UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Teacher Guide

Cycle 1 Support Lessons

Foundational Literacy

Level 1.1-2.1

2024

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Introduction

This guide provides a comprehensive resource for teachers delivering lessons at Foundational Literacy Levels 1 and 2 (1.1, 1.2 and 2.1). It offers structured lesson plans and strategies designed to support early literacy development. The guide focuses on phonics, handwriting, high-frequency words, reading skills and foundational grammar to establish a strong basis for young learners' literacy progression.

Each section includes clear guidance, teaching strategies and suggestions for implementation, ensuring that teachers are equipped to address diverse learner needs. The lesson plans aim to provide practical support for teachers, offering step-by-step instructions, techniques for engaging learners and ideas for extending or differentiating activities.

The guide covers:

Foundational Literacy Level 1 (1.1, 1.2)

1. Phonics
2. Handwriting
3. Reading Skills

Foundational Literacy Skills - Level 2.1

4. High-Frequency Words
5. Grammar
6. Reading Comprehension

The lesson plans feature:

- Aligned with English Language Learning Continuum (ELLC).

Lesson Plans

The Teacher Guide provides comprehensive guidance lesson plans designed to support English language instruction to Cycle 1 learners.

While each lesson plan offers clear structure, learning objectives, and step-by-step guidance, teachers should view these as flexible templates rather than rigid scripts.

We encourage educators to draw upon their professional expertise and knowledge of their students' needs to adapt, modify, and enhance these lessons—incorporating their own teaching strategies and techniques to create the most effective learning experience for their unique classroom context.

Phonic Support Lesson: Ss-Sound

LESSON PLAN	LESSON: 1 - Ss
	Learning Outcomes: • ENG.01.1.1.XX.001 Listen and identify all phonemes. • ENG.01.2.3.XX.052 Produce each phoneme correctly. • ENG.01.2.1.XX.005 Identify initial and end sounds in written words.

Resources	Starter
SP PPT (Slide 2)	**Phonics** 1. Introduce the phoneme /s/. Write it on the board. Inform/elicit from learners the NAME of the letter s. Inform/elicit from learners the SOUND of the letter (if required, use an interactive chart to correctly model and practise the phonemic sounds). 2. Teacher models the form in the air and learners repeat. 3. Teacher leads learners in chanting /s/ sound to a beat, ensuring learners are confident in the correct pronunciation of the sound and in recognising the letter Ss. **Teacher Notes: Sound Production** Exaggerate Mouth Position: - Teeth should be close together but not touching - Lips pulled back slightly in a small smile - Tongue positioned behind top teeth - Push air out to make a hissing sound like a snake Common Errors to Watch For: - Adding a vowel sound after /s/ (saying 'suh') - Tongue position too far forward (creating a lisp) - Teeth clenched too tightly - Making /z/ sound instead (voiced) - Sound too forceful/loud Correction Strategies: - Use snake analogy for continuous sound - Have learners place hand in front of mouth to feel air - Use mirror for tongue/teeth position - Practise contrasting /s/ with /z/ to show difference - Model quiet, gentle hissing sound Physical Prompts: - Point to teeth to show position - Use index finger in front of lips for continuous sound - Draw 's' shape in air while making sound - Pretend to be a slithering snake

Resources	Main activity
SP PPT (Slide 2)	**Sound and Vocabulary Introduction** 1. Using the PPT or picture word cards, introduce the words *snake, sun, sit, spoon* with appropriate actions: • snake: wind arm/hand like a snake • sun: hold hands up and spread fingers • sit: mime sitting down • spoon: mime eating with a spoon 2. The teacher places emphasis on the initial sound in each word so that learners can see that each word begins with /s/. For example, '*ssssnake', sssun', 'sssit', ssspoon*'. Have learners repeat the words and identify the /s/ sound in each word. 3. Teacher to say one of the /s/ vocabulary words and ask individual learners to approach the board/picture word cards and point to/choose the correct picture. Then, ask learners to repeat the /s/ sound and the word. Continue activity until learners are confident in matching the word to the correct picture.
Stretch	Learners match the words to the images independently.
Support	Practise /s/ sound words with actions, have learners lead in practices
SP PPT (Slide 3)	**Activity 1: Letter Recognition** Using My Turn Your Turn (MTYT) signal, teacher begins by gesturing towards him/herself saying "My Turn" and models the phoneme /s/ by drawing emphasis to the lips and tongue, '**ssss**' and then points to the students "Your Turn". Repeat MTYT until learners are confident making the /s/ sound. The teacher leads the class in finding the letter 's', by pointing to each letter one by one and asking learners '**Is** this /s/**?**' Learners work with a partner and look to identify and count letter 's'. Learners share their answers with the class.
Stretch	Ask learners if they can identify any of the other letters/sounds from the activity.
Support	Teacher counts the letter 's' with the class. Marking on the board every time it is identified (5).
SP PPT (Slide 4)	**Activity 2: Word Matching** 1. Teacher draws learners' attention to the 's' word images and elicits vocabulary from learners (while emphasising the initial /s/ sound of each word). 2. Teacher leads class in matching activity. Introducing words one by one, while practising the vocabulary. After each word teacher asks learners to identify which is the correct matching image. 3. Learners volunteer to approach the front of the class and identify the correct matching image. The class repeat the word with associated action together.
Stretch	Learners work in groups to think of more words they know that begin with the letter 's'. Groups share their words with the class.

