



**Teaching Reading at Hill View**  
**EYFS and Lower KS1**  
**Talk Through Stories**

## **Introduction**

At Hill View we are proud of the teaching of reading and the love of books we help foster in all of our pupils. Over the past few years we have 'reconsidered reading' through:

- Strengthening the rigor of our teaching of synthetic phonics using the RWI scheme, that has included comprehensive training for all staff that teach children to decode;
- Dovetailing this into the whole class teaching of Close Reading using strategies from the Reading Reconsidered methodology, that include text dependent questions and pupil engagement and understaying at different layers of texts,
- Sitting reading firmly at the heart of our integrated curriculum as a springboard and spine to the vibrant cross-curricular projects that our pupils experience and that are models for talk and writing.

This booklet summarises some of the key points and features that comprise our approach to whole class Close Reading.

## **Choice of books**

As a school we believe learning is made visible when children are shown 'What a Good One Looks Like' (WAGOLL). In reading this means choosing challenging texts that are made even more meaningful and engaging to the children as they are set within the context of their Integrated Curriculum Project.

Books form an age appropriate spine and provide models that support the Integrated Curriculum and models that inform the WAGOLLS for the Talk, Read, Write process that we use to develop children's writing and wider language skills.

## **Talk Through Stories**

It is designed to extend and deepen children's vocabulary so that they can understand the books they will be able to read for themselves. It is important to plan specifically and systematically – step by step – to develop their vocabulary.

Through reading the story each day, children get to know the story really well: the plot, the characters, and their actions and motives (See Appendix B for further information on close and layered reading).

Through introducing a variety of vocabulary each day, we explore words from the story, specifically selected to develop children's understanding of each word in the context of

their everyday lives. These are words that children are unlikely to hear in everyday conversation but are likely to come across in stories.

If we are to develop children's language, they need to talk. The aim of Talk Through Stories is to give them opportunities to do this and to develop their vocabulary. It is vital, therefore, that children have a partner when answering the questions. You choose pairs to feed back and do not rely on hands up.

## **The Structure of a Talk Through Stories Lesson at Hill View**

### **Before Reading:**

#### **Sharing the LI and Reading Skill**

Share the LI with children and discuss what skill they will be using and the associated 'reading role'. See Appendix A for the KS1 and KS2 skills documents. These should be referred to in the lesson so that children are clear about the skill they are learning/demonstrating.

Reading Roles takes familiar job titles and assigns them to reading strategies and skills thus giving children an easy-to-refer-to system for being more deliberate with their thinking during reading, with the ultimate goal of being able to comprehend texts. Alongside the job title (or role) there is a symbol which can be used as a further way to prompt certain kinds of thinking – some children may find these easier to remember.

### **Story Timetable**

**Day 1:** Introduce the story and read it to the children. Discuss characters and problem.

**Day 2:** Re-read the story. Show facial expression for characters' emotions at different points of the story.

**Day 3:** Have fun with favourite phrases and do the freeze-frame activity so that children construct sentences orally.

**Day 4:** Encourage the children to join in with more of the story and talk about how the problem was resolved.

**Day 5:** Invite the children to decide what they think about the characters – are they 'nice' or 'not nice' – and why they think so.

## **Vocabulary Timetable**

**Days 1 to 4:** Two words a day - 5 minutes.

**Day 5:** Revise all words.

## **Planning**

You will need to familiarize yourself with the Ruth Miskin Talk through Stories planning documents (Appendix D).

## **KS1**

Where possible you might try to align your IC, the talk for writing process, with your reading. So the text you might focus on for the week may be your WAGOLL that you introduce the children to, to inspire their writing. This would be integrating the reading and writing, which supports your IC project learning.

## **Non-Fiction in the Wider Curriculum**

Reading more non-fiction is both challenging and very important. When planning, teachers should ensure to embed non-fiction texts. Embedding Non-Fiction supports the comprehension of both the fiction and non-fiction texts.

## **How to Embed Non-Fiction**

- Link your questions across the two types of text both in style and subject content.
- For younger children, adapt, combine and amend articles to make them more accessible.

For example, if your novel was Paddington at the Palace, you might look at an article on Buckingham palace, a description of Big Ben, a biography of Queen Elizabeth, instructions on how to make marmalade or a map of British railway stations.

## **Questioning**

Teachers at Hill View should expose children to range of different question types (see Appendix C).

