and try to make additional material with similar properties available to them in the future.	

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Assessment activities/things to try

Attend with interest as an adult reads a story, look at, touch and manipulate the book at intervals	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
In a variety of situations (<i>e.g. within a group, or quiet one-to-one setting; with or without 'story bag' props</i>), 'read'/recite/perform folk tales, simple rhymes and poems encouraging the learner to listen to your voice and to repeating elements within the story. Point at intervals to large, clear pictures and encourage the learner to <i>look at</i> them and to engage physically in holding and touching the book.	<p>The learner ceases other activity, at least briefly, and looks towards the adult as they speak.</p> <p>The learner's body language, facial expression and use of vocalisation are consistent with an interest in the interaction around the story.</p> <p>The learner reaches for and looks at the book on at least three occasions.</p>

Listen with interest to sounds recorded on a 'step-by-step' switch, or in a talking story on PC; use switch or touchscreen to repeat sounds and move the story on	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Choose one or several noises, words or short phrases which feature in a story, poem or drama. With the learner observing, record these on a speaking switch (<i>e.g. Big Mack switch, Step-by-Step switch or similar device</i>). Rehearse pressing the switch to hear the effect.</p> <p>Provide the learner with a switch or touchscreen to 'turn the pages' of a 'talking story' on the computer.</p>	<p>The learner presses the switch, waits to listen to the sound, then presses the switch again, demonstrating an interest in hearing the sounds.</p> <p>The learner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listens to a page of the story as it is read (by the software) • presses the switch to turn the page • listens and looks at intervals at illustrations on the screen.

Vocalise in response to a particular feature of a familiar story	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
In a variety of situations (<i>e.g. within a group, or quiet one-to-one setting; with or without 'story bag' props</i>), 'read'/recite/perform folk tales, simple rhymes and poems encouraging the learner's participation.	The learner makes vocalisation(s) which might demonstrate interest or excitement connected with the story.

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Assessment activities/things to try

Anticipate repeating pattern in a story (e.g. <i>smiling at 'fi, fie, foe, fum'</i>)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Choose a story which strongly features dramatic repeating patterns, e.g. <i>"I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down"</i>.</p> <p>Another approach is to encourage learners to make the same noise on each repeat, e.g. <i>knocking on the little pigs' door</i>.</p>	<p>The learner shows excitement or anticipation by facial expression, body movement or vocalisation on several occasions as repeating pattern reaches climax.</p> <p>The learner tries to knock at an appropriate point in response to repeating pattern in story.</p>

Show specific reaction to sensory aspect of a well-known story (e.g. <i>laughter and excitement in battle scene, unease at 'spooky' music</i>)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Use music, lighting, projection and other features of a sensory room or drama studio to create an atmosphere appropriate to specific scenes in a dramatic tale. Act out the scene and look for learners engaging with the event(s).</p>	<p>The learner responds to the atmosphere depicted by demonstrating an 'affective' reaction of some kind.</p>
Teaching strategies (to move learner to this step)	
<p><i>Ways into Literature</i> by Nicola Grove, <i>Odyssey Now</i> by Nicola Grove and Keith Park and <i>Interactive Storytelling</i> by Keith Park all provide lots of suggestions about developing these aspects.</p>	

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Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Next steps B

Summary statement
Learners can match visual information to specific objects, people and events. They may indicate a picture at an appropriate point when being read to, or repeat familiar words/phrases in context.

Hold/turn a book the right way up	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Observe how the learner interacts with books, magazines and other representational material when left to their own devices.	The learner picks up the book and spontaneously corrects its orientation when it is upside down.
Hand the learner an open book so that they receive it upside down.	The learner notices and turns the book the correct way up.
Sit with the learner and look at a book upside down.	The learner protests, shows surprise or other reaction which shows they have noticed.

Point to picture of a character in a familiar story	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Choose a storybook with which the learner is very familiar. Read the story together then stop at a point where a key character is clearly portrayed in a picture.	The learner points to picture of character.
Ask the learner 'Where is . . . (e.g. Jack)?'.	

Match a familiar person to a clear photograph of that person	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Take a set of clear photos of all the learners and staff in the class. Give the learner one photo and ask 'Who's this?'.	The learner demonstrates that they can recognise at least three familiar people in photographs.
Prompt the learner to take the photo to the person or to point or eye point as appropriate to their needs.	

