Key leaflet: Guided reading

> When I'm in the guided group I like it because I get help from the teacher and I don't just have to work independently all the time.
>
> **Year 9 pupil**

> It gives a chance for those students who are perhaps less secure and less confident…to be able to take their points a little further…It allows me to make sure I'm checking the understanding, and to push points a little further with those students too.
>
> **English teacher**

> Guided reading enables students to take risks in a 'safe' environment, so you can really push them towards independent thinking or interpretations.
>
> **English teacher**

To listen to what a range of pupils and teachers have to say about the benefits of guided reading download or view ***Clip 6: Securing learning*** – pupils and teachers talk about guided reading.

Guided reading is a pedagogical approach developed by schools with support from the National Strategies and is seen by teachers as a highly effective way of building, developing, applying and securing skills in reading, for a wide and diverse range of pupils. It allows teachers to focus in an intensive and targeted way on specific pupils and their needs, whether those pupils are working below expectations or are making fast progress.

This leaflet is intended for classroom teachers or support staff who plan to use guided reading in their lessons and wish to explore the approaches described. It will also be of use to heads of English, school managers, other curriculum leaders, deputy heads and headteachers who are improving aspects of reading within their department or school. It is intended for use alongside:

- *Key leaflet: Modelled and shared reading* (Ref: 00464-2010PDF-EN-03)
- *Key leaflet: Leadership and management in guided reading* (Ref: 00464-2010PDF-EN-04)
- *Key leaflet: Assessment and guided reading* (Ref: 00464-2010PDF-EN-05).

These can be downloaded by going to the National Strategies web area at: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search using the titles or reference numbers given.

There are also relevant video clips of classroom practice and reflection, which may be viewed alongside the advice provided in the leaflets.

The guided reading approach is not new; pupils who have entered the school from Key Stage 2 will be familiar with it, and there are likely to be teachers within the department or school who have already benefited from what it can offer. This leaflet acts as both a review of the advantages the approach offers learner and teacher, as well as an introduction to the pedagogy for those who have not yet explored the opportunities it offers.

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What are the key challenges for me or us?

Key challenge	Yes/no
To understand the pedagogy and principles underpinning guided reading so I can consider how to implement it in my lessons	
To consider how to include guided reading in schemes of work and curriculum plans	
To improve how I currently use guided reading, focusing on strategies such as use of questions, focused objectives, leading into and out of the group work	
To manage guided reading effectively in the context of the whole class being productively occupied	
To improve how I assess pupils' reading development as part of guided reading	
To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the guided reading I do	
Other (my own focuses)	

What is guided learning?

In guided learning teachers work with a small group (typically for about 20 minutes) to help pupils build, develop, apply or consolidate particular skills and strategies that they have been taught. While the teacher works with the selected group, other groups within the class continue with a range of pre-planned activities, which may – or may not – mirror the ones being addressed in the guided group. The purpose of the guided teaching is to enable pupils to become more confident and independent in using the skills they have been taught.

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What are the principles underlying guided learning/group work?

- Learning is a social activity in which talk is fundamental.
- Knowledge is jointly constructed and achieved.
- 'Scaffolding' provides support and focus through a gradual shifting of responsibility and control to the pupil.
- Metacognition, consciously focusing on and reviewing learning strategies and progress, is integral to learning.
- Language, thinking and learning are interrelated.
- Motivation and the disposition to learn are important parts of learning.
- Learning is structured into distinct episodes that follow a clear sequence which increases in cognitive demand.
- Teaching is designed to outpace rather than follow development.
- Teaching and learning are interactive, being part of a structured, focused dialogue between teacher and pupils and amongst pupils themselves.

Pedagogy and practice: Teaching and learning in secondary schools
***Unit 9: Guided Learning*, page 15 (Ref: 0432-2004 G)**

What is guided reading?

Guided reading – and the skills and strategies that lead into and out of it – is a highly effective and enabling strategy developed by English teachers with the support of the National Strategies. It also offers a range of benefits for teachers across all subjects in which accessing, understanding and interpreting text is a fundamental part.

How does guided reading fit into a teaching sequence?

