

**Folens
Literacy**

Guided Reading

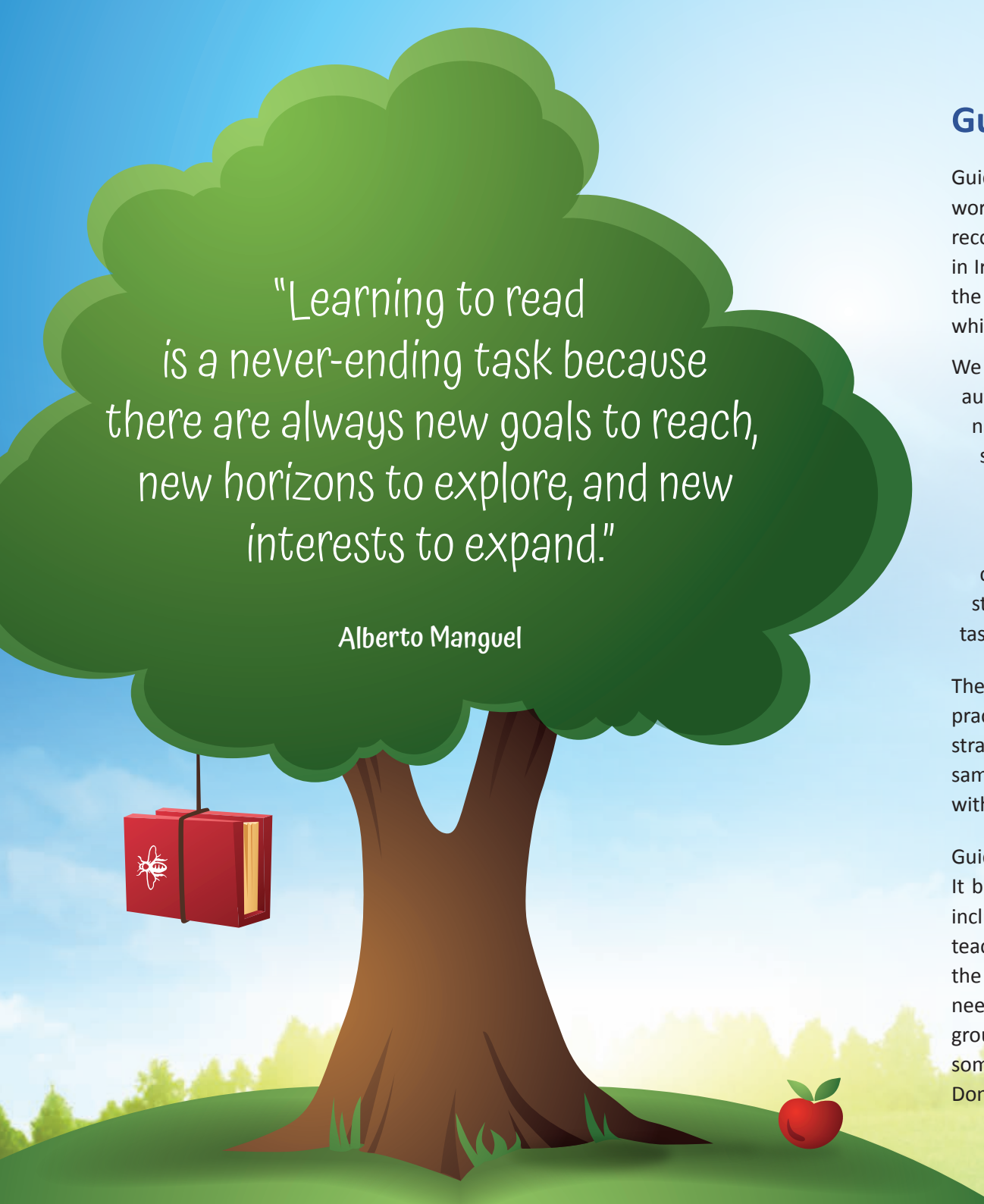
- a practical
approach



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BIG CAT**



*"Learning to read
is a never-ending task because
there are always new goals to reach,
new horizons to explore, and new
interests to expand."*

Alberto Manguel

Guided Reading - a practical approach

Guided reading is a commonly used term across the English-speaking world to describe the teaching of reading. This is fast becoming a recognised feature of literacy lessons throughout many primary schools in Ireland. Guided reading is an approach where teachers can facilitate the teaching of reading to smaller groups of children of similar ability while independent stations are happening in their classrooms.

