



Weekly Reading GUIDE

Research-Informed Reading Programme

Should we be evidencing written comprehension?

- Using The Fluency Shed for three days a week as a whole-school approach to teaching reading may mean that children spend much more time reading and discussing texts and less time writing than they might in your current model. This is deliberate. Writing in response to texts can help consolidate and deepen understanding, but it does not provide reliable evidence of children's underlying reading ability, (Such, 2025).
- Although Ofsted (2018) explains that there is no expectation for a specific amount or frequency of written work in children's books, we understand that writing in response to texts can help deepen understanding. It is also requirement of statutory assessments at the end of Year 6, Therefore, the Fluency Shed has included short, challenging written comprehension activities at the end of every third lesson. We have also provided termly written summative assessments in the style of statutory assessments that focus on one fiction text, one non-fiction text and one poem per assessment, per term from Summer Year 1 to Summer Year 6.

What would a week's worth of reading lessons look like if I use The Fluency Shed?

The Fluency Shed consists of three 30–45-minute lessons per week, leaving time for one or two additional reading lessons.

One possible whole-school structure:

Day 1: The Fluency Shed — Focus on reading with accuracy

Day 2: The Fluency Shed — Focus on reading with automaticity

Day 3: The Fluency Shed — Focus on reading with prosody

Day 4 & 5: Extended reading — Applying fluency skills, building reading stamina and understanding whole texts. (Guidance provided.)

What is the rationale for combining The Fluency Shed with extended reading lessons?

Alongside three days a week on Fluency Shed, we recommend that for the other two 30—45-minute reading lessons, children move to extended reading of longer texts. Texts need to be carefully chosen for extended reads and be at an age-appropriate level or higher. It is an opportunity to practise skills from Fluency Shed's explicit reading instruction. Research shows that there are three necessary aspects of reading pedagogy that can each be targeted by a different core reading lesson structure. (Such, 2025).

- 1) Fluency reading: Build reading fluency through practice
- 2) Close Reading: Discuss texts in depth.
- 3) Extended reading: Read plenty of thoughtfully chosen texts

As the Fluency Shed specifically caters for numbers 1 and 2, the other two days can be spent focusing on number 3: extended reading. Extended reading lessons using whole-books will provide the necessary experience for stamina, vocabulary and comprehension. The two lessons should include extended reading, both supported and independent, and include discussion and reflection on vocabulary, knowledge and meaning so that the reading lessons are effective in sparking genuine discussion.

***To complement extended reading lessons, Literacy Shed Plus offers a wide range of discussion guides for contemporary classroom texts which are placed into age categories. Each book study supports small-group or whole-class reading, with carefully designed questions for every section of the text.**

What is Extended Reading?

- Extended reading is a structure for teaching reading that is designed to give children plenty of experience of the written English language. It is a lesson that recognises that the breadth of our children's reading experiences is as important as the depth of their exploration of individual texts (Such, 2025). In an extended reading lesson, children engage with a lot of text, either with support or independently.
- The extended reading lessons support the idea of how reading entire books, rather than just short extracts, can significantly support children's reading comprehension, vocabulary development, fluency and background knowledge. Whole-book reading allows students to understand how authors structure texts, develop ideas over time and use language in context. It also builds reading stamina and encourages reading for pleasure, which in turn increases engagement and overall literacy skills.
- We believe that a weekly reading programme, consisting of the Fluency Shed for three days and extended reading lessons for two days, creates a broad and balanced approach to reading. The Fluency Shed provides focused, extract-based reading that is discussed in depth, ensuring that children are not overwhelmed by the length or complexity of a whole text; meanwhile, the two whole-book lessons provide opportunities for sustained reading and deeper exploration of complete books.

The Fluency Shed + Extended Reading Lessons:
An Example Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
The Fluency Shed To read with accuracy	The Fluency Shed To read with automaticity	The Fluency Shed To read with prosody	Extended whole-book reading lesson To build stamina and apply fluency skills	Extended whole-book reading lesson To build stamina and apply fluency skills
30-45 minutes	30-45 minutes	30-45 minutes	30-45 minutes	30-45 minutes

Daily: Teacher reading the class text to the children for 20 minutes a day.

