

Reading Experiences in Irish in English-medium Schools

Learning Outcomes

Children develop concepts, dispositions and skills in relation to:

Oral Language: e.g., Vocabulary, Demonstration of understanding

Reading: e.g., Engagement, Motivation and choice, Vocabulary, Fluency and self-correction

Through the activities listed below, children are supported to develop key competencies such as:

- Being a communicator and using language: through reading for enjoyment using their entire linguistic repertoire.
- Being an active learner: through the development of metacognitive skills and strategies.
- Being an active citizen: through engaging with texts written in Irish, appreciating the language and its importance in Irish culture.



This Support Material outlines various reading experiences to support engagement in reading in Irish. When engaging in reading in Irish, children:

- experience the richness of storytelling in the Irish language
- engage with a wide range of genres
- transfer skills from reading in English to support reading in Irish
- enjoy and benefit from varied reading experiences



During these reading experiences opportunities may arise for **explicit teaching** focusing on various Learning Outcomes in an **authentic, meaningful** way. Examples of these include vocabulary instruction, conventions of print or exploring grammatical features in the text (e.g., the impact of the *séimhiú* on pronunciation).

There are many engaging texts available in Irish. Recommendations for suitable texts can be found at the following sources:

- *Bímis ag Léamh:* [An Bosca Leabharlainne](#)
- *Scéalta den Scoth:* [Scéalta den Scoth](#)

Reading Engagement (LO1) can be fostered from Stage 1 to Stage 4 through shared, playful and engaging reading experiences. Reading experiences range from teacher-led activities, to scaffolded activities, to child-led activities. Using their knowledge of the children, teachers can choose the most suitable activities as children become increasingly confident readers. Draw on the Support Material, Scaffolding Children's Reading in Irish, for some activities and resources that support children to access and engage with texts.

Mainly teacher-led

1. Modelled reading
2. Echo reading
3. Finish the sentence

Scaffolded reading

4. Repeated reading
5. Reader's Theatre
6. Whisper reading

Increasingly child-led

7. Reading diaries
8. Reading clubs

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1. Modelled Reading (*Léitheoireacht Mhúnlaithe*)

Modelled Reading involves the teacher reading a text aloud (for example, an excerpt from a big book / picture book / a verse in a poem). The children listen to a text being read with clarity and confidence, supporting them to become familiar with the sounds of the Irish language. Teachers reading texts aloud can use props, images, intonation, actions etc. to support comprehension.

In junior classes (Stages 1 and 2), teachers can use big books, picture books or a class puppet to model reading. In middle and senior classes (Stages 3 and 4), big books and picture books be used, as well as other texts, for example, poems, short stories, short factual reports, plays and novels. A video example demonstrating modelled reading as part of the Reader's Theatre can be accessed [here](#).

Listening to various voices and dialects can support children become familiar with the richness of different dialects and varieties in the Irish language.

Teachers can try some of the following options:

- Watch someone reading a story on Scéal an Lae on TG4. Go to [Cúla4](#), select Bunscoil, then select Gaeilge, and finally select Scéalta.

- Listen to stories in Irish in various dialects on the Séideán Sí website seideansi.ie, as a whole class or in groups using headphones.
- Select readers in the school community and ask them to record themselves reading a text.
- Practise a line or a passage from a text appropriate to the children's level. When they can read it fluently, encourage them to record themselves.
- Invite children in middle and senior classes (Stages 3 and 4) to visit infant and junior classes (Stages 1 and 2) to demonstrate Modelled Reading.

Modelled Reading also helps to foster fluency (LO 10, Reading Strand).

2. Echo Reading (*Léitheoireacht Mhacalla*)

Echo reading helps children to familiarise themselves with the sounds of the Irish language, and to convey meaning by echoing what the teacher has read. It is most effective when the text includes phrases and vocabulary children have previously encountered, ensuring they understand the content and can focus on building fluency and pronunciation. The teacher begins to read the text (sentence or passage) with clarity and confidence, stopping after each sentence or half-sentence. Like an echo, the children repeat the text.

- If children need more support with pronunciation, the text can be read in different voices and at different speeds.
- As the children becomes more confident with echo reading, half the class can read the sentence with clarity and confidence, and the other half can echo it. When the children are ready to do so, echo reading could be practised in small groups or pairs.

A video example demonstrating Echo Reading as part of the Reader's Theatre can be accessed [here](#).

Echo Reading helps to foster fluency (LO 10, Reading Strand). It can also encourage children to pay attention to conventions of print (LO 3, Reading Strand), such as question marks and exclamation marks which impact how we read a text, developing prosody in the process.



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3. Finish the Sentence (Críochnaigh an Abairt)

In the activity Finish the Sentence, the teacher begins reading a displayed text (sentence or passage) with clarity and confidence. The children can follow the words as the teacher reads. The last word or phrase is omitted from the text and the children have to guess the missing word or phrase.