Talk through Stories draws upon building text dependent questioning and Marion Blank's levels of questioning; Naming, Describing, Retelling/Narrative and justifying. The levels are graded in complexity and go from understanding concrete questions to more abstract questioning and inferencing.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

| Symbol  | Role  | KPI Skill |
|---|---|-----------|
|    | <p>Translator</p> <p><i>The translator is able to sound out unfamiliar words using their phonic knowledge. They may also be able to read fluently.</i></p>                | Decode    |
|    | <p>Reporter</p> <p><i>The reporter finds and records facts and information from a text. They are able to explain what has happened to far in what they have read.</i></p> | Retrieve  |
|   | <p>Detective</p> <p><i>The detective searches for clues in a text. They can make inferences about what is being said and done.</i></p>                                    | Infer     |
|  | <p>Weather Forecaster</p> <p><i>The weather forecaster uses information from a text to predict what will happen next.</i></p>   | Predict   |

## Appendix B

### Close Reading

'Close reading is the methodical breaking down of the language and structure of a complex passage to establish and analyse its meaning. Teaching students to do it requires layered readings and asking, sequenced, text-dependent questions:' p61 RR

1. Use layered readings to read the text multiple times
2. Establish meaning via text dependent questions
3. Analyse meaning also via text dependent questions
4. Process insights in writing.
5. Built on the fundamentals from previous reads
- 6 Each reading served different purposes; doesn't feel repetitive.
- 7 Reduces overwhelming children because helps us unpack language:  
Purposefulness of re-reading.

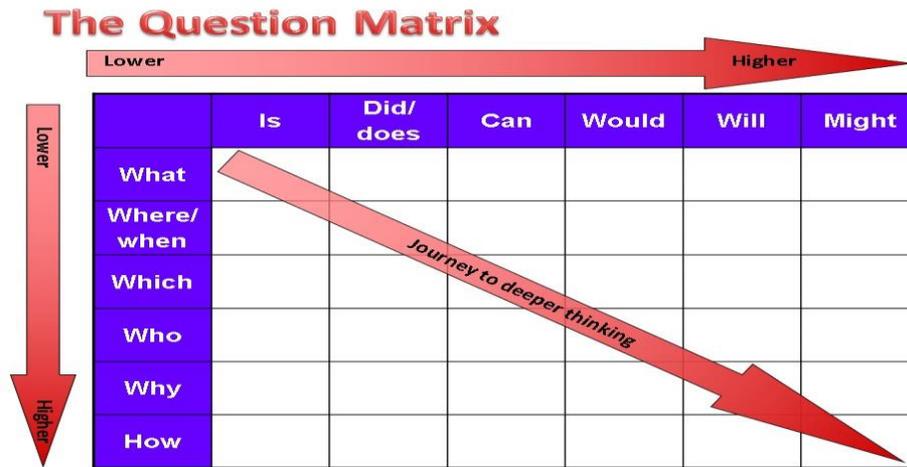
Key features of effective reading instruction in our school, outside of Synthetic Phonics instruction, usually:

1. Use layered readings to read the text multiple times
2. Establish meaning via text dependent questions
3. Analyse meaning also via text dependent questions
4. Built on the fundamentals from previous reads
5. Each reading served different purposes; doesn't feel repetitive.
6. Reduces overwhelming children because helps us unpack language:
7. Purposefulness of re-reading. Telescopic – each level of questioning is more precise.

#### **Three Reasons Why CR is important:**

1. Close Reading is a tool that helps students read a book that is above their comfort level.
2. Defends against what we call "gist" reading. You understand the main idea of the text and you can explain it. But there is a lot more to a text than just the main idea.
3. CR develops language sensitivity. In math we talk about does this answer make sense. In reading, it's similar, you develop an ear and you hear the sarcasm and tone that enters Roald Dahl's writing.

## Appendix C



**Talk through Stories** draws upon building text dependent questioning and Marion Blank's levels of questioning; Naming, Describing, Retelling/Narrative and justifying. The **levels** are graded in complexity and go from understanding concrete **questions** to more abstract **questioning** and inferencing.

BLANK level questions were devised by Dr Marion Blank as a way to structure questions at different levels of understanding, ranging from 1 (simple one word answers) to level 4 which require reasoning. Below are examples of different questions:

**BLANK level 1: (Naming)**

Find one like this  
 What can you see?  
 What is it?  
 Say this...  
 What did you hear?  
 What did you do?

**BLANK level 2: (Describing)**

What happened?  
 What shape is it?  
 What size is it?  
 What colour is it?  
 Where is it?

**BLANK level 3: (Identify)**

How are these the same?  
 Tell me something else you could use...  
 Tell me a story...  
 Find me one to use with this...  
 Tell me the beginning, middle and end...

**BLANK level 4: (Predicting)**

What will happen if...?  
 Why?  
 What could you do?  
 How can we tell?  
 Why should we use that?  
 Why is... made of ...?

## Appendix D

Refer to documents; TTS Storytime activities RMT 1 and TTS Vocabulary time activities RMT

### **Further reading;**

Blanks question levelling <https://www.nurserynook.co.uk/single-post/2018/03/05/blank-level-questions>

Ruth Miskin

<https://schools.ruthmiskin.com/slogin/?next=/resources/watch/428/>

Talk for Writing <https://www.talkforwritingshop.com/>

Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction Paperback – 9 April 2013  
by Isabel L. Beck et al

Reading Reconsidered: A Practical Guide to Rigorous Literacy Instruction Paperback – Illustrated, 12 April 2016  
by Doug Lemov et al