Routes to literacy – Reading for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Find own name in a range of settings in the classroom	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Ensure that the names of learners are marked in a variety of ways around the classroom, <i>e.g. on coat peg, tray, timeline/schedule, books, etc.</i></p> <p>Move named items around at intervals, so they are not always in the same place.</p>	<p>The learner picks out own name from a choice of several names in at least three different settings and on more than one occasion.</p>

Bring favourite book to an adult for them to read	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Encourage the learner to go to the book corner/library and 'Find a book for us to read'.</p> <p>Observe how they make a selection.</p>	<p>The learner looks carefully at two or three books before selecting one in particular.</p> <p>The learner immediately chooses a book you know to be one of their favourites.</p>

Activate sound or speech corresponding to a picture in a familiar story (e.g. choose switch (from two) and press to play appropriate sound)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Using a familiar story, record two sounds corresponding to characters or actions, at least one of which recurs (<i>e.g. in Knock, Knock, who's there? by Sally Grinley, record 'knock, knock' on one switch and the sound of one of the monsters on the other</i>).</p> <p>'Rehearse' using the switches before starting the story.</p>	<p>The learner repeatedly activates the recurring sound on cue, but activates the 'monster' only when its specific picture appears.</p>

**Routes to literacy – Reading for information
Assessment activities/things to try**

Use a (spoken) word or select an object or symbol to ‘describe’ a feature depicted within a storybook	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Begin to read a story, drawing the learner’s attention to the pictures and following the words with your finger.</p> <p>As appropriate to the learner’s mode of communication, prepare objects and/or symbols which can be used to label or describe characters, actions, places or events within the chosen story.</p> <p>Prompt the learner at intervals, e.g. ‘<i>What can you see? Show me!</i>’, and indicate objects/symbols.</p>	<p>The learner says a relevant word (or words) at an appropriate moment during shared reading with an adult.</p> <p>The learner chooses an object or symbol which is relevant to what is happening in the story. Encourage the learner to verbalise as well.</p>

Match items in a story sack to characters, places or events in a very familiar story	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Make or obtain a story sack containing a wide range of props linked to a selected story, e.g. <i>use the various objects taken to the beach by Mrs Armitage in Mrs Armitage and the Big Wave by Quentin Blake.</i></p>	<p>The learner matches item in the story sack to its picture when it appears in the story.</p>

Look at one or two favourite familiar picture books (or sensory equivalent) with an adult, paying attention to specific aspects of the picture indicated by the adult	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Using a familiar book known to be liked by the learner, turn pages with the learner, talking about pictures/sensory items.</p>	<p>Note whether the learner pays particular attention to the item being talked about.</p>

Routes to literacy – Reading for information
Assessment activities/things to try

Imitate (e.g. copying facial expression) or empathise (e.g. oh!) in response to specific event happening to a character in a familiar story	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Read the story with the learner, stopping at key points to elicit their response.</p> <p>Model facial expressions appropriate to the events depicted (e.g. <i>surprise, fear, excitement, sadness, etc.</i>).</p>	<p>The learner makes any kind of response which demonstrates a degree of emotional engagement with the story.</p> <p>The learner attempts to imitate.</p>

Show pleasure when an adult starts to read a favourite story, respond at key points and demonstrate understanding that it has finished	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Share a favourite story book with the learner.</p>	<p>The learner demonstrates anticipation of shared reading (e.g. <i>settles comfortably and looks attentively at adult and book</i>).</p> <p>The learner actively engages with the book at least three times during the reading session (e.g. <i>to point at, or look more closely at, a picture, or to vocalise at an appropriate moment</i>).</p> <p>The learner ignores distractions during most of the story.</p> <p>The learner shows awareness that the story has finished (e.g. <i>comments in some way – through speech, facial expression or body language, closes book, etc.</i>).</p>

Routes to literacy – Reading for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Next steps C

Summary statement
Learners are aware of the distinction between print and pictures. They can say something about one of the characters or an event in a familiar story they have just heard and may relate this to the sequence of events depicted.

Handle a book, turning pages mostly from front to back, looking at them with interest	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Observe learner when reading on their own.</p> <p>Encourage learner to hold the book and turn the pages while you read it with them.</p>	Learner demonstrates awareness that the 'direction' of a book runs from front to back. They turn the pages mostly one at a time, looking at/reading something from each pair of pages – although they may miss some pages.

