

# The art of modelling

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I believe reading is the vehicle that impacts everything. It exercises the mind and enlarges the cognitive function of the brain. Reading is an important life skill which leads to many opportunities. How many times do you know of pupils losing a mark on a test because they didn't read the question properly? I know it's not all about tests and exams but it's a simple skill that can easily be taught through **modelling**. Modelling is the key to developing independence. When tackling a reading comprehension question, it's important to know which skills are needed to conquer it.

**Break it down:** The teacher breaks the skill down into small steps.

**Show them:** The teacher then shows the children how to do each step with an example question.

**Think aloud:** The teacher talks out loud through the process of misconceptions, solutions and reaching the right answer by double checking the question.

**Answer it:** The teacher then shows the children how to put the answer in words.

The pupils are then ready to repeat the process in small groups, pairs or practising independently with the help from a teacher. This builds up the skills to transfer and apply independently.

At Pocklington Community Junior School, we use an online tool called 'Cracking Comprehension' by Rising Stars to develop our pupils' reading comprehension ability. It's interactive, meaning the teacher has access to the age-appropriate text and questions on the screen with a highlighter to model the process of retrieving information or quotes from an extract. The teacher can demonstrate their thought process on the screen and type their answer as it would be written on paper.

We also follow a five-stage process of teaching to an end product, like a piece of writing. This same technique can be used in Art, Geography, Science, any subject. Picture your subject whilst reading through the 5 stages and how this would look in your class. Firstly, what is the end product you're wanting from the pupils?

**Stage 1: Review** – Look at a good example. Break down all the skills involved in creating the product. You could even show pupils a bad example of what it would look like if the skills weren't applied.

**Stage 2: Teach** – Teach the skills, giving pupils a chance to have a go at them and identifying them on the good example. For a piece of writing, this is the time to gather vocabulary and phrases from the good example that can be used in their own end product.

**Stage 3: Practise** – Follow the modelling steps leading to pupils having a practise of it before being asked to produce an independent piece of work.

**Stage 4: Apply** – Pupils apply all the skills taught in this process and produce their own end product.

**Stage 5: Evaluate** – Pupils assess their piece of work against the good example at the start. Which skills have you shown? What could be improved?

When working in nursery-aged children, the students often repeated the words and phrases from stories being read to them. They would appear in their writing or in the conversations they had with their peers; a memorable phrase could be the powerful tool needed for our pupils to succeed. These phrases can come from reading. Books open up so many opportunities for our pupils and with the world still turning, everyone inside, a book may be the only way of travelling somewhere this year.

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