- The teacher usually begins with a whole-class session in which they have modelled and taught particular reading strategies.
- Following this, the teacher works with a pre-selected small group of three to six pupils to develop key reading skills and strategies. This is the guided reading session.
- The session is planned, short and focused (about 20 minutes).
- The rest of the class works independently of the teacher, individually, or in pairs or groups.

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How is a guided session organised, and what happens in it?

- Pupils are grouped by **ability**, **need** or **focus** depending on the teacher's purpose.
- The session might begin with brief teacher **modelling** – or reviewing what has been introduced in the whole-class session, ensuring pupils know what their task is.
- A short period of **independent reading** is usually followed by or linked to a **joint reading** task, such as questioning and discussion, to deepen understanding of textual features.
- When finished, the teacher **checks understanding and use of strategies** with the individuals/group. Pupils **explain and expand responses** orally.
- It ends with a short period of **reflection and review**, where pupils are asked to summarise what they have learned about the text.
- Follow-up **tasks and targets** are set.

How do pupils benefit?

- Pupils will be able to **build**, **apply**, **secure and consolidate skills** which are appropriate to their needs; the **intensive focus** within the group structure and environment means the teacher can intervene or step back as required.
- The guided session offers **further support** to the group of pupils, enabling them to use more expert strategies than they can currently manage independently, helping them to build and develop skills which they might lack.
- **More-able pupils** can be challenged intellectually rather than socially; be invited to speculate and demonstrate independent thought; take risks in a 'safe' environment; focus on untypically demanding objectives, and respond to a higher level of discourse.
- It aims to support these pupils' **growing confidence and independence** at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Guided reading **bridges the gap** between modelled/shared and independent reading for specific pupils.
- Pupils are closely supported in understanding the way **language and structure of texts** match **writer's intentions**.
- It helps pupils by preparing them for what they are about to read through prediction and by considering specific words and phrases they will encounter.
- It **articulates explicitly a range of reading strategies** that pupils can use.

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What the research says

Research into guided reading has explored the particular benefits that can be derived from using it, and the ways in which it operates. For example, how does guided reading link with how learners *think*?

> One such reading-as-thinking model is that developed by Freebody and Luke (Luke, 1992; Simpson, 1996). Guided reading fits well into this model. Freebody and Luke's perspective could be described as 'integrative' because it combines components of reading that have often been perceived as separate and mutually exclusive. These components, which are described as four 'key elements of proficient, critical reading as social practice' (Luke, 1992, page 8), are:
>
> i. **Coding competence:** learning your role as a code breaker. How do I crack this?
>
> ii. **Semantic competence:** learning your role as text participant. What does this mean?
>
> iii. **Pragmatic competence:** learning your role as text user. What do I do with this, here and now?
>
> iv. **Critical competence:** learning your role as text analyst. What is this text trying to do to me?

Extract from *The Guided Reading Approach, Theory and Research* by Biddulph, J. Published by Learning Media Ltd. Copyright © LML. All rights reserved.

This research suggests guided reading is not hierarchical, and that all four components might take place simultaneously. In viewing your own classes or the clips suggested it may be useful to ask which of these practices you see in operation? A key point to bear in mind is that all four elements are expressed in terms of 'I' (or 'me') – in other words, emphasising the need for learners to be able to apply these skills *independently*.

But why do these things in *groups*? Other research has shown that group work can bring fundamental benefits to learners:

The importance of small group work

> The teaching sequence, which moves from the elicitation and activation of prior knowledge to the consolidation phase, is essentially teacher-directed. But clearly there is also a major emphasis in the Strategy on small group work, not least when the teacher is organising guided reading for some pupils and independent work or small group work for others.
>
> There is in the research literature a direct developmental connection between scaffolding and small group work. Scaffolding is a process that gradually transfers the responsibility from teacher to pupil for task planning, strategy selection, monitoring of progress and the evaluation of outcomes. But scaffolding is not only about strategies; it is about knowing when and where strategies should be used, and since (as we have already seen) research has shown that learning is facilitated when it takes place through dialogue and instructional conversations, the natural place for these to take place without the teacher* is in small groups, and between peers.
>
> ***Key Stage 3: Roots and research*, June 2002, page 18, (DfES ref: 0353/2002)**

*this should not be taken to mean without the teacher's presence or contribution, but that opportunities must exist for learners to collaborate, discuss and share learning and ideas – that real learning takes place at the point when pupils **become independent** and **make the decisions for themselves** but within the frame of the group.

