



**Evidence for
Excellence in
Education**

Report

Developing National Curriculum-based Learning Progressions Reading

National Foundation for Educational
Research (NFER)



Developing National Curriculum-based Learning Progressions

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Preface

NFER is both a charity and a specialist research organisation. We exist to make a positive difference to learners.

We continue to be recognised as a leading research and assessment organisation throughout the UK, providing independent evidence to improve education and learning in children and young people's lives. Key stakeholders, research clients and headteachers described NFER as: reliable, rigorous, professional, expert and independent in market research conducted in 2012. Our influence with schools and children continues to grow; in 2013 over 2.5 million school children took tests developed by us and over 50 per cent of schools in England took part in research conducted by us. We also combine our own evidence with that of others to offer an unbiased expert voice.

Through expert research and our extensive knowledge of education and assessment, we offer a unique perspective on today's and tomorrow's educational challenges. Our insights are relevant, accessible and inform policy and practice across the world, and our evidence is cited in government reports, academic journals and the wider media. Successive governments have used it to inform policy thinking.

We develop assessments to the highest technical and educational standards for test publishers and government bodies. During 2013/14, we continued developing and trialling National Curriculum assessments with the Standards and Testing Agency in England and, in Wales, our work continued supporting education reform as the developers and suppliers of the new national reading and numeracy tests.

NFER's assessment expertise rests on a solid foundation of research, ranging from piloting and evaluation of new assessment models, to research into effective test development, marking, administration, analysis and reporting methodologies.

We have a team of over 80 highly qualified professional researchers, statisticians and assessment experts who offer extensive experience to ensure our assessments are reliable, fair and informative. NFER's Research and Product Operations department is equally highly skilled in developing and managing large scale and complex research and assessment projects across the education sector.

1 Introduction

At the end of 2013, NFER was commissioned by Renaissance Learning to develop *learning progressions* in reading and mathematics based on the 2014 National Curriculum in England. The *learning progressions* were subsequently mapped to Renaissance Learning's STAR Reading Assessments.

This report describes the development processes adopted to ensure the *learning progressions* were appropriate for use and would support the delivery of the programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 to 4 and the assessment of pupil progress. A parallel report is available for mathematics.

1.1 Background: National Curriculum reform in England

The beginning of the 2014/15 academic year saw the launch of the new National Curriculum, to be taught in years 1–11 in key stages 1–4. The new curriculum arose as a result of a comprehensive review published in December 2011 (DfE, 2011). Overall it is clear that the demand in the new curriculum, especially in some subject areas, has been explicitly increased and that specific skills and aspects of knowledge will be required to be taught at an earlier age than previously.

Pupil attainment against the pre-2014 National Curriculum was measured by means of an eight-level scale. At each level, there were subject-specific descriptions of performance, against which achievement could be assessed. At the same time as the new curriculum was introduced (September 2014), this level-based assessment system was abolished.

The decision to remove the National Curriculum levels was one of the recommendations of the National Curriculum review. The review panel concluded that the National Curriculum level descriptors 'lacked precision' and that the way levels were being used was inhibiting progress. It was recommended that:

[...] the purpose of statutory assessment would change from assigning a 'best fit' level to each pupil to tracking which elements of the curriculum they have adequately achieved and those which require more attention.

(DfE, 2011)

The removal of National Curriculum levels has been heralded as a move to allow much greater autonomy for schools to develop their own assessment systems. However, alongside such autonomy, schools have the responsibility to ensure that pupils are progressing towards the expected end of key stage standards and to demonstrate evidence of such progress to Ofsted and other key stakeholders.

The new National Curriculum Programmes of Study for reading set out what is to be taught by the end of each academic year in key stage 1, every two years in key stage 2 and by the end of each of key stages 3 and 4. The Department for Education have also published a consultation on end of key stage performance descriptors for key stages 1 and 2 (DfE, 2014). However, it is entirely up to schools to develop their own assessment systems to

judge what pupils have learned or mastered and to track the attainment and progress of pupils within and across key stages. This will require teachers to develop a detailed understanding of the relationship between the new curriculum and expected standards of achievement and progress.

Learning progressions offer a means of supporting teachers in assessing progress against the new National Curriculum.

1.2 Learning Progressions

Although the National Curriculum Programmes of Study define what is to be taught, they do not always specify all the steps in learning that a pupil must master in order to progress.

Learning progressions (sometimes referred to as learning trajectories or progress maps) detail the way in which knowledge and skills in a particular curriculum area generally develop. *Learning progressions* are not new – they have been used extensively in Canada, the US¹, Australia and New Zealand.

According to James Popham, a key advocate of *learning progressions*:

A learning progression is a carefully sequenced set of building blocks that students must master en route to mastering a more distant curricular aim. These building blocks consist of subskills and bodies of enabling knowledge.

(Popham, 2007)

Learning progressions are becoming increasingly well known in the UK and their use has been supported by educational experts (Heritage, 2008; Black, Wilson & Yao, 2011, Wiliam, 2011, 2014)

Learning progressions based on the National Curriculum break down the steps in learning that will lead to the achievement of key curricular targets, including the identification of the key ‘building blocks’ or *focus skills* that need to be mastered en route. Understanding and being familiar with *learning progressions* in reading will enable teachers to construct teaching plans that provide pupils with opportunities and experiences to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills or sub-skills that will lead to the achievement of the next curricular target. Identifying the *focus skills* also provides a framework for assessing progress by pinpointing what evidence of progress may usefully be collected and when. It will enable teachers to measure where pupils are at particular points in time and how likely they are to achieve the expected standard at the end of the relevant key stage.

In checking progress regularly against the *learning progressions*, particularly the embedded *focus skills*, teachers will be carrying out meaningful formative assessment and also collecting evidence of progress to share with parents and Ofsted.

¹ For a detailed description of the development of learning progressions for reading in the US, see Renaissance Learning, 2013.

1.3 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report describes the processes involved in the analysis of the new National Curriculum in England in order to develop a set of *learning progressions* to support formative assessment of pupil progress against the programme of study for reading.