We know that many children who are reading well in 1st class will not automatically become proficient comprehenders in later years. The nature of reading changes dramatically as children move up the school. The tasks that children encounter from 2nd to 6th class are also more challenging. Children are expected to answer higher-order questions, respond both critically and personally, find evidence to support their answers, make inferences about complex ideas and connect ideas across multiple texts and contexts. Children need stamina and motivation to stick with much longer and more complex tasks.

The challenge for children from 2nd class is that they need reading practice in level-appropriate texts in order to apply new skills and strategies. This is essential to help develop reading strategies. At the same time, they need age-appropriate texts and conversations, along with ample opportunities to stretch their thinking.

Guided reading instruction provides meaningful literacy experiences. It begins where the children are, by addressing individual needs. This includes rich tasks which promote deep understanding; allows us to teach reading before and during the reading process (not only after the reading process); and allows us to adjust our teaching to meet the needs of all children. The core of reading is the small group. In small groups everyone is engaged and everyone has a voice. Children can sometimes learn more from each other than they can from the teacher. Don't forget the social context of learning!

Direct explicit reading instruction includes:

1. Introducing the text – activating prior knowledge
2. Introducing and working with critical vocabulary
3. Reading the text
4. Revisiting and discussing the meaning of the text
5. Teaching for strategies/teaching point(s)
6. Extending the meaning of the text
7. Working with words (when appropriate)

Sample lesson plan

Before any guided reading lesson the teacher chooses an appropriate text for the group. Each child requires their own copy of the text. The teacher decides on the specific learning outcomes and pre-plans introducing the book, key teaching points and any follow-up activities.

Lesson plan for guided reading

Date:	Group:
Book Title:	Band/Level:

Strategy focus

Teachers should identify and share with the children their learning objectives for the session. This allows the children and the teacher to identify whether or not these objectives have been achieved or if more explicit instruction needed.

Introduction

- Talk and think about the book before reading.
- Arouse the children's interest.
- Activate prior knowledge – draw on children's previous experience and connect them to the text.
- Use the children's background knowledge to understand the text.
- Predict the storyline by referring to the title and/or pictures and/or blurb.
- Remind children of the particular strategy you are going to require them to use when reading this text.

Key words/Word work

- Provide explicit instruction on how the text 'works'.
- Select chunks of texts at the appropriate reading level that allow children to perform reading tasks independently.
- Point out aspects of print or layout that are important.
- Show how illustrations support the meaning.
- Point out new and important words.
- Explain difficult words or concepts, new grammatical structures and prepare them to read (scaffolding).

Read book – purpose

A reader's purpose affects everything about reading. It determines what's important in the text, what is remembered and what comprehension strategy a reader uses to enhance meaning. Giving a purpose for reading allows children to be responsible for their reading and learning.

Independent reading

Each child silently reads the entire text or predetermined portion of the text. This is unlike the traditional approach, known as round robin reading, where children take turns reading aloud. This time is also unlike shared reading, when children read along with the teacher or join in chorally. Children are expected to read independently at their own silent reading pace. It is expected that they actively engage and practice the reading strategies practiced and taught.

While the children are reading, teachers may want to sample their reading by asking select children, one at a time, to raise their voice so you can hear them read. At this time, your role is in reinforcing productive reading strategies or correcting inaccurate or unproductive reading behaviour. It is not necessary to reach every child in the group each day. It is important that teachers record who has been heard in order to sample everyone's reading routinely. This is also an opportunity to check oral reading fluency. Teachers will begin to learn about their readers on an individual basis and decide on teaching points for future guided reading lessons. Recording observations of children's strengths and weaknesses will inform further instruction.

After reading

Go back to the purpose for reading and discuss the children's responses.

Provide reading response experiences, which include vocabulary development, sequencing, summarising events, character analysis, creative thinking, synthesis and evaluation.

Employ a variety of comprehension strategies (see list below).

Ask Literal (HERE), Inferential (HIDDEN) and evaluative (IN THE HEAD) questions. Encourage children to support their answers with evidence in the text.

There may be times when you need to prepare children for an independent reading response station.

Word work (optional)

Work explicitly on word-solving strategies such as chunking, root words and affixes if you feel that your students need extra support.

Evaluation

Comprehension strategies

Monitoring understanding

Proficient readers monitor their comprehension during reading to know whether what they are reading makes sense. They bring their prior knowledge to the reading. They rely on a variety of strategies to correct errors and confusions. We teach students to listen to and monitor their own reading.

Making connections

Before, during and after processing a text, readers make connections to what they already know; they connect to their personal experiences, their knowledge of the world and the other texts they have read or experienced. Text-to-self connections are connections between the text and the reader's experiences and memories. The more experiences and memories a reader has about a topic, the easier the material is to read. Connections the reader makes between the text and what he knows about the world (facts and information) are known as text-to-world connections. Text-to-text connections are connections the reader makes between two or more types of texts. The reader may make connections relative to plot, content, structure and/or style.