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How does guided reading work?

Guided reading can fit easily into the teaching sequence, as follows.

Stage	Intention	Example
Introduction to text Introduction to objective, task and content	• to introduce the text • to support recall • to make connections • to encourage prediction and speculation • to recap on prior learning	Teacher explains/reminds pupils that session is focusing on a particular skill (for example, using inference to establish writer's viewpoint)
Learning check Confirm the strategies, skills and knowledge to be developed	• to make explicit a range of reading strategies and cues • to make explicit the learning objectives and outcomes	Teacher checks with individuals/ group what strategies they will use, what the task is, etc. May require further modelling of how to approach the task
Independent reading and related task (try/apply) Pupils work individually or in pairs monitored by the teacher	• to monitor as pupils read, checking for accuracy, fluency and comprehension • to give pupils focused attention (teacher on-the-shoulder) • to give pupils the chance to develop reading stamina and range	Pupils work in pairs to consider a text, perhaps annotating it, discussing key features related to the target task, etc.
Return to text/developing response Pupils return to the task with support and intervention from the teacher	• to go back to the text encouraging pupils to identify details and points which require clarification, exemplification or discussion • to support pupils in developing critical and deeper responses to the text • to use the text to review the application of a key reading strategy (such as rereading, skimming, scanning) • to tackle misconceptions • to establish a critical dialogue around the text, exploring personal preferences, and probing and extending responses • to assess comprehension and the use of appropriate reading strategies	Further task is set, such as focusing on a specific use of language (e.g. probing how an extended metaphor operates, or what else might be noticed regarding punctuation and its effect on the text's impact) This may be a chance for pupils to challenge each other's thinking or help develop partner's responses, etc.

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Stage	Intention	Example
Review (share/appraise reading targets/next steps) Group reconvenes to reflect on learning, the progress made and strategies deployed, and to identify further targets	• to return to and reinforce the learning objectives • to reflect on progress made and strategies used • to prepare for further learning • to transfer the skills and knowledge to other contexts • to evaluate strategies and texts	Pupils might complete assessment sheets, or discuss whether they have met success criteria set at the start. They might be asked to link their learning to other contexts (e.g. 'where else in the curriculum might this skill of judging bias be useful?')

Modelled and shared reading with guided reading

How does modelled and shared reading fit with guided reading?

Modelled and shared reading are particularly significant in providing opportunities for pupils to witness skills in action, try them out with support, and then apply them, but it is often the case that guided reading can help bridge the gap into independence.

What does modelled and shared reading offer?

The way in which modelled and shared reading is used can vary between schools, classes and groupings. The degree of modelled or shared reading required in the whole-class session which precedes guided reading will depend on factors such as:

- what has been done previously (the work may be little more than a quick strategy check)
- the level or disposition of the group or class (be aware that modelled and shared reading that goes on too long can leave insufficient time for independent application)
- the focus and purpose of the lesson to come (some activities or tasks may require a slightly less 'directed' teacher role).

Modelling in the guided session

You might choose to use modelling in the guided session to either support initial work done with the whole class or, if the class has gone straight into independent work (for example, when continuing work begun in a previous session), to introduce particular skills and strategies for the guided group you have selected. You can use simple resources such as a flipchart or small whiteboard to help refocus the group on how to approach the task.

When to use modelling in the guided session

You can use modelling at the start of the guided session, but do not discount its value as an intervention strategy. For example, if your guided group has struggled to grasp key strategies, or needs moving on to a new element, you may find modelling how to respond to a text, how to build a paragraph, etc. a useful tool later in the guided session.

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A word of warning

Typically, guided group sessions last around 20 minutes. Be aware that useful though modelling is, the purpose of a guided session is to allow pupils to share ideas, interact with you and each other, and ultimately apply reading skills independently. Make sure that the focus of the session does not rest entirely on you and leave little time for development of the very skills you have modelled or that have been shared.

See ***Clip 7 – Guided reading: supporting practice*** (second section: **Do: *Modelling within guided work***) to watch a teacher using modelling in a guided session.

See *Key leaflet: Modelled and shared reading* (Ref: 00464-2010PDF-EN-03) for more on this.