Chapter 2 outlines the overarching principles of the development process and chapter 3 focuses on the development of the framework or hierarchy within which the detailed *learning progressions* were created and organised. This is followed by a detailed description of the way in which the *learning progressions* were constructed (chapter 4), including the identification of gaps and inconsistencies within the programme of study for reading and how these were resolved. Other chapters detail the mapping of the *learning progressions* to Renaissance Learning's STAR assessment skills (chapter 5), the development of a teachable order for the *learning progressions* (chapter 6) and the production of teacher tables providing more detailed information for each of the *focus skills* (chapter 7).

2 Overarching development process

The development process spanned ten months and entailed a collaborative relationship among NFER's research team and Renaissance Learning. The process was necessarily iterative, requiring that rounds of development were followed up by detailed expert feedback and the material revised accordingly.

The development of the final product occurred in ten stages, which are presented as discrete below but, in practice, often functioned recursively to inform each other. After initial material generation and internal review, all stages underwent two further levels of review, first by additional members of the NFER team and then by subject experts at Renaissance Learning. The stages are detailed briefly below and will be expanded in more detail in later chapters.

1. Familiarisation with the new National Curriculum.

2. Development of the underlying framework or *hierarchy*.

The content of the new National Curriculum for reading was re-examined in order to determine the structure that underpins the way the teaching of reading is conceptualised. The end result of this scrutiny was the identification of four *domains* within reading, each of which was broken down into groups of *skill areas*, known as *headings*. This hierarchical framework therefore contextualises the *skill areas* within *headings* and their respective *domains*.

3. Extracting the *National Curriculum statements*.

Individual skills required at each year of compulsory schooling were extracted from the new National Curriculum and entered into a spreadsheet under a relevant *domain* and *heading*. The whole reading curriculum (early years – year 11) was included in this process.

4. Dissecting the National Curriculum statements to develop the *skill statements*.

The National Curriculum statements were then allocated to the discrete *skill areas* to which they belonged. For example, the statement 'checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading' was assigned to the *skill area* of 'comprehension monitoring'. Some statements from the National Curriculum had to be allocated to two or more *skill areas*, e.g. 'drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence'. This was classified as relating both to the *skill areas* of 'character' and 'inference and evidence'.

5. Establishing the *learning progressions* within each *domain*.

Framed by professional insight into classroom practices, the *skill statements* derived from the National Curriculum were presented chronologically to reflect the order in which they would be likely to be taught.

6. Revising and developing the *learning progressions*.

Additional *skill statements* were generated by subject experts to contextualise the atomised National Curriculum skills to form a complete and realistic chronology of the way learning progresses in the classroom.

7. Identifying the focus skills.

For each *domain*, subject experts identified a number of *focus skills*. Conceptualised as the skills upon which further learning is contingent, these skills would form the basis of later work on the *teacher tables*.

8. Mapping the *learning progressions* to Renaissance Learning's STAR Reading skills.

The *learning progressions* based on the National Curriculum were mapped to Renaissance Learning's US progressions. Similarities between the two sets of skills were identified and individual components matched up. The purpose of this process was to identify the elements of the new National Curriculum for reading that were covered by Renaissance Learning's extensive bank of STAR reading items.

9. Developing a year-by-year teachable order

Subject experts examined the individual National Curriculum-based *learning progressions* to establish their optimal position in the chronology of the academic year. The resulting *teachable order* outlines a rational sequence in which the skills could be taught.

10. Creating the *teacher tables*

For each *focus skill*, a *teacher table* was created. The material generated from the progressions and mapping was synthesised by subject experts who also provided additional supporting information including: prerequisite skills, terminology and concepts and suggestions for supporting pupils with English as an additional language

3 Developing a hierarchy for the Learning Progressions

The National Curriculum document is organised chronologically by key stages. It understandably includes a degree of repetition as the skills of reading are revisited, consolidated and built upon, in an iterative fashion. However, to inform the development of the *learning progressions* it was necessary to begin by analysing the National Curriculum non-chronologically, in order to identify the curriculum's conceptualisation of what constitutes 'reading'. At this point, no attention was paid to the assessability of the elements of the reading curriculum. This allowed for the initial process of defining the subject matter and isolating all the topics and the sub-topics or skills and sub-skills that compose reading. The second task was to discern the underlying structure and the relationships between the identified components, which helped to construct the framework needed to generate practical learning progressions – the basis of the STAR assessments.

The outcome of the scrutiny of curriculum documentation can best be represented by the tree diagram reproduced in Appendix A. This reveals the hierarchy or framework that underpins the curriculum but is not evident when the curriculum is presented chronologically.

Reading was classified into four areas or *domains*:

1. Word reading (dominant in KS1)
2. Comprehension – as relates to all texts (throughout KS 1-4)
3. Comprehension – literary / fiction / narrative (throughout KS 1-4)
4. Comprehension – information / non-fiction / non-narrative (throughout KS 1-4)

Each of these *domains* was sub-divided into areas, called *headings*, which were further broken down into homogenous clusters of *skill areas*. For example, the *domain* of 'Comprehension – literary / fiction / narrative' divides neatly into two *headings*: 'understanding and interpreting texts' and 'engaging and responding to texts' (using the terminology of the National Curriculum). Fifteen separate skill areas were identified in the National Curriculum as belonging to the *heading* of 'understanding and interpreting texts'. As is described in chapter 4, learning progressions were developed for each of these skill areas.

To avoid an idiosyncratic interpretation of the National Curriculum, three researchers worked on the analysis and compared their results at the end of the exercise. There was almost complete unanimity on the structure of the reading curriculum with differences arising largely from the naming of the headings and skill areas. The most noteworthy decision, taken in consultation with colleagues at Renaissance Learning, resulted in some structural distinctions being made that are not explicit in the National Curriculum documentation. It was agreed that it would be more helpful, for the purposes of assessment, to break the large domain of comprehension into the

three smaller domains that relate to: 'comprehension: all texts'; 'comprehension: fiction'; 'comprehension: information'. This segmentation is not fully justified by the way the teaching of reading is conceived in the curriculum, as the distinction between fiction / information is not reflected in the organisation of the curriculum document and is mentioned only in passing in relation to some skills. However, it is reflected in the National Curriculum assessments of reading and the distinction is certainly a consideration in the way the teaching of comprehension is approached in most classrooms.