Asking questions

Questions are at the heart of teaching and learning. Questions open the doors to understanding. Questioning is the strategy that propels readers forward. When readers have questions, they are less likely to abandon the text. Proficient readers ask questions before, during and after reading.

Summarising

Summarising involves extracting the essential information, including the main idea and supporting details from text. When readers summarise, they figure out the most important ideas in a story and restate those ideas using their own words.

Drawing inferences

Inferring involves merging background knowledge with text clues to come up with an idea that is not explicitly stated in the text. Inferring is the proverbial reading between the lines. An inference is a logical conclusion not directly confirmed by the author. It is based on clues from the text and personal connections made by the reader. Inferences are sometimes hard to make because the author doesn't come right out and confirm the reader's conclusions. When we make inferences, we are using clues from the seen text (words, pictures, charts, graphs, visual cues) as well as the unseen text (ideas, opinions, essential background knowledge).

Synthesising

Synthesising is the merging of new information with prior background knowledge to create an original idea. Strategic readers stop periodically while reading to digest what they have read and what it means before continuing. This process allows readers to form opinions and combine separate pieces of knowledge to come up with knowledge that is new, or at least new to the person doing the thinking.

Visualising

Visualising is all about inferring meaning. When readers visualise, they are actually constructing meaning by creating mental images. When we visualise, we create pictures in our minds that belong to us and no one else.

Determining importance

What we determine to be important in a text depends on our purpose for reading it. When reading fiction, if the reader has had experiences similar to those of the main character, the reader is likely to enjoy a richer, more fulfilling reading experience. When we read non-fiction, we are reading to learn and remember information. We need to focus on important information and merge it with what we already know to expand our understanding of the topic.

Effective questioning

Literal questions

- Where and when did the story take place?
- What did he/she/it look like?
- Who was he/she/it? Can you name the...?
- Where did he/she/it live?
- Who are the characters in the book?
- What happened after?
- How many...?
- Describe what happened at...?
- Who spoke to...? Identify who...?
- Can you tell me why? Which is true or false...?
- Find the meaning of....
- What is...?

Inferential questions

- How did ... feel?
- Why did ... feel/think?
- Why is ... important?
- Comment on a quotation.
- Describe ... reaction/feeling.
- In what ways does ...?
- Explain....
- Match feelings/thoughts to parts of the story.
- If ..., which/why?
- Agree or disagree with an opinion. Justify.
- How do we know...?
- What does this tell us about how ... is feeling/thinking?
- Have you ever had a similar experience? How did you feel?
- Put yourself in the character's shoes.
- Hotseat/interview characters.
- Who do you know who is like...?

Analysing authors' use of language

- Which feature does the author use in a (specified) piece of text? Why?
- What does (word/phrase) mean? Why has the author used this phrase/feature? For example italics, bold, repetition, simile, exclamation marks, headings, bullet points, captions, etc. Comment on the effect.
- What has the author used in the text to make this character funny/sad/angry/tense? How effective is this?
- How has the author used the text to make the situation or event angry/tense? Comment on the effect.
- Think of another more/less emotive word you can substitute here. What different effect would your word have?
- As a reader, how do you feel about...? How has the author created this feeling?
- Which words and phrases tell you that the author is describing...?
- How could the meaning be changed by altering the punctuation? For example commas, full stops, ellipses, exclamation marks, etc. Comment on the effect.
- Comment on the technical language. Explain why the author used it.
- What words/phrases indicate the author's attitude?
- How does the author show that ... is important?
- Why has the author used repetition? What effect does it have?
- Why have exclamation marks/italics/capitals been used? How does this affect the way you read it? What effect does this create?
- What is the author's style? What features help you identify this? Why is this style effective in this text?
- What words give you that impression?
- How has the author been humorous?
- What words, phrases or features make you think that?
- How would you explain this ... in similar terms/to a younger child?
- How does the metaphor/simile/adjectives/adverbs help you to understand this text? What makes it effective?