Work in practice – planning

You will need to decide what your **intended outcomes** are – what do you hope to achieve from the class as a whole (i.e. the 'non-guided' groups') and the guided group itself? Will they be working on the same tasks and towards the same objectives?

Also – what do you hope to achieve **more generally** from the guided work? (Do you have other outcomes in mind – such as developing confidence to talk about texts, encouraging social skills, etc.?) For example:

Stages	Advice
Decide **which classes** you will consider for developing guided reading	• Make it manageable. If this is your first time using this approach, then 'act small, think big!' • Pay as much attention, even at this stage, to the groups who are not working in guided groups and what the criteria are for not involving them (yet).
Establish the strengths, weaknesses and rates of progress in reading for that class	• Do you have sufficient data and assessment information in order to establish reading targets? If not, draw on the wide range of data and information most departments or schools have on pupils, or initiate your own work scrutinies and evaluation. • Later, the guided work itself will become a powerful piece of evidence for identifying pupils' needs.
Set a timescale	• Will this work continue for a term, or focus around a specific unit or scheme of work? • Be aware that groups and classes may need time to develop the 'habit' of working in guided reading groups. • Be flexible: if it is going well and engages pupils, there is no need to stop it simply because that is what you planned to do.

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Stages	Advice
Decide how you will gauge process	• You might use Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) or The Progression Maps (go to **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search for Progression Maps: reading) to establish particular areas and levels to target (based on your initial analysis of need) and whether these have been met. • You could talk to pupils about skills, engagement in the learning and their own sense of their development. • You might use peer evaluation and reflection at particular points in the process. • You might use standardised assessments – controlled GCSE tasks in reading, for example, at the start and end.
Group the pupils	• Groups should generally have a common learning need, but you can alter, adjust or amend groups according to their learning needs. • Occasional mixing of abilities may be helpful to develop certain skills. • Issues of gender, ethnicity and personality may need to be taken into account. • Size of groups is not fixed – consider the benefits of particular numbers (e.g. from three to six) to your particular class.
Manage the groupings	• Groups need not stay the same throughout a scheme or process. Mixing groups – even within a lesson – if required, is always a possibility. For example, you might wish to regroup when studying a longer written prose piece having previously looked at a visual media source, or changed groupings when a drama script (possibly more accessible in a mixed-ability grouping) was introduced.

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What does good and outstanding practice in guided reading look like?

Good practice will consist of these features:	Outstanding practice, in addition, will have these features:
Assessment is used effectively to group pupils and to track progress Guided reading led by an appropriate learning objective Learning objectives are linked to pupils' curricular targets Pupils are aware of their curricular targets and can identify when and how they have made progress Guided work builds on teaching at the start of the lesson and feeds into the plenary All pupils are accustomed to working independently and know how to manage the task without interrupting the guided group TAs [if available] used effectively in the classroom to support another guided group or individual pupils Teacher uses a range of strategies to engage and sustain pupils' engagement Resource builds and extends pupils' reading skills and thinking and offers a degree of challenge (in particular for gifted and talented pupils) Guided session has a clear structure and provides sufficient time for pupils to apply the skills they have been taught Independent work builds on the teaching at the start of the lesson and feeds into the plenary All pupils (including those working independently) make good progress in the lesson Guided reading is planned into schemes of work for all years	Teacher very skilled at listening to pupils' responses and posing questions that extend their thinking Teacher demonstrates excellent subject knowledge and can employ a range of strategies to ensure pupils make progress Pupils confident to raise questions Pupils confident to answer teacher's questions and can sustain responses Pupils confident to challenge and extend other pupils' contributions Pupils self-motivated and support one another Pupils know what they need to learn, the purpose for their reading and can identify success and areas for improvement High levels of independence displayed by pupils not in the guided groups. Quality outcomes generated by the pupils Curricular targets are used skilfully by the teacher to personalise the learning and to secure progress in identified reading skills for all pupils Guided session has pace and is well timed Guided reading is used by all teachers in the department and they have a shared understanding of the pedagogy

The lists above have been adapted from *Improving reading: A handbook for improving reading in Key Stages 3 and 4* (Ref: 00950-2009DWO-EN-02)

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Work in practice – the classroom

There is no 'one size fits all' model. Three summaries follow of teaching sequences which contain a guided reading session (the shaded section). Video clips of the guided reading sessions can be viewed online (by going to **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and searching for the title of the clip).