4 Developing Learning Progression skill statements from the NC Programmes of Study

Following the development of the hierarchy, work began on developing *learning progressions* for each of the identified *skill areas*. Due to the broad nature of many of the statements within the National Curriculum, individual statements were scrutinised and broken down into several shorter fragments which were aligned with different *skill areas*. For example, the key stage 3 National Curriculum statement ‘studying setting, plot, and characterisation, and the effects of these’ refers to three separate skill areas: *Setting*, *Plot* and *Character*. Therefore, the statement was broken down into three fragments relating to setting, plot and character respectively, (for example: ‘studying characterisation and the effects of this’) and aligned with the relevant *skill area*.

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how the skills were represented in the new curriculum, several widely used and high status non-statutory sources were consulted in addition to the statutory sections of the National Curriculum document. These included, for example, the non-statutory guidance for teachers in the National Curriculum and the GCSE subject content guides. A bibliography of the range of sources on which researchers drew is provided in Appendix B.

For each *skill area* a *learning progression* was traced out, establishing a set of *skill statements* outlining the progression of a particular reading skill. Due to the succinct nature of the National Curriculum, ‘gaps’ were often found where a skill was not represented in the National Curriculum at a particular year or key stage. For example, the key stage 3 Programme of Study makes no direct reference to the study of themes. In such cases, it is understood that pupils would continue to study and make progress in these skills within this time period even if there were no explicit reference to them in the Programme of Study. This issue was compounded by the organisation of the National Curriculum document in which several years are grouped together to form lower key stage 2, upper key stage 2, key stage 3 and key stage 4. This resulted in a single National Curriculum statement forming the basis for *skill statements* over several consecutive years. In these cases, intermediary *learning progression skill statements* were created to ‘bridge the gap’ between years or key stages and to ensure that each *learning progression skill statement* builds on and develops the *skill statement* from the previous year. The final product is a *learning progression* for each *skill area* which represents a full development of the skill, in most cases from Reception up to Year 11. In cases where it was felt that complete competence in a particular skill could be achieved before the end of schooling, *learning progressions* do not extend from Reception to Year 11. For example, several *skill areas* relating to decoding or phonic knowledge progress only from Reception to the end of key stage 1.

Due to this process of extrapolation from what was explicitly stated in the curriculum in order to 'fill gaps' in the progression of a skill, not every *skill statement* can be matched directly to a National Curriculum statement in the relevant year group. In these cases, the *skill statements* represent either a stage 'working towards' a National Curriculum statement in a later year or 'extending' development of a skill studied in a previous year. In this way, each *learning progression skill statement* is associated with a statement from the National Curriculum. For an example of a *learning progression* and its associated National Curriculum statements see Appendix C.

Due to the complex nature of reading, many *skill areas* were not easily shaped into a single linear progression. In these cases, individual strands which represented different aspects of a skill could be identified. For example, in the skill area of *Prediction*, the statements in the National Curriculum fall into three areas: making predictions based on text features, e.g. the title; making predictions based on what is read in a text; and using wider reading and previous experience to support predictions. This resulted in as many as three *skill statements* per year in the *Prediction learning progression*. By incorporating all aspects of a skill into the *learning progression skill statements*, it was possible to represent the development of each skill as a whole and more accurately reflect the intricacy and multi-faceted nature of many reading skills.

Following the development of the *learning progressions*, there was a rigorous review process, both within the research team at NFER and by colleagues at Renaissance Learning.

4.1 Identification of focus skills

Building upon the development of *learning progressions*, which generated over one thousand separate *skill statements*, a subset of *focus skills* was identified. *Focus skills* are defined as essential to progress in a skill area and support the development of other skills in the same or future years and are central to the emphases of the National Curriculum. These skills constitute the areas that pupils need to master in order to become successful readers.

To help with the identification of the *focus skills* in reading, the US *learning progressions* were interrogated to identify how *focus skills* had been assigned within different *skill areas*. This provided a guideline for the proportion of *learning progression skill statements* that could be designated as *focus skills* and helped shape the process to be adopted in the England. Following this, the *learning progressions* were examined in relation to the new English National Curriculum in order to determine which *skill statements*, within each *skill area*, reflected the emphases of the reading curriculum, i.e. the steps which the new National Curriculum highlights as central to the development of a specific reading skill. In total, 29 per cent of *skill statements* were designated as *focus skills*. The number of *focus skills* varies by *skill area* depending on the number of skills which were felt to be essential to subsequent progress. For example, the *Word Reading domain* has a disproportionately high number of *focus skills* (61%) as it is essential that pupils

master most of the skills within these areas in order to be successful readers. Conversely, the *skill area Critique of Information Texts* has no associated *focus skills* as it is felt that, although these skills strengthen reading ability, they are not essential to becoming a successful reader. The initial identification of *focus skills* was carried out by individual researchers working alone. The outcomes of this phase of work were subject to an internal review in which justification for the designation of each *focus skill* had to be provided and discussed with another team member. Adjustments were made as a result of this discussion before arriving at an agreement that the correct skills had been identified as the *focus skills* for each *skill area* and that they accurately reflected the emphases of the National Curriculum.

