



Language and Literacy  
in the Foundation Stage

# Framework for Literacy Development

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# Introduction

Literacy focuses on developing each child's ability to understand and use language as an integral part of learning in all areas. Children need to interact effectively in the world around them, to express themselves creatively, to progress their learning of the wider curriculum and to communicate confidently using the four modes of language: talking and listening, reading and writing. While these areas have been set out under separate headings, the activities and processes identified within them inter-relate and interact and should, therefore, be developed in a holistic way.

The development of effective language and literacy is crucial to living and learning. Language is used to communicate with people, to share and express feelings, to give and obtain information and understand ideas and develop thoughts. Children bring to school their own experiences of using language, both oral and written, in the home, pre-school settings and local community. These skills should be valued and used as a starting point for further development.

Children's language and literacy experiences should take place within a rich and stimulating environment. The role of the teacher is crucial in encouraging interaction and the promotion of communication as tool for learning.

The teacher should observe children's progress and use the information gathered to plan future learning experiences to develop effective talking, listening, reading and writing.

# Talking and Listening

Oral language is central to a child's development and is concerned with more than growth of vocabulary. It is used to communicate with people, to share thoughts and feelings, to give and obtain information and to understand ideas and develop thinking. The language which children bring to school should be valued and used as a starting point for further development so that they can be helped to communicate confidently with adults and other children, expressing their own needs, thoughts and feelings.

Children's listening and communication skills are fostered as they talk with adults and play and work with other children. By using carefully chosen comments and open questions, by listening attentively to children talking together or talking with an adult, teachers can assist children in their thinking and help them to build their confidence in the use of language.

By developing children's phonological awareness, i.e. sounds within the environment and patterns of sounds within words, adults provide children with a tool for future reading and writing.

## Contexts for Learning

Children should have opportunities, arising from classroom and other first-hand experiences, to develop their talking and listening in a range of contexts across the curriculum for a variety of purposes, for example, to describe their needs and experience; to ask and answer question; to take part in conversation; to talk about stories, poems or rhymes; to explain and to make predictions. They should be encouraged to listen to and talk to peers and adults during play and as they carry out activities in every curricular area. They should be given opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings and present ideas and information to others in a group or to the whole class. Role-play and drama will provide opportunities for children to become aware of and use other forms of communication, including body language, facial expression and gesture.

# Learning Experiences to Develop Talking and Listening throughout the Foundation Stage

Purposeful talking and listening is the foundation for learning and underpins future development of reading and writing.

## Attention and Listening

Children should have opportunities to:

- listen to a wide range of stories, songs, poems, music, and writing of other children, using various media, for example, audio-tapes, CDs;
- listen to and recall a sequence of instructions;
- listen to the views and ideas of others;
- listen and respond to familiar phrases in stories;
- listen to a variety of sounds in order to identify familiar sounds in the environment; and
- play oral memory games.

## Phonological Awareness

Children should have opportunities to:

- respond to a steady beat;
- identify words in phrases;
- discriminate between sounds, for example:
  - loud/quiet,
  - high/low,
  - odd one out;
- explore the structure of words by, for example:
  - tapping syllables,
  - identifying and manipulating phonemes,
  - focusing on sounds at the beginning, middle and end of words;and
- experiment with and enjoy rhyme, for example:
  - through odd one out games, nonsense rhymes or sorting objects which rhyme.

## Conventions of Speech

Children should have opportunities to:

- observe modelled behaviours;
- initiate and join in conversations, taking turns with adults/another child/children, for example, during play;
- take part in group oral language activities, for example, circle time; and
- adopt a role relevant to context, for example, the doctor in the surgery.

## Language and Thinking

Children should have opportunities to:

- talk about experiences, pictures, stories, rhymes, poems and information with adults/peers for a range of purposes;
- talk about their work, play and things they have made;
- retell a story, for example, by using pictures, props or prompts;
- repeat sound sequences, for example, short clapping or musical phrases;
- ask and answer questions for a range of purposes, (for example, to find information, ask permission, find out 'why?') with adults modelling questions for children where appropriate;
- explain what they have done and give reasons for their choices, actions or needs;
- express their ideas, thoughts, feelings and opinions; and
- recognise that language is used for different purposes, for example, humour.