For six examples of guided sessions view Clips 8–13:

Clip 8: Year 10 – *Shakespeare*

Clip 9: Year 9 – *The Kite Runner*

Clip 10: Year 10 – *Frankenstein*

Clip 11: Year 7 – *Timothy Winters*

Clip 12: Year 11 – *Media*

Clip 13: Year 11 – *Of Mice and Men*

Three of these clips are outlined in the case studies on pages 12–14.

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Case study school 1: mixed 11–18 school, Year 9

To view the guided work from this school in action, watch ***Clip 9: Year 9 – The Kite Runner***. Should you wish to watch the whole teaching sequence from which this guided session comes, please see ***Clip 15: A reading lesson***.

Focus	Overview	Details
Whole-class introduction	• Looking at Framework substrand: How linguistic and literary features shape and influence meaning • Getting to level 7 • Text: *The Kite Runner*	• Pupils start by deconstructing what a particular objective means; what reading skills are required • Pupil in role as teacher manages feedback from class with another pupil scribing on board • Teacher then introduces extract to be worked on and question: 'How is the mood created in this extract?' and then models how she would text-mark and begin to answer question, and also invites contributions from class. Strong focus on the metalanguage ('I'm beginning to synthesise my ideas here', etc.)
Focus for the non-guided group	• Group continues to work on extract to answer question set, in particular the 'how'	• Teacher briefly provides examples of sorts of things to look for (is it figurative language? punctuation? vocabulary?) • Groups work on copies of extract
Focus for guided group	• Group answers same question on the extract • Strong language focus	• Group of four plus teacher (boy/girl plus boy/girl) • Individuals feed back findings from work on the text
Teacher's role in guided work	• Reminds group of focus for session • Intervenes where needed	• Teacher 'on shoulder', prompting where needed; keeping pupils focused on what is required to move beyond the 'what' (the writer does) to the 'how' it is achieved and its effect • A lot of prompting/eliciting to make pupils 'hit' the target level • Focus on naming particular linguistic terms such as 'rhetorical questions' and then eliciting their effect
Whole-class conclusion	• Pupils feed back within their groups with rest of class 'listening in' • Teacher concludes by summing up	• Teacher 'on side' listening as class manages the feedback • Individuals in groups build on or challenge findings from others • Teacher returns to objective from the start, reminds pupils of the particular reading skills and strategies they have used to achieve it • Asks for a general response to whether the target objective has been met

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Case study school 2: mixed 11–16 school, Year 10

To view the guided work from this school in action, watch ***Clip 10: Year 10 – Frankenstein***

Focus	Overview	Details
Whole-class introduction	• Looking at *Frankenstein* • Focus on the literary devices Shelley uses • Differences in presentation of the character between Chapters 5 and 16, leading to GCSE essay task with focus on chapter 16 for the lesson	• Shared reading session, considering two short extracts and contrasts, mediated by teacher on board • Pupils discuss key objectives and what they mean, and what strategies they will use to achieve them • Physical activity, moving around class to find and discuss literary devices exemplified by *Frankenstein* quotes posted by teacher on the wall • The extract on board is analysed using skills developed, and fed back
Focus for the non-guided group	• Work on the extended extract shown on the board	• Groups focus on the skills explored during the whole-class session
Focus for guided group	• Particular focus on making more detailed links and connotations to words/phrases. Pupils working on D/C border	• Group: three pupils plus teacher (two boys and a girl working as trio) • Trio work to analyse particular examples from text, discussing between themselves • They discuss and share ideas, build on each other's comments • They text-mark and also produce a shared written paragraph with the teacher's guidance
Teacher's role in guided work	• Sets task in motion • Prompts when needed (not often) • Notes (some) ideas on flipchart • Sums up thinking both verbally and in writing	• Teacher mediates and develops their responses, notes ideas on flipchart • He gives them prompt for shared writing to compose a paragraph which demonstrates the point, evidence, explain/evaluate and add more detail, focusing on the two sides to the creature and effect on the reader • Teacher sums up their thinking for them; helps articulate their ideas and links to wider comment on the novel
Whole-class conclusion	• Peer assessment related to whether objectives have been met • Pupils come up with own targets • Teacher links activities done to development work in next lesson	• Using coloured sticky notes, peer assessors place positive comments, advice, etc. on the work completed • They also feed back orally to partners • Pupils write a target down for their close reading; some feed back via whole class