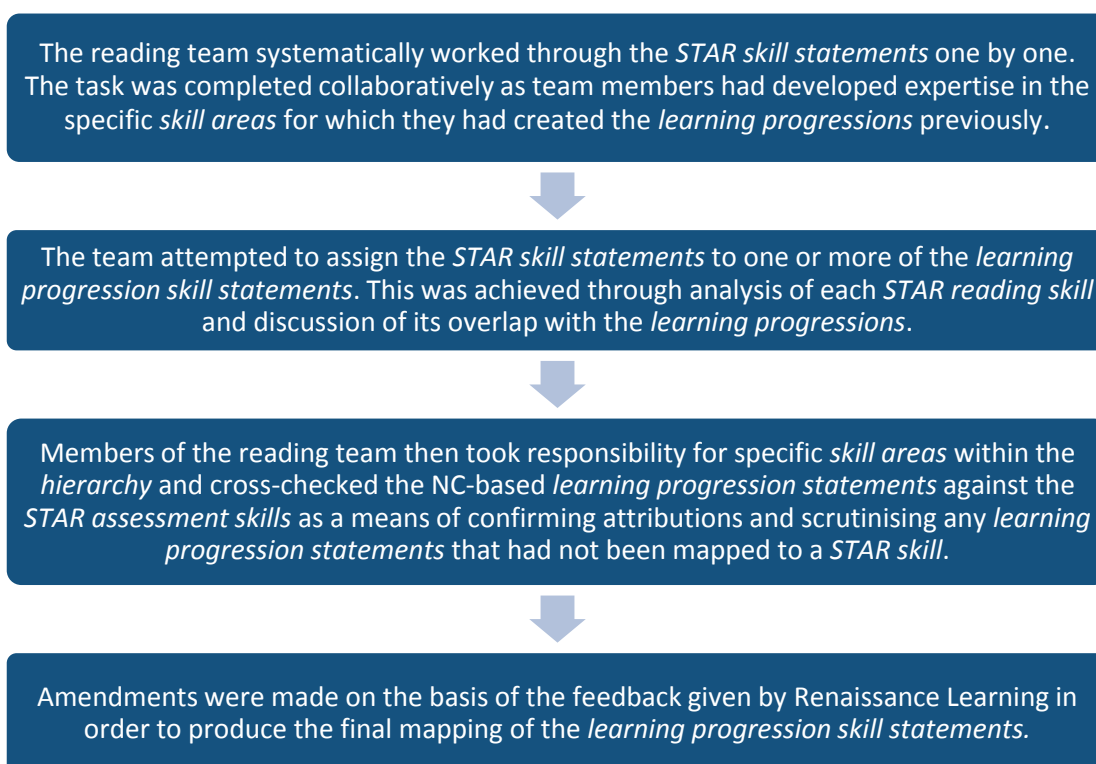
4.2 Development of domain expectation statements for each year group

Following on from the completion of the *learning progressions*, *year level domain expectation statements* were developed. These statements comprise a descriptive summary of the typical abilities pupils demonstrate and the typical activities pupils complete within each year group for sub-sections of the curriculum.

These statements give teachers an idea of the important developments within a broad area of study, e.g. understanding and interpreting non-fiction texts, for each year group. For an example of a set of *year level domain expectations* see Appendix D.

5 Mapping the NC-based Learning Progressions to STAR assessment skills

Following the development of the English *learning progressions*, the next stage was to map each *skill statement* to Renaissance Learning's *STAR skills*. The purpose of this stage in the development process was to identify how and where Renaissance Learning's existing extensive bank of reading test questions could be used in the context of the new National Curriculum in England. This was a considerable task given that, for reading, 1103 *skill statements* had been developed and there were a total of 515 Renaissance Learning *STAR reading skills* to map to. The following flowchart describes the mapping process.



In many cases there was no one-to-one correspondence between the NC-based *learning progression skill statements* and *STAR skills*, as is to be expected considering the disparity in the number of statements and the different emphases of the English and US curricula. Due to this, single *learning progression skill statements* were frequently mapped to multiple *STAR skills*. This ensured that the full breadth of the *learning progression skill statements* were covered by the content of the *STAR skills* assigned to them. For example, the NC-based *learning progression skill statement* 'Make more complex inferences, such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, by recognising implicit meanings at sentence and whole text level' was mapped to the *STAR skills* 'Infer implied causes

and effects’ and ‘Make and support generalizations about text with reasons and evidence’.

Similarly, single *STAR skills* were frequently matched with several *learning progression skill statements*. This occurred where it was felt that the skill underlying the *STAR skill* was equally related to more than one *skill area*.

Once the mapping had been completed, areas of the new curriculum that could not be assessed by existing STAR questions were highlighted to Renaissance Learning so that they could begin the process of generating additional questions to extend their existing bank.

Challenges in the mapping process

A number of challenges were encountered in the mapping process, many of which were common to both the reading and mathematics mapping exercises.

Firstly, due to differences in the approach to teaching early reading between the US and England, many of the *learning progression statements* relating to the *domain Word Reading* could not be mapped to any *STAR skills* / test questions. However, as word reading skills are the remit of the assessment programme STAR Early Literacy, rather than the STAR reading product, Renaissance Learning is confident that the word reading aspects of the new curriculum will be adequately assessed.

Secondly, a difficulty occasionally encountered stemmed from a mismatch in year / grade equivalence. It was often found that a *STAR skill* mapped well to a NC-based *skill statement* except for the year groups to which they were attributed. Sometimes there was a mismatch of only one year, although in some instances the difference was greater. Following discussion with Renaissance Learning, it was agreed that a US *STAR skill* could only be matched to a NC-based *skill statement* if it was assigned to the same academic year or one year either way.

A related issue occurred in cases where multiple *STAR skills* from different grades were mapped to a single NC-based *skill statement*. It was agreed with Renaissance Learning that it was only acceptable to have multiple *STAR skills* mapped to the same *learning progression skill statement* if they were all related to the same year.

Finally, as large parts of the reading curriculum in England are not assessable through the vehicle of a written test, several *learning progression statements* could not be mapped to *STAR skills*. For example, oral discussion skills or skills relating to recital and performance, though falling within the scope of the reading curriculum, cannot be assessed in a written form. This limitation applies also to National Curriculum assessment and is not, therefore, unique to the STAR product. Another complicating factor is that the questions within STAR Reading programme are multiple-choice in format. This places constraints on the skills that are assessable. For example, several high level skills which would characteristically be assessed through extended response essays in this country could not be mapped to the *STAR skills*. Other limitations arise from the fact that higher levels of the National Curriculum require working with and comparing more than one text. As multiple texts

are not currently presented simultaneously in STAR Reading, several skill statements related to comparison could not be mapped to *STAR skills*.

Overall level of matching

Of the 515 *STAR reading skills*, 299 (58%) were matched to NC-based *learning progression skill statements*. The main reasons for which *STAR skills* could not be mapped to *learning progression skill statements* are summarised as follows:

- 1 The *STAR skills* were based on the US schooling system and, as such, extend as far as Grade 12. This is the equivalent of Year 13 in England at which time pupils are in the second year of their A level courses, beyond the end of compulsory education. The NC-based *learning progression statements* only cover education up to the end of GCSE level study in Year 11.
- 2 It became apparent that the statements within several *STAR skill areas* could not be mapped to the reading curriculum in England. These *STAR skill areas*, including *Use structural analysis* and *Antonyms*, align more closely with the English curriculum for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling which is beyond the remit of *learning progressions* in reading.
- 3 Due to differences between the two curricula, certain skills are taught at different times in England and in the US. If a *STAR skill statement* was assigned to a grade more than two years away from the year group assigned to a NC-based *learning progression skill statement* they could not be matched. This was to ensure that the difficulty of the STAR items associated with the *STAR skill statement* were appropriate for the pupils taking the test. However, it did leave several *STAR skills* which could not be mapped to the *learning progressions*.
- 4 Finally, several *STAR skill statements* were not mapped as they referred to content which did not feature in the new National Curriculum for reading.