Commenting on the author's purpose and viewpoint

- Why did the author choose this setting?
- What do you think the author's purpose is? How do you know?
- What was the author's intent by including (phrase/sentence/incident, etc)?
- What is the purpose of this particular paragraph/character/change?
- Why has the author used humour at this point?
- Look at the caption and diagram. What does it explain to you? Why does the author choose to include them?
- What impression do you think the author wants to give of this character? Why? What effect does this have on other characters?
- In this paragraph, what effect does the author want to have on the reader?
- What is the author's purpose in this piece of text in relation to the plot?
- From the opening section of the text, what is the author's opinion of school/the war/animals, etc? How does this affect the story/plot/characters/setting, etc?
- Which other author handles time in this way, for example by including flashbacks or dreams? Which stories have openings like this?
- Which article/letter would most persuade you to change your mind? Why?
- By using these words/phrases what effect has the author had on the reader?
- How are the two texts different in purpose? What effect does this have on the reader?
- From these texts, how have the authors presented the information in different ways? Which is the most effective? Why?
- Whose viewpoint is being presented here?
- What does the author want to persuade you to do/think/believe?
- Who is the advert trying to persuade?
- Can you tell what the author thinks?

What are the other students doing?

In order to implement guided reading effectively, students must be able to work independently over sustained periods on significant reading and writing tasks, not busywork. Teachers must instruct students in the skills needed to sustain independent engagement, such as how to choose an appropriate book, how to manage writing projects, how to confer with a peer and how to write a response to literature. Generally, it's a good idea to spend the first two to four weeks of school showing students how to be members of productive and literate communities. It is important to plan carefully and allow enough time to really establish habits and routines.

The best way to guarantee success is through plenty of modelling, with teachers gradually releasing more responsibility to the students.

Teaching children in this manner is challenging work. Very little else will matter if classroom focus, management and organisation are not in place. When we plan a lesson so that each one includes literacy teaching, student reading, small-group instruction and a focus on productive work, good things happen. It is not necessary to do everything all at once. Begin by organising to do something new, and little by little it's possible to add new things. It's always possible to change your structures and plans once the students are more adept and you feel more comfortable (in fact it's inevitable).

What are these stations?

Response to reading

- List the main events in the story.
- List the characters from the story with a thumbnail sketch for each.
- Make a facts chart or fact file about a character.
- Make a list of places where most of the action takes place.
- Write an acrostic naming events and characters.
- Using ideas from the text, make a true or false quiz for a friend.
- Make a chart showing who did what and when.
- Draw a timeline of events.
- Draw a plot profile.
- Write a summary in no more than 100 words.
- Prepare a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of events in flashback story.
- Draw a story map illustrating the character's feelings.
- Make a cartoon strip showing the turning point in the story.
- Write a newspaper report of your story from the point of view of a character (biased).
- Write a letter to the main character advising them of the motives of others.
- Using speech bubbles, draw a conversation between two characters at a particular point in the story.
- Make an information page about ... including effective presentational features.
- Invent new subheadings for paragraphs in your book.
- Choose a non-fiction book. Devise questions to help your peer make use of its non-fiction features.
- Make a poster to advertise your book using eye-catching layout and presentation.
- Compose a poem that signifies change, for example time or seasons. Highlight the words or phrases which signpost change.
- Turn information into a flow chart or set of instructions.

Grammar focus

- Find similes and metaphors in your book. Illustrate them.
- Make a continuum of words, for example happy, angry. Explain the difference between each word in the order you have chosen.
- Make banks of 'happy' and 'sad' words, etc.
- Find a piece of descriptive text you like. Change the adjectives for synonyms. What effect does this have?
- Choose a conversation. Rewrite it in a dramatic way, exaggerating actions and using more expressive vocabulary.
- Locate compound words in story – make a list of them.
- Use reading to locate words containing consonant digraphs (ch, sh, th, wh).
- Use text to locate homophones – write a sentence for each one.

Visual literacy

- Paint a descriptive scene from a book.
- Paint a character.
- Design a new book cover.
- Your book is being made into a film – make an advertisement for this.

Familiar reading

- Audiobooks
- Rereading books
- Big books
- Shared/paired reading

These are only some examples of what can be used during those independent stations. The list is endless. iPads and computer work all have their place, along with workbooks. The teacher is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the stations are productive and engaging and that learning is happening.

Other Questions

How many different small groups should I have?