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Case study school 3: 11–18 mixed comprehensive, Year 11

To view the guided work from this school in action, watch ***Clip 13: Year 11 – Of Mice and Men***

Focus	Overview	Details
Whole-class introduction	• Looking at GCSE assessment objectives and Framework objectives related to 'personal response'. • Text: *Of Mice and Men* • Discussion of reading strategies • Applying text-based active reading	• Lesson begins with whole class using visualisation strategies to form an impression of Crooks and his hut • Individuals feed back to teacher on impressions formed and evidence from text • Teacher models how to draw out links, connections and ideas from specific phrases from extract from novel on board
Focus for the non-guided group	• To gather further evidence for a GCSE response on characterisation	• Task: how does Steinbeck evoke sympathy for Crooks? • Pupils begin by completing 'inference grids' detailing evidence and their own responses
Focus for guided group	• Working specifically on developing responses (point, evidence, explain, reflect and give personal comment). Pupils working on D/C border	• Group of five plus teacher (pair of boys; girl/boy; girl/teacher) • Pupils look at pre-supplied extract to gauge where writer has/hasn't achieved these things. Then, in pairs create their own new paragraphs using the structure • They complete process by sharing how they have deployed techniques to develop their essay responses • They finish by assessing an earlier weaker extract, which is then revealed to be their own from previous year's mock exam!
Teacher's role in guided work	• Introduces focus • Works with girl • Distributes extracts, resources as needed • Mediates and shares responses within group	• Strong ongoing assessment focus • Uses mini-whiteboards to share learning • Keeps group on tight objective focus; intervenes to draw out learning as needed • Ends by showing pupils what they have learned and progression from previous year; helps pupils set own targets
Whole-class conclusion	• Whole-class reflection on reader's sympathy for Crooks and how this might have changed since start of lesson	• Pupils physically 'enact' sympathy with individuals standing near/far away from 'Crooks' (pupil in role) to show degree of sympathy, backed up by evidence • Asked to reflect on whether level of sympathy has changed from the start

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Guided reading sessions: challenges and solutions

There are several key, basic steps you can take which are likely to lead to successful guided reading sessions. On a broad level, for example, beginning with Year 7 classes who will have experienced guided reading work at Key Stage 2 may be advisable. More specifically, in relation to classroom practice:

- Position the group so that you can maintain a view of the whole class.
- Start with groups you know well and with whom routines are well established.
- Use preparatory lessons to establish ground rules for those not in the guided group.
- Establish clear expectations and standards.
- Reinforce expectations regularly.
- Use learning partners and pupil teachers (when the pupils take on role of teacher and lead session, reflection, feedback, etc.).
- Establish protocols for group work/talk for the guided group and the rest of the class (see below for independent advice).
- Model the learning disposition (the way you speak and react will set the tone for their work).
- Make it clear that pupils will be expected to feed back from the guided group to the whole class and vice versa.

However, these alone will not suffice. Certain particular challenges remain in relation to developing reading. For example:

Issue: pupils find it difficult to focus on or respond to the learning objective

Possible solutions:

- Check it's not an understanding problem (do they understand the assessment focus or the objective? Do they have a vocabulary in which to express their response?).
- Focus on the specifics of the text; don't go outside it (unless that is a stated objective) or draw on 'guess-work'.
- Use eliciting – leading pupils towards understanding ('Why does the writer use this word in particular?' 'Go a bit further – explain what the impact is…')
- Rephrase, or ask in a different way. ('So, what you're saying is…?' 'Can you think of another way of saying that?'
- Focus on what the writer is doing – the *how*, and the *effect* of choices.
- Ask for solutions from others in the guided group.
- Follow pre-provided checklists; refer to skills/success list/criteria.