6 Teachable order

Once all the *skill statements* had been written and finalised, the next task was to place them in a *teachable order* by year, i.e. every *skill statement* was to be placed in a sequence to show when it could sensibly be taught in relation to all the other skills intended for that year. The *teachable order* created is only a suggested sequence and it is appreciated that there are many possible alternatives. However, the *teachable order* provides a planning aid for teachers to draw on, if they wish.

For the Reading *skill statements* this posed a particular difficulty, as the skills of reading are taught cyclically, constantly repeating and revising skills, across English and other curriculum subjects. Deciding on an 'order' for teaching the reading skills within a year group was therefore a conceptually challenging task.

The process involved several rounds of review and discussion about the precise relative order of each *skill statement* until consensus was reached in the team. In later reviewing stages, other research colleagues were asked to provide additional guidance in areas of their expertise. For example, researchers with a background in phonics and early years education were always involved in reviewing the *teachable order* for the early years.

Many skills are global in their nature and the team was aware that in a classroom they would be taught continuously throughout the year, and probably in multiple subjects (for example: the skills of reading for different purposes). Global skills that are revisited in the classroom from the beginning of the year to the end were particularly hard to locate in the sequence and so it was decided that they would be placed at the very beginning of the order. The decision was based on the principle that the *teachable order* should show the order of when the skills are first established, as opposed to when the teaching of the skill is 'finished'. Therefore global skills, such as reading for pleasure and applying research skills to topic work, are introduced towards the beginning of the *teachable order* despite the fact that they continue to be taught and reinforced throughout the year.

The rationale for the *teachable order* varied slightly between year groups to reflect shifts in emphases in the curriculum. Detail of the rationale is documented in Appendix E. However, in very general terms, the pattern of the *teachable order* is as follows:

- 1 Global skills of reading, research and vocabulary
- 2 Specific, single book work, for example looking at the plot, character and setting of a particular text
- 3 Multiple book study, including comparisons between texts and studying the literary conventions of particular genres or non-fiction text types
- 4 Higher-order skills, dependent on the year group, for example looking at the use of bias, fact and opinion in non-fiction towards the end of primary education, or, for very young children, writing simple responses to comprehension questions.

For Reception up to Year 3, the *teachable order* was complicated by the presence of a large number of separate *Word Reading* skills. In early years education, phonic skills are often taught as a separate subject in separate sessions from English / Literacy. It was felt, therefore, that two parallel sets of *skill statements* should be established running side by side, rather than being combined into a single order where skills of decoding are awkwardly interwoven with skills of comprehension. However, the constraints of the delivery of the product made this impossible. After lengthy discussion, it was decided that the two sets of sequence would remain separate: with all the ordered skills relating to *Word Reading* preceding all the skills relating to *Comprehension* skills. While it is appreciated that this does not reflect classroom practice, it is an approach that seems more realistic than interlacing the skills from the two *domains*, leading to clumsy transitions between comprehension and phonics work as the order progressed. After key stage 1 this was no longer a concern in establishing the *teachable order*, as there were considerably fewer *skill statements* relating to phonics work. These were also placed at the beginning of the *teachable order* unless they clearly fitted elsewhere.

When complete, the *teachable order* for each year group was also reviewed by Renaissance Learning before final approval.

7 Teacher table information

The purpose of the *teacher tables* is to provide supporting information about the *skill statements* that had been identified as *focus skills* and which, therefore, are regarded as essential to progress in reading. *Teacher tables* that are relevant to the progress of individual pupils will be automatically generated by the STAR programme. Table 7.1 below shows the categories of information provided in each table with exemplification taken from the content of the *teacher table* for the skill area of 'Analysis and Comparison-literary / fiction / narrative'.

Table 7.1

Column heading	Type of information and purpose	Example (from <i>Analysis and Comparison-literary</i>)
Year	year group in which the <i>skill statement</i> is taught	5
National Curriculum statement	taken from the statutory National Curriculum and the basis from which <i>skill statements</i> were created	making comparisons within and across books
Skill statement	a statement articulating a particular point in progress in the mastery of a complete <i>skill area</i>	compare aspects of stories (e.g. plot, characters, settings, themes) within and between genres, with some awareness of purpose and effectiveness
Prerequisite skill	other <i>skill statements</i> which must already be mastered before introducing a particular <i>focus skill</i>	compare characters and settings within and between stories from a range of different genres (e.g. stories set in different times and places)
Examples of content-area vocabulary	a list of words showing the type of vocabulary used to teach and discuss the target <i>focus skill</i>	plot, character, setting, theme, compare, contrast, effect, exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, resolution, description, hero / heroine
Conceptual knowledge	areas of understanding that pupils have to have embedded prior to study of the target <i>focus skill</i>	understand that stories of all genres contain common aspects (i.e. plot, characters, setting, themes); understand that although stories generally share common aspects, the details of these aspects may vary, both within and between genres (e.g. different settings), depending on purpose; understand that authors make conscious choices in how they portray aspects of stories

Column heading	Type of information and purpose	Example (from <i>Analysis and Comparison-literary</i>)
Linguistic competencies	typical linguistic skills that pupils have to deploy to demonstrate their ability in a target <i>focus skill</i>	using linguistic structures that express comparison (e.g. using appropriate adjectives, adverbs and correct construction of superlatives)
EAL support	additional support given to pupils with EAL so that they can understand and participate in the study of a <i>focus skill</i>	review and reinforce terms including: character, plot, setting, genre, compare, contrast, theme, effect; monitor pupil engagement with a sufficient range of English texts from relevant genres; reinforce vocabulary for establishing comparison and contrast (e.g. similarly, however, the main difference, unlike) and scaffold sentences for making comparisons (e.g. In Story A, 'the main character is a ..., whereas in Story B the main character is ...'; 'the settings differ in their ...')