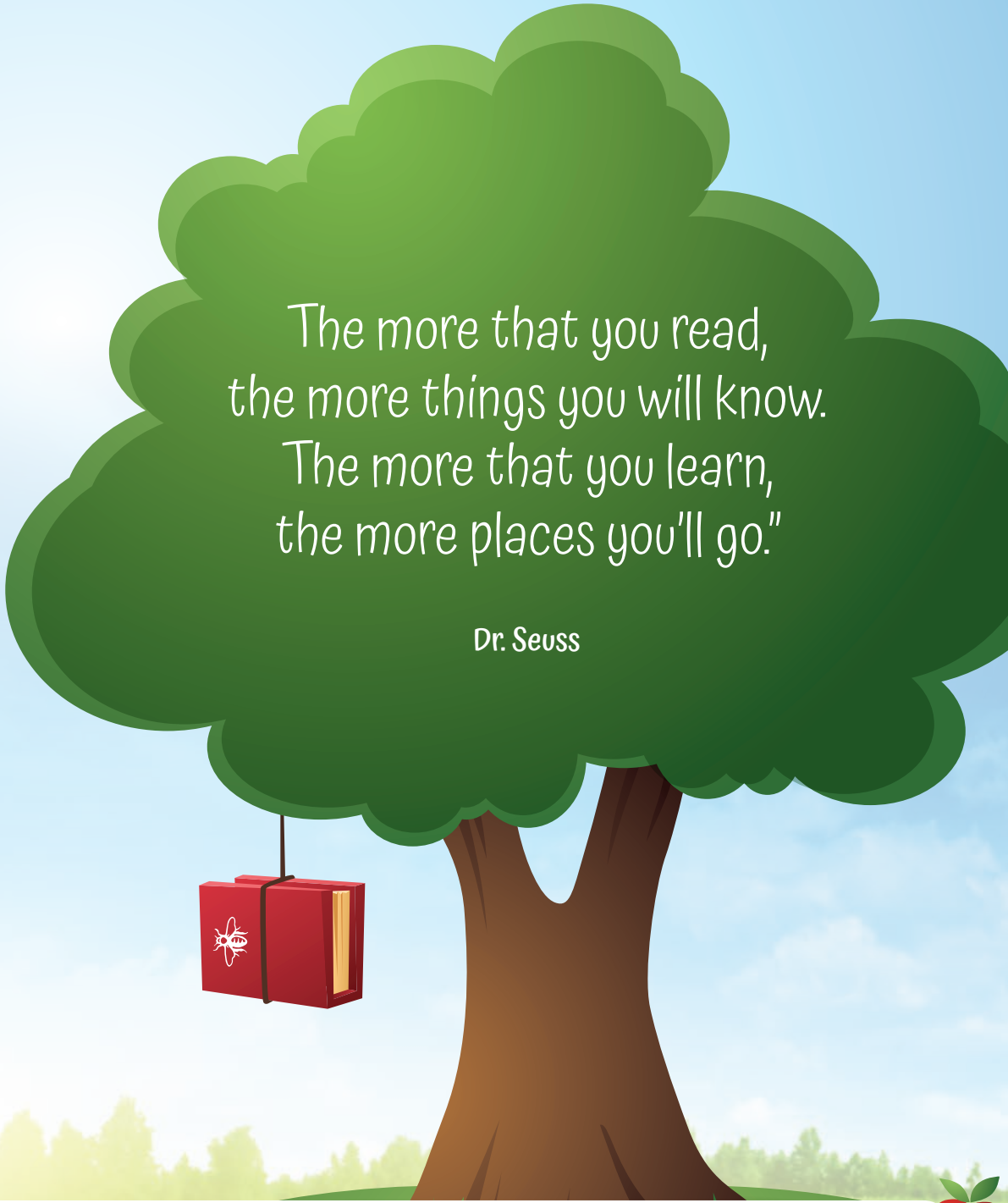
Form groups carefully and thoughtfully – four groups is ideal. Groups can be managed by the teacher on their own. You might be lucky to have access to SEN personnel but this is not a necessary factor for the implementation of guided reading. For those of you new to this way of teaching, starting small with three groups is acceptable. Remember that the main idea of small group teaching is to meet individual needs, in high quality, appropriate text.

How many times per week should I teach small group reading?

Four days per week is ideal, allowing 20 to 30 minutes for each guided reading group.

How many groups will I see per day?

You should meet with two groups each day.



The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go."

Dr. Seuss

Sample Timetable

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Group 1	20 Minutes	Guided reading	Familiar/shared reading with peers	Free writing station	Grammar work
	20 Minutes	Response to reading	Response to reading	Guided reading	Visual literacy
Group 2	20 Minutes	Free writing station	Familiar/shared reading with peers	Guided reading (20 minutes)	Visual literacy
	20 Minutes	Guided reading	Response to reading	Response to reading	Grammar work
Group 3	20 Minutes	Familiar/shared reading with peers	Guided reading	Visual literacy	Free writing station
	20 Minutes	Response to reading	Response to reading	Grammar work	Guided reading
Group 4		Familiar/shared reading with peers	Free writing station	Grammar work	Guided reading (20 minutes)
		Response to reading	Guided reading	Visual literacy	Response to reading

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