- This activity is particularly useful when there is a rhyme in the text. Click on this link to find a selection of poems: [Padlet COGG](#).
- At Stages 3 and 4, children can be encouraged to insert a new word or phrase that rhymes.

The activity Finish the Sentence also helps to improve vocabulary (LO 6, Reading Strand).



4. Repeated Reading (Léitheoireacht Leanúnach)

Repeated Reading allows children to revisit the same text a few times, supporting them to become more confident in reading the text each time.

- Encourage children to read the same text (for example, an excerpt from a story / poem / rhyme / song lyrics) over a period of a week so that they can practise it a few times.
- If further practise is needed in relation to pronunciation, teachers can read the text in different voices and at different speeds.

Repeated Reading also helps to foster fluency (LO 10, Reading Strand).

5. Reader's Theatre (Amharclann an Léitheora)

Reader's Theatre is a collaborative approach where children perform a text or an extract from a text in an informal way. Displaying the text on the whiteboard or in a visible area helps, and starting with short plays or poems is recommended. The text is read repeatedly over several days, with students engaging in different reading activities each day (modelled reading, echo reading, choral reading, independent reading). This is then followed by a performance of the text on the final day.

Modelled reading (léitheoireacht mhúnlaith) The teacher reads the script aloud line by line, referring

to pictures of the story to help the children understand the story.

Echo reading (léitheoireacht mhacallach) Again, the teacher reads the script out line by line, but this time, the children read every line aloud after her, just like an echo.

Choral reading (léitheoireacht chórúil) Every child is given a character/ part from the story. The children with the same part read the relevant lines together. The teacher can begin to place more emphasis on accuracy and prosody (expression when reading).

Independent reading (léitheoireacht neamhspleách) Groups are formed, with each group comprised of one of each character/ part. Each group reads their script, with each child reading their relevant part independently. The teacher circulates between the groups checking for accuracy and prosody.

Performance (léiriú) On the last day, each group performs their script for the class. At this point, children should be reading with good accuracy, fluency and prosody. In order to ensure Reader's Theatre maintains its simplicity, this performance need not involve any elaborate props, costumes or sets.

A video Example showcasing a teacher using this strategy is available in the [PLC online toolkit](#).

Reader's Theatre activity also helps to foster fluency (LO 10, Reading Strand)

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6. Whisper Reading (Cogarléitheoireacht)

In Whisper Reading, the teacher begins by reading the text clearly and confidently. It is helpful to display the text on the whiteboard or provide copies to the children. After listening to the teacher, the children read the text in pairs, in a whisper. The teacher circulates the classroom to listen to their reading.

- If children prefer to read by themselves, or if other sounds and noises in the class affect them, they can use a toobaloo. A toobaloo is an auditory feedback device, shaped like a phone, that allows children to hear themselves clearly while speaking softly into it.

Whisper Reading also helps to foster fluency and self-correction (LO 10, Reading Strand)

7. Reading Diaries (Dialanna Léitheoireachta)

Reading Diaries help children to think of themselves as readers, and to reflect on the texts they have read. Once children have experience of Reading Diaries in English, they can be encouraged to add *leabhair Ghaeilge* and books in other languages to their diary.

The whole class or individual children can:

- keep a Reading Diary with a list of the texts they have read.
- draw a number of stars (1–5) next to each title to show how much they liked the text.
- keep a record of the genres they have read in Irish and place a tick or heart beside the genres they particularly like.
- choose one of the books as a suggestion for another child or someone at home to read.

Reading Diaries help children reflect on texts in different genres and encourage them to read texts for pleasure (LO 2, Reading Strand).

8. Reading Clubs (Clubanna Léitheoireachta)

Reading Clubs give children the opportunity to come together socially to discuss the text they have read with each other. In order for this to be successful with a leabhar Gaeilge, it would be advisable that children have experience of Reading Clubs in English. The *Réidh le Léamh* section of the [Bímis ag Léamh](#) booklet contains some helpful suggestions to support the creation of a relaxed and comfortable environment.

Support children to give feedback on the text by providing sentence frames:

Is é _____ an carachtar is fearr liom.

Is é _____ an carachtar is mó a chuireann isteach orm.

Is é _____ an carachtar is cosúla liomsa.

Use some of the following prompt questions:

Cén radharc is mó ón téacs a d'fhan i d'intinn?

Cén radharc is mó a chuir ionadh / fearg / áthas ort?

Cé mhéad réalta as 5 a thabharfá don leabhar agus cén fáth?

An maith leat an seánra seo?

Ideas and activities for setting up a Reading Club are available on the website www.cogg.ie, under [An Club Leabhar](#). Reading Clubs help children reflect on texts in different genres, to read text for pleasure (LO 2, Reading Strand), and to respond to aesthetic, imaginative and creative aspects of the text (LO 7, Reading Strand).