In order to stipulate relevant *Prerequisite skills*, researchers looked at all the *skill statements* up to two years prior to the target *focus skill* to identify those which best supported or underpinned the skill needed. The *teachable order* was an important resource in establishing *prerequisite skills* for each *skill statement* because, for each *skill statement* under scrutiny, only those *skill statements* which precede it in the *teachable order* could be considered as *prerequisite skills*.

Content-area vocabulary consists of key subject-specific words that become necessary in learning about, discussing and writing for each *focus skill*. These will be largely familiar to teachers, as they are terms that are commonly used in the teaching of literacy.

What may be less familiar is the identification of the *conceptual knowledge* that underpins each *focus skill*. Learning is not a linear process, and much learning happens simultaneously, repetitively or cyclically. As a result, determining the extent of pupil understanding at any single point within the learning trajectory is not always clear cut. For each skill under consideration, the prior understanding that has to be in place to be able to master the next step has been isolated and appears under this column of the *teacher tables*.

Linguistic competencies for each *focus skill* also required some deliberation as pupils are regularly immersed in many different types of language use. Therefore, researchers scrutinised each *focus skill* to identify the most necessary forms of language use that would be required during the study and demonstration of the target skill, based on the content of the National Curriculum for each year group.

To generate the *EAL support* information for teachers, it was necessary to identify the key vocabulary and/or language skills required to approach each *focus skill* on an equal footing to native English speakers. This is often packaged as simple and common EAL activities and practices e.g. 'cloze' activities and modelling written and

verbal language. Alternatively, the advice consists of identifying and compensating for literature and language related background knowledge deficits. This section of the *teacher tables* was generated by an EAL specialist who had not worked on other phases of the project. This provided the product with an extra level of scrutiny, which was then supplemented by yet another level of review, conducted by another member of the research team and/or an external reviewer.

8 Conclusion

Commissioned by Renaissance Learning, NFER has developed: a *hierarchy* that reflects how reading is conceptualised in the new National Curriculum in England, *learning progressions*, individual *skill statements*, *teacher tables* and suggested sequences of teaching the skills in the *teachable order* from Reception to Year 11. *Learning progressions* provide a ‘roadmap’ to guide teaching and learning and to ensure that pupils develop their subject knowledge in a coherent and consistent way.

It is hoped that these *learning progressions* and the subsequent products that stem from this underpinning work will help to support schools to develop assessment frameworks to track pupil progress, following the abolition of National Curriculum levels.

The mapping of the *learning progressions* to the skills assessed within *STAR Reading* demonstrates the potential for such assessments to support teachers in monitoring progress against the programme of study for reading. The assessments can help to indicate a pupil’s current level of knowledge and the *learning progressions* then suggest next steps in his or her learning.

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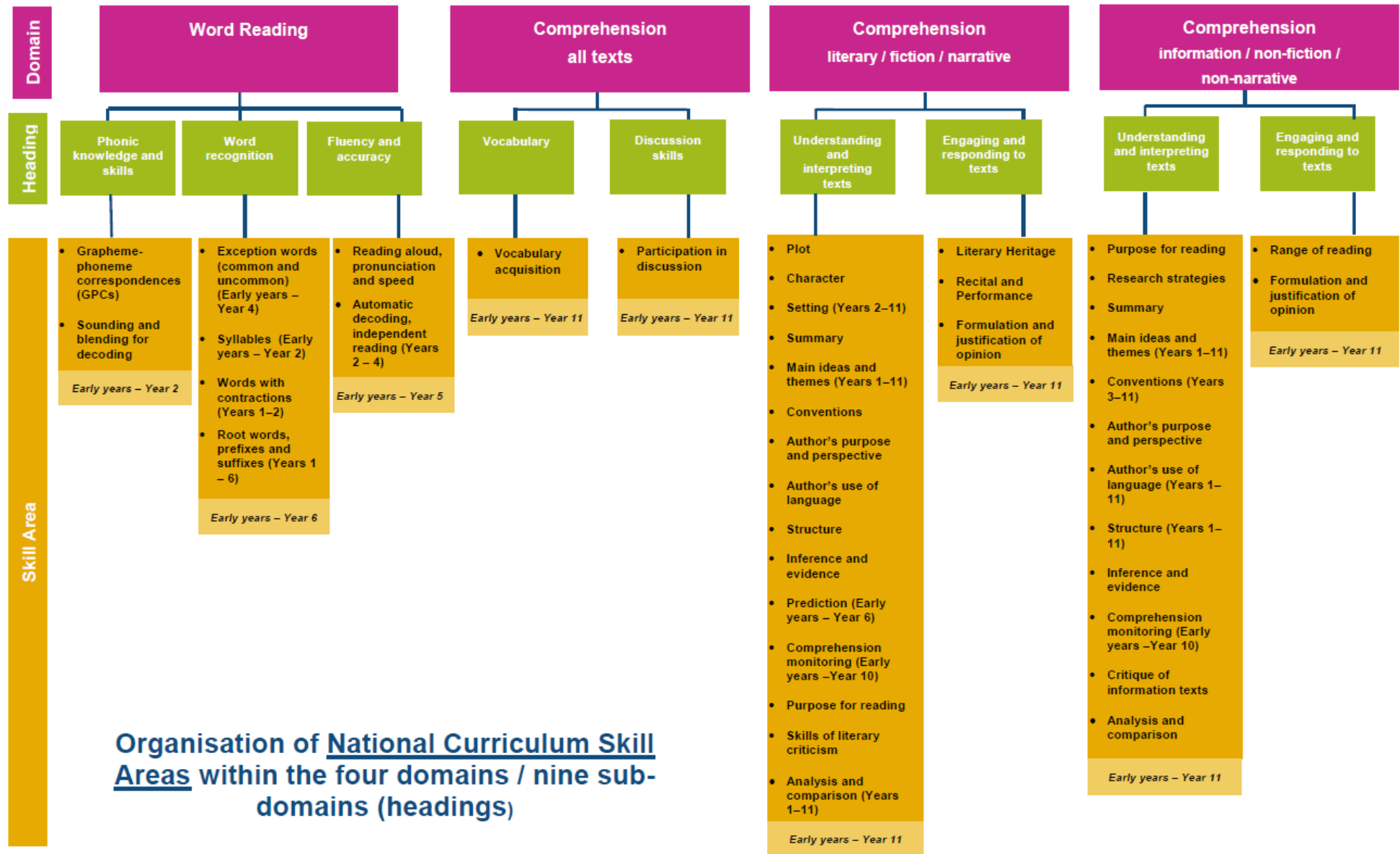
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Appendix A: Framework for Learning Progressions – Reading