‘Daily ‘story time’ might sometimes be viewed as an indulgence at key stages 2 and it can find itself being squeezed or skipped to accommodate other demands. However, if done well, it is a powerful driver for improving pupils’ reading and all-round education, as well as having a positive impact on their social and emotional wellbeing. It can also be a time of genuine enjoyment for the whole class, a shared experience sparking reflection and discussion.’

(The Reading Framework)

This read should be an opportunity to delve into a book that would normally be inaccessible to a child when reading alone as listening comprehension is generally higher than reading comprehension. Doing this encourages rich language discussions and extends pupils' reading journeys.

Guide to Extended Reading lessons

Note: This guidance is mainly taken from Christopher Such's essential guide to teaching reading in primary schools: 'Primary Reading Simplified: A Practical Guide to Classroom Teaching and Whole-School Implementation'. Please see the book for more detailed explanations.

From the end of Year 1 to the start of year 3, extended reading involves the teacher reading aloud (from an age-appropriate book) while children follow the words in their own copy of the text. Ideally this should be from a class set of books or photocopied. Failing that, they could track the text from a visualiser. This lesson structure involves the teacher reading aloud to children. This is interspersed with explanations and questions to ensure children construct a basic understanding of the text.

With more developed readers and towards the middle of year 3 and above, teachers should begin to ask children to quietly read short chunks of text for themselves, so that month by month, the length of the chunks of texts they ask children to read independently is increased. By the end of Year 6, the aim is for children to find it normal to read multiple pages before briefly discussing them to clarify their understanding.

Lesson Outline

- Choose the text to be read. This will ideally be a book where you have a whole class set, and the children can each have a copy. This book will last a couple of weeks (dependent upon year group).
- Briefly place the upcoming reading in wider context/summarise what was read in a previous lesson.
- Read the text aloud and ask the class to track whilst you are reading (using a ruler or finger).
- Pause to explain anything essential and keep explanations brief. Only a third or less of the lesson time should be spent discussing the text, the rest should be spent reading at pace.
- Model your thinking behind reading complex passages (slow it down, re-read to make sense of it).

Once confident

- Once children are familiar and confident with the lesson structure above, begin to ask children to quietly read short chunks of text for themselves.
- Introduce tricky vocabulary beforehand to help them with this.
- When a pupil finishes reading the set chunk of text, ask them to write a one sentence summary. Then re-read the section to check their summary accurately represents it.
- Ask questions about the section for understanding of the text. Ask for strategies they used (repeated reading, whisper reading, applying understanding of morphology).
- Gradually build up the length of time the children are reading independently in the lesson so that it is shared evenly with the teacher.
- Use discussion guides to ask targeted questions, encourage written comprehension for consolidating understanding.

Points to consider

1. The teacher is to read a book to the children for at least 20 minutes at another time of the day. As a general rule, the read-aloud should allow children access to complex vocabulary, ideas and syntax they cannot yet decode themselves. It should expose pupils to richer language than they encounter in their independent reading. Pause occasionally to discuss language and background knowledge but focus on pace and enjoyment. This is because daily shared reading fosters a love of reading, builds vocabulary and introduces story structures and fictional worlds.
2. Written comprehension tasks have their place, with the Fluency Shed providing one at the end of the three days. They can also be implemented based upon the extended reading lessons as research shows writing about reading can help children clarify and consolidate understanding. However, written comprehension should not replace fluency practice or rich oral discussion, which are essential for building comprehension.

The Fluency Shed draws on research and evidence from key experts and organisations in reading fluency, including Christopher Such, Tim Rasinski, Timothy Shanahan, Dr. Young-Suk Grace Kim, Duke and Cartwright (2023), Melissa Cheesman-Smith, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Fischer Family Trust (FFT).