## Extended Vocabulary

Children should have opportunities to:

- listen and respond to adults and peers;
- be immersed in the language of books;
- join in with familiar phrases in a story; and
- join in focused experiences to introduce or generate vocabulary.

## Literacy Indicators: Progression in Talking and Listening

By the end of Year 1 most children should:	Progressing towards Key Stage 1 most children should:
be able to listen attentively to a range of stimuli;	listen with increasing attentiveness and for longer periods of time;
be able to listen to and carry out instructions;	listen to and carry out more complex instructions;
be able to express some thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example, through drama;	express themselves with increasing clarity and confidence, using a wider vocabulary and more complex sentence structure;
be able to listen to others and respond, demonstrating some social conventions, for example, eye-contact, turn-taking;	understand and use social convention in conversations and child initiated interactions;
be able to answer questions, (for example, to give information) and ask questions (for example, to find information or seek an explanation);	
be able to talk about personal experiences;	be able to retell stories, events or personal experiences in sequence with reasonable detail;
be able to retell stories in sequence;	
give an opinion on a story or event;	offer reasons to support opinions given.
know a wide-range of rhymes, poems and songs;	
recognise some words that rhyme;	
be able to generate rhyme, for example, rhyming strings 'hat', 'fat', 'sat';	
show some awareness of the structure of words by recognizing syllables and sounds within words.	

# Reading

Children should be encouraged to develop a love of books and the disposition to read. As stories are read to them children should see the reader as a role model.

They should listen to a range of interesting and exciting fiction, non-fiction, poetry and rhymes, retell familiar stories and share a wide range of books with adults and other children. Opportunities should be given to browse in the book corner and use books to find information.

As children begin to understand that print carries meaning they should also be encouraged to develop a curiosity about words, how they sound, the patterns within words and how they are composed. Through sharing and using books, children should become familiar with letters and their shape and sound.

## Contexts for Learning

Reading experiences should be informal and enjoyable, with children learning in an environment where print is all around them, for example, in captions, labels and instructions. Children should have access to a wide range of reading materials throughout the day, for example, menus, catalogues, fiction, non-fiction, comics, magazines, personalized books, class books, and books related to areas of play.

They should have regular opportunities as a whole class, in small groups or individually, to see modelled reading and to participate in shared reading. As they move through the Foundation Stage they should have opportunities to read individually or in small groups with teacher guidance.

# Learning Experiences to Develop Reading throughout the Foundation Stage

Children will learn to read through the following experiences:

From:	To:
<p><b>Children should have opportunities to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enjoy a range of stories, poems and non-fiction texts read to them by adults/other children;</li> <li>share a wide range of books with parents/carers; and</li> <li>develop visual memory and discrimination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Through modelled and shared reading children should have opportunities to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talk about what has been read and say what they have enjoyed or found out;</li> <li>talk about story structures, for example, actions, reactions, build-up, conclusion;</li> <li>read a variety of texts in different ways, for example, stories, lists, information books;</li> <li>use title, cover, blurb and illustrations to predict type of text and content;</li> <li>use pictures and text to make predictions, for example, stories, lists, information books;</li> <li>talk about personal experiences related to text;</li> <li>explore features in written language, for example, the beginning, middle and end of words, spaces between words, direct speech, exclamation marks, question marks, capital letters and full-stops;</li> <li>talk about ways that unknown words can be read, for example, using picture cues, contextual cues, sound cues;</li> <li>encounter new words through text experience and begin to use appropriately;</li> <li>use books to find out about things that interest them;</li> <li>make their own books; and</li> <li>enjoy a range of computer-generated texts, for example, Clicker, interactive books on CD-Rom.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Through modelled and shared reading children should have opportunities to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compare structures of stories in order to recognise similarities;</li> <li>begin to locate information in a variety of ways, for example, using a contents page;</li> <li>use title, blurb cover and illustrations to predict type of text and read to confirm;</li> <li>justify predictions made using pictures and text;</li> <li>extend understanding by exploring feelings and making connections;</li> <li>use print features and/or punctuation when reading or dramatising;</li> <li>use a range of reading cues at every opportunity across the curriculum; and</li> <li>extend vocabulary while exploring the difference between spoken and written language.</li> </ul>