Organisation of National Curriculum Skill Areas within the four domains / nine sub-domains (headings)

Appendix B: Resources used for the development of the learning progressions

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Appendix C: Learning Progression for Understanding and Interpreting Texts: Prediction (Example)

Year	National Curriculum Statement	Skill Statement
R	suggest how the story might end (Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012)	Begin to make simple predictions about the events in an unfamiliar story read independently or heard read aloud (e.g. suggest how the story might end)
1	<p>predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far</p> <p>drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher</p>	<p>Make predictions about the content of unfamiliar stories based on the title, cover, illustrations and blurb, to discuss what might happen in advance of reading</p> <p>With prompting and support make simple predictions on the basis of what is read or heard (e.g. predict what a greedy character will do next)</p> <p>Begin to use reading experience (i.e. understanding of the structure of simple stories) to support predictions in books with a familiar narrative structure (e.g. that a fairy story may end with 'they all lived happily ever after' or that the 'monster' of a fairy tale will be defeated)</p>
2	<p>predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far</p> <p>drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher</p>	<p>Make simple predictions about what might happen, on the basis of what has been read so far, in stories with familiar settings or situations (e.g. predict that a story about a child entering a race might end with the child winning a prize)</p> <p>Use other reading experience (i.e. knowledge of books by the same author or with similar themes/settings) to support simple predictions about characters and events</p>

Year	National Curriculum Statement	Skill Statement
	predicting what might happen from details stated and implied	<p>Make predictions about the content of stories (e.g. what the story might be about, how it might end) drawing on a variety of features (e.g. title, cover, illustrations, blurb, author, genre)</p> <p>Make predictions about what might happen in a story (e.g. a character's future actions or a story's ending) beginning to make direct reference to what has been read so far</p>
3	(extension of year 2 requirement) drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher	Use wider reading experience, including knowledge of typical themes, plots and character arcs, to justify predictions (e.g. predict that the hero will 'win' whereas the villain will 'lose')
	predicting what might happen from details stated and implied	Make predictions about what might happen in a story drawing on what has been read so far and some details inferred (e.g. predict that two characters in conflict will end up as friends, drawing on evidence of their shifting attitudes)
4	(extension of year 2 requirement) drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher	Use wider reading experience, including knowledge of typical themes, conventions, plots and character arcs (e.g. the moral lesson in fables) to support and justify predictions

Year	National Curriculum Statement	Skill Statement
5	predicting what might happen from details stated and implied	<p>Make predictions about the content and themes of stories, drawing on a variety of features (e.g. title, cover, illustrations, blurb, author, genre)</p> <p>Make more detailed predictions about what might happen in a story based on inferences made (e.g. use inferences about a character's thoughts or personality traits to predict what they might do next)</p>
	(extension of year 2 requirement) drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher	Use prior reading experience, including understanding of typical themes, conventions, plots and character arcs, and wider knowledge to support and justify predictions (e.g. use knowledge of a familiar setting or topic to predict what might happen next)
6	predicting what might happen from details stated and implied	Make more detailed predictions in a story using details drawn directly from the text and those that are inferred; and check these predictions based on what is read next (e.g. read on to check whether predictions were correct)
	(extension of year 2 requirement) drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher	Synthesise previous knowledge (e.g.: knowledge of story setting or topic) and prior reading experience (e.g. knowledge of common themes, story structure, genre conventions) and apply to what has been read so far in order to make a prediction

Appendix D: Year-Level Expectations for Word Reading: Phonic Knowledge and Skills

Reception

Pupils understand that letter(s) on the page symbolise spoken sounds in words and recognise simple grapheme-phoneme correspondences for an initial and then a wider set of single-letter graphemes consisting of consonants and vowels, responding with one sound for each letter. They can respond with the correct phoneme to a small set of graphemes where two letters represent one sound and with the correct phoneme to unusual grapheme-phoneme correspondences in simple common exception words. They are able to participate in teacher-led oral blending using short CVC words and they progress to decode by blending, phoneme by phoneme, two letter VC words with known phonemes. They move on to blending a small number of three-letter CVC words, a wider range of three-letter CVC words, CVC words where graphemes may be more than one letter and phonically regular words with adjacent consonants (e.g.: CVCC / CCVC).

Year 1

Pupils are able to respond with the correct phoneme to a wider range of graphemes where two letters represent one consonant sound. They can identify unusual correspondences in common exception words and respond with the correct phoneme to a wider range of graphemes where two letters represent one vowel sound (digraphs), progressing to graphemes consisting of three letters or more. They recognise at least one common graphemic representation for each of the 40+ phonemes and know that some graphemes map to more than one of the phonemes. They progress to the confident identification of correct correspondences for all 40+ phonemes, including alternative sounds for graphemes. Increasingly, they learn to read by blending, phoneme by phoneme throughout the word, words of one syllable or more that are not already familiar but contain taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences and to blend words that include split digraphs, noting the difference in sound.

Year 2

Pupils can now recognise all common graphemes representing the 40+ phonemes when they decode words. When they read, they are increasingly able to identify unusual or rare grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a growing range of common exception words and are becoming faster and more accurate in their recognition of those taught so far. By blending phoneme by phoneme throughout the word, they are able to decode a variety of words containing a

common taught grapheme which may be pronounced differently in each word, progressing to blending a variety of words with common phonemes represented by different graphemes that have been taught, and to the decoding of words consisting of two or more syllables that contain taught graphemes.

Appendix E: Example rationale underlying teachable order

Three examples of the principles underlying the sequencing of *skill statements* suggested in the *teachable order* are included here. These relate to:

- Reception year
- Years 4-7
- Year 10

From Reception to Year 3, the skill statements were divided into two sets and ordered within these sets:

- 1 word reading skills
- 2 comprehension skills

It is not expected that all the word reading skills will precede all the comprehension skills but that teachers will interweave the statements from both sets, following the relative order within each strand. The exact point at which to switch from word reading to comprehension and *vice versa* is left to the judgement of the teacher.