Look at left page in a book before right page	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Observe the learner when reading on their own.</p> <p>Encourage the learner to hold the book and turn the pages while you read it with them.</p>	The learner usually looks first at/reads something first from the left-hand page.

'Read' a pictorial or symbolic timeline and say what is going to happen	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide the learner with a timeline or schedule which is sequenced from left to right. Adapt to the learner's needs using pictures, symbols, and some words with which they are very familiar.	The learner can identify what will happen first, next, etc. by reading timeline from left to right.

Routes to literacy – Reading for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Find a wanted item by scanning/examining labels	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>This could be in a situation such as a classroom shop, or when selecting items to take on a picnic.</p> <p>(The task should not be one which is so familiar that the learner is able to select objects from containers by memory without looking – move the labelled drawers, etc. at intervals to avoid this.)</p>	<p>The learner is able to select familiar items by scanning/examining the labels on boxes, drawers, etc.</p> <p>(Labels might be symbols or pictures.)</p>

Follow simple two-stage instructions ‘written’ in pictures or symbols	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>In a game situation, show the learner cards indicating the order in which two things need to be done (e.g. <i>pouring water into a cup and then giving the cup to an individual</i>).</p> <p>The learner should be familiar with a range of such instruction cards before the assessment takes place, but the card in question should introduce a new activity, to ensure the learner is following instructions rather than simply a routine.</p>	<p>The learner correctly carries out the instructions.</p>

Match very familiar words and recognise a few specific letters (e.g. letters of own name)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Present the learner with several jumbled pairs of words (including both elements of their name) in a variety of presentations, e.g. <i>on food packaging, on flash cards or programmes on pc</i>, asking them to ‘Find two words the same’.</p>	<p>The learner correctly matches at least 10 pairs of words presented no more than five pairs at a time.</p>
<p>Present the learner with the letters of their name (cut up on card or in programme on pc). Jumble them up.</p>	<p>The learner correctly selects at least the first letter of each part of their name.</p>

Routes to literacy – Reading for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Use pictures to sequence (three) key events in a familiar story	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Choose a very familiar story and read it with the learner.</p> <p>Separate the pages of (a copy of) the book or prepare pictures which clearly depict (three) key events in the story. Visual resources for many stories are also downloadable as jpg files from Sparklebox.</p> <p>Ask the learner to use the pictures to tell the story, <i>e.g. at the end of a project on the life cycle of a frog, provide the learner with pictures of three key phases (egg, tadpole, frog).</i></p>	<p>The learner places pictures in order using left to right orientation.</p>

Refer to or comment on print in the environment (e.g. labels, notices)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Ensure there are plenty of opportunities to observe print within the learner's environment.</p> <p>Take opportunities to draw attention to signs, labels and notices both within and outside school.</p>	<p>The learner spontaneously indicates a sign, label, etc. and shows by speech or other method that they understand its meaning.</p> <p>The learner responds using speech or other method, showing that they understand the meaning.</p>

Volunteer some information about a familiar story	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Share a story with the learner which is familiar to them and which they are known to like.</p> <p>Encourage the learner to join in and comment.</p>	<p>The learner says something factual about the story which indicates they have understood a key point, <i>e.g. refers to something which happens to a particular character, or at a particular point in the story.</i></p>

Look at texts with/without an adult, showing interest or enjoyment	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Ensure the learner is provided with regular opportunities to look at a wide range of reading material (<i>e.g. in the book corner or library, with CDs, DVDs, comics, magazines, the internet, etc.</i>).</p>	<p>The learner looks at covers, flicks through pages, and attempts to read some words with the support of pictures or overall 'branding', <i>e.g. identifies CD by favourite band, tv programme in listing or DVD in online store.</i></p>

Routes to literacy – Reading for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Express in some way (when prompted) their personal attitude to or interest in a story that has just been read (e.g. <i>like/dislike, recall of specific event, etc.</i>)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Read the story with the learner, stopping at key points to elicit their response.</p> <p>When the story is finished, ask them what they think about it.</p> <p>Use open questions, such as ‘What was your favourite bit?’. Pass the book to the learner and say ‘Show me’.</p>	<p>The learner gives some kind of ‘evaluative’ response, indicating the impact of the story, or some element of it, upon them.</p> <p>This might include the learner finding and pointing out something in particular. Encourage them to verbalise this.</p>