# Literacy Indicators: Progression in Reading

By the end of Year 1 most children should:	Progressing towards Key Stage 1 most children should:
<p>show a desire to learn to read;</p> <p>understand that print has meaning and that the meaning doesn't change;</p> <p>understand that the printed word remains constant;</p> <p>be able to talk about what has been read and say what they have enjoyed or found out;</p> <p>make links between own experiences and the text, for example, "My cousin broke my chair";</p> <p>make predictions, for example, what will happen next;</p> <p>browse in order to choose books;</p> <p>know how to handle and care for books correctly;</p> <p>understand the purpose of environmental print;</p> <p>retell stories using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pictures or props,</li> <li>- oral prompts,</li> <li>- memory;</li> </ul> <p>develop concepts of print:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand the difference between print and picture,</li> <li>- be able to track text,</li> <li>- recognise the difference between words, letters and spaces,</li> <li>- make one-to-one correspondence, between spoken and written word;</li> </ul>	<p>give reasons for opinion;</p> <p>talk about own experiences and feelings to help them understand the text, for example, "Mummy bear will be cross because my mummy was cross when my chair was broken";</p> <p>transfer understanding to new situations by making connections, for example, talk about how a character might react in a different situation such as Red Riding Hood in the shopping centre;</p> <p>give reasons for their predictions;</p> <p>choose books for a specific purpose;</p> <p>read and use environmental print within the school;</p> <p>retell and sequence stories, in reasonable detail, using appropriate language, for example, "After a while..."; "Soon after ...";</p> <p>recognise the difference between a line and a sentence;</p>

By the end of Year 1 most children should:	Progressing towards Key Stage 1 most children should:
<p>follow pictorial instructions;</p> <p>understand and use some language associated with books, for example, cover, spine, author, illustrator;</p> <p>recognise different types of text, for example, fiction, non-fiction or poetry;</p> <p>be aware of features in written language, for example, bold print, size variation, exclamation marks, speech bubbles, capital letters, full-stops and question marks;</p> <p>show some awareness that words are made up of sounds and syllables; understand that sounds are represented by letters (phoneme/grapheme awareness); show some awareness of the sounds at the beginning, middle and end of a word; (See guidance on phonological awareness)</p> <p>use prior knowledge and pictures to make sense of a text;</p> <p>use context and syntax to make predictions about words;</p> <p>recognise some familiar words in context; and</p> <p>demonstrate an increased vocabulary, through their text experiences.</p>	<p>read and follow simple instructions;</p> <p>begin to identify different genres, for example, instructions, fairy tales, recount, reports;</p> <p>begin to recognise specific features of some genres, for example, characters and setting in a story; the sequence of instructions;</p> <p>begin to read with expression in response to print variations and punctuation for example, sounding surprised, sounding angry, stopping at a full-stop;</p> <p>use sound symbol correspondence to read;</p> <p>use more than one cue to cross-check;</p> <p>use a range of reading cues with increasing independence and begin to self-correct;</p> <p>read on sight, some words in a range of meaningful contexts; and</p> <p>use extended vocabulary when discussing text, retelling stories or in their emergent writing.</p>

# Writing

In order to help children experience and understand the purposes of writing, they should have opportunities to talk about why people write. They should be given opportunities to experiment with their own written communication for their own purposes, using a range of writing materials such as pens, pencils, crayons and paint. They should have opportunities to 'read' their own writing and have this writing valued. As the teacher writes in a range of situations, children should see her as a role model.

Where teachers have observed that children are at the appropriate stage of development, and have chosen to use adult writing as a model, help should be given to those children in the formation of letters. On occasions, some children may wish to have their thoughts written down by an adult. A child may choose to copy this writing but should not be asked to do so. However, children should be encouraged to use adult writing and a range of texts as models to support their independent writing.

As children begin to write with more competence they should be helped to express their ideas clearly using their increasing vocabulary and knowledge of sentence structure. Teachers should provide specific modelling of the writing process through a range of writing forms for different purposes and audiences.

Through shared writing and with teacher support for individuals, children will have opportunities to write in increasingly conventional ways.