Basic structure for the Teachable Order for Reception Year

1. Word reading skills:

- a. Phonological awareness
- b. Letter recognition
- c. Blending for reading
- d. Fluent and accurate reading

2. Comprehension skills:

Listening activities and range of reading

- a. Listen to books being read
- b. With a positive approach, engage with a range of books and print in the environment
- c. Join in book related activities as appropriate

Book behaviour

- a. Develop age-appropriate vocabulary for discussion
- b. Talk about texts and illustrations
- c. Develop some sense of text type, fact / fiction
- d. Identify topics of books
- e. Recognise frequently occurring language of books e.g. *once upon a time*

Discussing book content with teacher

- a. Express opinions

- b. Link stories to own experience
- c. Talk about content, including:
 - identifying aspects of characters, setting, structure, events and making simple predictions in stories
 - identifying information in an expository text
- d. Answer teacher's questions
- e. In later work on non-fiction , discuss slightly more advanced aspects, such as language and purpose of information texts

Development of independent reading skills

Basic structure for the Teachable Order for Years 4 to 7

In the years spanning key stages 2 and 3, the skills placed at the beginning of the teachable order are those that the teacher initiates at the beginning of the year but which are intended to continue throughout the year. The remaining skills are those that relate to the study of a single text, or later, comparisons between texts.

1. Range of Reading (NOT necessarily in the following order)

- a. Know how to select books
- b. Read an ever-increasing variety of books
- c. Keep a reading record / log (if applicable)

2. Informal discussion (e.g.: personal opinion)

3. Research skills (NOT necessarily in the following order)

- a. Choose non-fiction books
- b. Read around a topic
- c. Adapt reading style to fit purpose
- d. Note-taking

4. Study of specific fiction / non-fiction texts:

Fiction texts:

- a. Setting
- b. Character
- c. Plot
- d. Structure

Also interweaving where logical: (NOT necessarily in the following order)

- a. Inference
- b. Author's use of language
- c. Author's purpose and perspective
- d. Prediction
- e. Comprehension monitoring.

The relative order of all these is dependent upon the specific title chosen for study.

Areas that are best **studied upon completion** of a whole book (NOT necessarily in the following order):

- a. Main theme, the key details supporting that theme
- b. Summary of a complete work
- c. Personal response to the complete work
- d. *Skill statements* that relate to formal literary criticism, using subject terminology and knowing how to structure response

5. Comparison of texts

- a. Setting
- b. Character
- c. Plot
- d. Structure

- e. Generic conventions, e.g. stock characters, effectiveness of different forms of structure and their purposes and the breaking of conventions
- f. Context of the texts and the writers (NOT necessarily in the following order):
 - study of differing accounts
 - differing viewpoints
 - different authors / their purposes
 - subliminal messages / purposes of non-fiction texts
 - argument, persuasive text, fact and opinion, implicit and explicit messages

6. Personal response

Skill statements relating to the expression of personal response in more formal contexts, e.g. in debates, arguing viewpoints and in early forms of the literary criticism essay.

Basic structure for the Teachable Order for Year 10

1. Range of Reading (NOT necessarily in the following order)

- a. Reading to appreciate English literary heritage / English language
- b. Reading for a range of purposes

2. Vocabulary - extending vocabulary through reading and discussion and applying in reading, writing and speech; using challenging technical terminology

3. Structured discussion

- a. Identifying different possible responses to texts
- b. Taking account of others' views
- c. Taking on different roles, e.g. leading, reviewing or summarising contributions of others

4. Research skills (NOT necessarily in the following order)

- a. Using appropriate reading styles
- b. Selecting most useful note-taking strategy

5. Study of specific fiction / non-fiction texts:

Fiction texts

- a. Setting – evaluating author's choices and impact of these
- b. Character – explaining motivation, analysing depth (static, dynamic), analysing development in light of genre and intent
- c. Plot (including plot devices) – analysing impact of sequence of events on meaning, theme or reader; interpreting events / plot in relation to context, bias
- d. Author's use of language, precisely and perceptively

The relative order of all these is dependent upon the specific title chosen for study.

6. Areas that are best studied upon completion of a whole text (NOT necessarily in the following order):

- a. Identifying main and subsidiary themes
- b. Explaining and interpreting themes and ideas
- c. Summarising ideas and information from single text (focusing on main and subsidiary themes)
- d. Analysing how structure, form, layout and presentational choices support purpose and theme
- e. Explaining how devices achieve particular effects, including in drama (monologue, language choice)
- f. Comprehension monitoring – adjusting perception of author's point of view, purpose, theme and resolving inconsistencies or misunderstandings
- g. Drawing on knowledge of context to inform evaluation
- h. Skill statements that relate to formal extended response; using textual evidence and explanation; supporting a point of view by referring to evidence / terminology

7. Comparison of texts

- a. Distinguishing characteristics, techniques of specific authors (one or comparing different authors)
- b. Texts addressing similar themes
- c. Literary, rhetorical and grammatical features and their impact on readers
- d. Effect and impact of structural and presentational choices
- e. Selecting and comparing information for specific tasks (bias and opinion)
- f. Summarising and synthesising from a range of sources, recognising common threads
- g. Critical comparisons referring to wider reading, contexts of texts (e.g. historical issues, literary movements)
- h. Authors and texts from different times, cultures, including influence on each other
- i. Conventions across a wide range of texts

8. Evaluation/Criticism of texts (NOT necessarily in the following order)

- a. Analysing how author's purpose and viewpoint is established
- b. Analysing effect of different viewpoints / multiple narrators
- c. Analysing and comparing viewpoints and purposes within and between texts
- d. Analysing, comparing, responding to layers of meaning and developing own interpretations
- e. Developing an analytic and evaluative critique of text(s)
- f. Maintaining a critical style and an informed personal response

9. Personal response

Skill statements relating to the expression of personal response in more formal contexts, e.g. in formal presentations / debates and more formal literary critique, i.e. extended essays.

- a. Selecting information effectively for prepared spoken presentations, for different audiences
- b. Using range of dramatic approaches, readings, performances to analyse texts
- c. Showing confidence with conventions of literary criticism / critique of texts (supporting points with analysis and evidence, and referring to other sources to clinch an argument)

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