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Issue: pupils need to have their learning 'moved on'. They are good at identifying, but not on analysing, inferring and deducing

Possible solutions

- Make sure the modelling has demonstrated the inference and interpretation (the personal, or inventive response) not just the point and the evidence.
- Encourage sharing of ideas and debate, so that exploration goes beyond listing features. (Do you agree? Why/why not?)
- Make the point that all readers are critics (we all have a view).
- Ask more open questions. (Why? How?, etc.)
- Extending and securing the learning through more challenging questions ('OK – now tell me how we can add a personal reflection to this response?').

Issue: managing independent work

The most important consideration is that those who are working independently have been able to build and develop skills through modelled and shared work in which they have been *interdependent* on peers and teacher before they are left to work independently. A key issue, however, that many teachers cite as a challenge to successful guided work is the management of the rest of the class while the guided reading session takes place.

Possible solutions

- **Good planning** is vital. If you put as much time into considering what the 'non-guided/ independent' pupils are doing, as into the guided group, you are likely to have a successful session.
- **Establish the culture** – even if you are not doing 'fully-fledged' guided work, introduce group work in which you focus for a shorter time, perhaps, on specific groups.
- **Share the objectives** – explain to pupils and make explicit the benefits of this way of working and what your expectations are.
- **Work with any support or additional teachers** present in a way that involves them, if possible, at the planning stage.
- **Encourage the class to see independent work as creative, necessary and exciting** – a way of both giving them independence and opportunity to be treated in a mature way, as well as focused assistance which they need.
- **Involve the pupils themselves** in the managing of the process (see page 17).

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Specific strategies for independent work

Teacher strategies to support and secure independent working	Ground rules for pupils working independently	Pupil strategies for independent working
Build new practice gradually; start small and support pupils	Ensure you understand the task and ask enough questions before beginning	Use reading/writing/discussion partners for regular feedback on what you're doing
Provide staged, scaffolded tasks to groups, e.g. in an envelope so that they only focus on one activity at a time	If the teacher is doing guided group work, use an agreed list of coping strategies and only ask the teacher as a very last resort	Check the time at regular intervals and try to cover all parts of the work set
Offer an element of choice in the tasks to encourage commitment	Save questions up for the plenary session – write them down if necessary	Check what others are doing and ask them to explain if necessary
Consider support in the form of sound files, digital resources, DVD, etc. or tasks related to the text in ICT	Complete unfinished work ready for next lesson in addition to homework unless told otherwise	Use resources provided – dictionaries, writing frames, prompts displayed on the classroom wall, examples from the board from earlier in the lesson
Use classroom wall displays to support work in progress – e.g. the lists of text features generated in whole-class sessions	Know and work on personal targets for improving reading and writing or group work skills	Work out problems – try first, ask later
Establish group leaders, pupil or teacher, and give them a checklist of questions to cover – vary the leader each time	Concentrate on the job in hand – avoid being distracted by others unless you are directly working with them	Redraft and improve your work or look for more examples and ideas if you have time left over

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What sort of activities can be done in guided reading?

It is likely that the class teacher will want to focus on particular challenges and objectives taken from the Framework for English, the assessment focuses, and/or related GCSE criteria and assessment objectives.

In many cases, though not all, it is likely that pupils will be working towards developed, personal responses to texts and the choices writers make. However, this does not mean that all guided work has to focus on interpretation of writer's viewpoint, or effect of literary techniques in an extract, speech or poem. Active text-based tasks, which involve close reading in a range of ways, can be equally effective – even if the final outcome is to write a paragraph from a longer response.

Close reading

These activities are most effective when worked on by a pair or small group as the discussion of possibilities leads to a closer look at the text.

Cloze

Filling the gap involves the reader in actively constructing meaning. Skills include:

- paying close attention to the meaning of the sentence
- choosing a word that fits grammatically
- using one's existing knowledge of the topic
- working out what is likely from the rest of the text
- working out what will fit with the style of the text , for example whether a word has already occurred in the sentence
- attending to the sense of the whole sentence by reading and rereading.

Sequencing

Sequencing activities involve reconstructing a text which has been cut into chunks. Skills include:

- reading and rereading
- paying close attention to the structure of the genre
- paying close attention to link words
- hunting for the logic or organising principle of the text , for example chronological order
- using previous experience and earlier reading.

Text marking

Text marking includes underlining, annotating or numbering the text to show sequence.
Skills may well include:

- skimming or scanning to find specific information
- differentiating between different categories of information
- deciding what is relevant information
- finding the main idea(s)
- questioning the information presented in the text.