## Context for Learning

Children should have access to a stimulating writing area with a variety of tools and media throughout the school day and be encouraged to 'write' during play and in every curricular area. They should have regular opportunities as a whole class, in small groups or individually to see modelled writing and to participate in shared writing. As they progress they should have opportunities to write individually or in small groups with teacher guidance.

# Learning Experiences to Develop Writing throughout the Foundation Stage

Children will learn to write through the following experiences:

From:	To:
<p><b>Through modelled writing children should have opportunities to:</b></p> <p>see the teacher as a 'writer', for example, writing messages, recording observations, scribing shared texts;</p> <p>observe the teacher modelling specific writing strategies, including directionality, correspondence between spoken and written words, spacing, sound-symbol relationships, making analogies, letter formation, simple punctuation;</p> <p><b>Through shared, guided and independent writing children should have opportunities to:</b></p> <p>talk about why people need to or choose to write;</p> <p>talk about the ideas represented in their drawings;</p> <p>'read or interpret' their emergent/experimental writing;</p> <p>see themselves as 'writers' as they experiment with 'writing' in a range of informal contexts, for example, writing messages or during play;</p> <p>talk about what they want to write;</p> <p>talk about different forms of writing in context, for example, recipes, stories or lists;</p> <p>begin to explore how to write words;</p> <p>use ICT to compose and draw, for example, a simple word-processor or graphics package;</p> <p>improve physical skills in order to develop balance, co-ordination and space-awareness; and</p> <p>develop manipulative skills in order to be able to handle writing materials, for example, finger exercises, action rhymes, threading beads, drawing and painting pictures with increasing detail, doing puzzles, using lentils, sequins to decorate, using scissors.</p>	<p><b>Through modelled writing children should have opportunities to:</b></p> <p>see the teacher explicitly model specific writing genre, for example, procedure, recount, report, narrative;</p> <p>see the teacher improve her own writing by choosing alternative words or re-organising content;</p> <p><b>Through shared, guided and independent writing children should have opportunities to:</b></p> <p>begin to talk about the most appropriate form for a specific purpose, for example, letter of thanks, a list for things we need;</p> <p>begin to use pictures, prompts or simple frameworks to plan their writing;</p> <p>think about the best words to use when writing;</p> <p>use a range of writing forms across the curriculum;</p> <p>use increased knowledge of sound-symbol correspondence, analogy, or word-accessing to write in a way that others understand; and</p> <p>use a range of word-processing skills with increasing competence.</p>

# Literacy Indicators: Progression in Writing

By the end of Year 1 most children should:	Progressing towards Key Stage 1 most children should:
<p>experiment with mark-making to share ideas;</p> <p>be able to distinguish between drawing and writing;</p> <p>understand that printed text is recorded speech;</p> <p>understand that writing is a means of communication, for example, writing messages for others to read;</p> <p>choose to write without prompting;</p> <p>see themselves as writers, displaying confidence and valuing own writing;</p> <p>understand that writing is formed directionally, one word at a time, for example, left to right or in lists;</p> <p>begin to problem-solve how to write words through beginning to apply sound-symbol correspondence, using familiar words to make new words or finding words in the environment;</p> <p>use a comfortable and efficient pencil grip with some control; and</p> <p>begin to form some letters correctly, for example, the letters in his or her name.</p>	<p>make decisions about what and how they will write, for example, a story, a caption for a model, a label for a picture, an order in the café, a sentence about a topic or shopping lists;</p> <p>write in a range of genre, with teacher guidance, following shared preparation, for example, a simple report on an animal following a visit to the farm;</p> <p>use rhymes, poems and patterned stories as models for structuring their own writing;</p> <p>use a wider range of vocabulary in their writing;</p> <p>begin to show evidence of sequence in recount and instructions;</p> <p>begin to demarcate sentences;</p> <p>begin to use capital letters for the pronoun 'I', for names and at the start of a sentence;</p> <p>show increased independence when writing words by applying sound-symbol correspondence, making analogies and accessing words from a range of sources; and</p> <p>show increased control over formation of lower and upper-case letters, size and spacing.</p>

## **An Early Years Literacy Interboard Group Publication**

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