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Text restructuring

Text restructuring involves reading and then remodelling the information in another format. For example, flow charts, diagrams, Venn diagrams, grids, lists, maps, charts, concept maps or rewriting in another genre. Depending on the format, skills used will include:

- identifying what is key and relevant in a text
- applying what is known in a new context
- remodelling the content and the format of the text
- awareness of the characteristics of different genres
- critical reading
- summary and prioritisation
- writing as well as reading skills.

Linking these to meaningful outcomes

Of course, while most of these activities are useful in their own right, ultimately they need to lead pupils towards gaining an understanding either of the text's inherent features and conventions and/or the development of their own reading strategies and skills. For example, a cloze exercise would need to be linked to – or supported by – exploration of what the activity tells us about the writer, or what the impact is on the reader of the possible choices available to the writer. Similarly, restructuring a text is of restricted value unless the attendant thinking is made explicit, for example: How does opening the text in this way affect our response as readers? Why use enjambment in this particular line?

Trying a range of guided reading approaches

There is nothing to stop you using guided reading as an approach, and the purpose of this leaflet is, to a large extent, about doing just that. However, you may feel that introduction of guided reading as a strategy in your class or department is best done collaboratively, developing ideas and observing a colleague, as you explore how it works best.

Key leaflet: Leadership and management in guided reading (Ref: 00464-2010PDF-EN-04) provides some continuing professional development ideas, especially for leaders, middle-managers, etc., but much of what is contained within may be of benefit to all.

See ***Clip 7: Guided reading: supporting practice* (first section: plan)**, which shows a teacher and her subject leader planning for, delivering and reflecting on a guided reading session.

The same leaflet references two helpful resources which might assist you in introducing guided work into your own practice or that of the department or school:

Resource sheet 1: Guided group session observation sheet (Ref: 00464-2010PDF-EN-06) can be used for observing and evaluating guided work either in your own or colleagues' classes, or when viewing some of the clips available online. Use it in conjunction with the two-column 'good/outstanding' features grid on page 10 of this leaflet.

Resource sheet 2: Planning for guided reading (Ref: 00464-2010PDF-EN-07) is a form for completion while planning the work you and/or colleagues might do.

The key thing to remember is that guided reading is part of a repertoire of approaches to the teaching of reading used by many teachers. As the examples which you have read about, or might watch, reveal – there are many different ways of making it work for you, but without 'having a go', you won't ever know how much it might enhance your pupils' learning, and your own teaching.

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Next steps

Action	By what date?
Further familiarise myself with the pedagogy of guided reading by looking at the online clips and reading the key materials	
Look at Key Stage 2 practice in guided reading either through talking to pupils or visiting feeder schools	
Decide where guided reading approaches might fit most readily and most usefully into current schemes (for example, where the need is greatest in terms of improving reading, re-engaging pupils, etc.)	
Identify a class or module of work to focus on when introducing guided reading	
Plan a sequence or unit of work which incorporates guided reading as a key approach	
Teach the lesson(s) as planned	
Evaluate success of guided reading undertaken through spoken/written self-reflection and/or peer observation	
Share best practice in guided reading with colleagues as appropriate (identify opportunities to do this)	
Other (your own priorities)	

Useful resources

The following resources, including the clips of classroom practice and interviews can be found at **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**:

*Resource sheet 1: Guided Group session observation sheet (*Ref: 00464-2010DOC-EN-06*)*

Resource sheet 2: Planning for guided reading (Ref: 00464-2010DOC-EN-07)

Key leaflet: Modelled and shared reading (Ref: 00464-2010DOC-EN-03)

Key leaflet: Assessment and guided reading (Ref: 00464-2010DOC-EN-05)

Key leaflet: Leadership and management in Guided Reading (Ref: 00464-2010DOC-EN-04)

Improving reading: a handbook for improving reading in Key Stages 3 and 4 (Ref: 00464-2010DOC-EN-01)

Pedagogy and practice: Teaching and learning in secondary schools, Unit 9: Guided Learning (Ref: 0432-2004G)

Grammar for reading and writing (Ref: 00655-2008PDF-EN-01)

Targeting level 5 and above: teaching responses to reading (Ref: 00042-2009PDF-EN-01)

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