Support	Teacher uses actions to introduce each of the 's' sound words.
SP WP (Worksheet)	**Handwriting Practice** 1. Draw the line guides on the board (representing the same lines in the book). 2. Teacher MUST model the formation of the lower-case and upper-case letter 'S'. Teacher displays a small red dot where the letter begins and ends. 3. Learners follow the teacher with their finger in the air - forming the letter and making the sound. Teacher watches the learner's formation and invites a learner to model a 'super S' on the board. 4. Learners to then use their 'magic writing finger' to form uppercase and lower-case 's' on the back of their hand, on the table and on their partners hand. Teacher to model this activity. **Activity 1**: Lower-case and upper-case letter 's' formation. Learners begin by tracing the first line and then independently form letter 's' on the next line. **Activity 2:** Letter formation and circle picture. Learners to write lower case 's' to complete the 's' word and then circle the correct picture. Teacher to support learners with reading the 's' words. Encourage learners to say /s/ sound and 's' words -- teacher to model on board using the word snake. **Notes:** The teacher must model the correct letter formation (as is in the book) at the beginning of the activity and throughout if learners require additional guidance in the correct way to form/write the letters. Reinforce 's' sound using /s/ phonics song throughout the modelling and encourage sound response from the learners.
Stretch	Learners can be asked to write simple CVC words with 's' when the teacher is modelling sun, sit.
Support	For some learners, tracing the letter 's' will be challenging enough. Teacher can provide more tracing paper for the learners who find it challenging.
Resources	**Plenary**
	Sound Hunt Game 1. Teacher explains that learners will go on a 'sound hunt' around the classroom: • Learners walk quietly around the room • When teacher calls "Stop!", learners must find something beginning with /s/ • Learners point to their object and make the /s/ sound • Teacher selects individuals to name their object 2. After each round, class repeats the new /s/ words together with actions. **Teacher Notes:** Ensure classroom objects include some /s/ items (e.g., sock, seat, sunglasses). Teacher monitors for correct sound production.

Phonic Support Lesson: Aa-Sound

LESSON PLAN	LESSON: 1 - Aa
	Learning Outcomes: • ENG.01.1.1.XX.001 Listen and identify all phonemes. • ENG.01.2.3.XX.052 Produce each phoneme correctly. • ENG.01.3.1.XX.001 Accurately reproduce modelled language.

Resources	Starter
SP PPT (Slide 2)	**Sound Introduction** 1. Introduce the phoneme /a/. Write it on the board. Inform/elicit from learners the NAME of the letter a. Inform/elicit from learners the SOUND of the letter (if required, use an interactive chart to correctly model and practise the phonemic sounds). 2. Teacher models the form in the air and learners repeat. 3. Teacher leads learners in chanting /a/ sound to a beat, ensuring learners are confident in the correct pronunciation of the sound and in recognising the letter Aa. 4. My Turn, You Turn. Teacher touches chest and says "My turn: /a/" and then points to learners and says ""Your turn: /a/" (watch for individual mouth positions and correct gently and praise good attempts: o Correct gently: "Let's try again with our mouths a bit more open" o Praise good attempts: "Yes! I can see your mouth is nice and open" **Teacher Notes: Sound Production** **Exaggerate Mouth Position:** - Mouth opens wide like at the dentist - Lower jaw drops down - Tongue lies flat and low in mouth - Lips relaxed and neutral (not spread or rounded) - Short, sharp sound **Key Teaching Points:** - Sound is very short (not extended) - Like the sound when doctor checks your throat: "Say ah" - Feel jaw movement: "Put your hand under your chin" - Show quick opening of mouth: "Like taking a quick bite of an apple" - Sound is voiced (voice box vibrates)

	Common Errors to Watch For: - Making long 'ay' sound (as in 'day') - Making 'uh' sound (schwa) - Mouth not open wide enough - Tension in lips/face - Adding extra sounds - Sound too quiet/hesitant
Stretch	Ask learners to think of words they know that begin with /a/.
Support	Use mirror to show mouth position, exaggerate sound formation.
Resources	**Main activity**
SP PPT (Slide 2) **Picture/ Word Cards (Optional)**	1. Using the PPT or picture word cards, introduce the words *ant*, *apple*, *axe*, *arrow* with appropriate actions: • ant: crawl fingers like an ant • apple: mime taking a big bite • axe: careful chopping motion • arrow: pointing motion 2. The teacher places emphasis on the initial sound in each word so that learners can see that each word begins with /a/. For example, 'aaaant', 'aaaapple', 'aaaaxe', 'aaaarrow'. Have learners repeat the words and identify the /a/ sound in each word. 3. Teacher to say one of the /a/ vocabulary words and ask individual learners to approach the board/picture word cards and point to/choose the correct picture. Then, ask learners to repeat the /a/ sound and the word. Continue activity until learners are confident in matching the word to the correct picture.
Stretch	Learners match the words to the images independently.
Support	Practise /a/ sound words with actions, have learners lead in practices.
SP PPT (Slide 3)	**Activity 1: Letter Recognition** 1. Using My Turn Your Turn (MTYT) signal, teacher begins by gesturing towards him/herself saying "My Turn" and models the phoneme /a/ by drawing emphasis to the mouth position, 'aaaa' and then points to the students "Your Turn". Repeat MTYT until learners are confident making the /a/ sound. 2. The teacher leads the class in finding the letter 'a', by pointing to each letter one by one and asking learners 'Is this /a/?' 3. Learners work with a partner and look to identify and count letter 'a'. Learners share their answers with the class.

Stretch	Ask learners if they can identify any of the other letters/sounds from the activity.
Support	Teacher counts the letter 'a' with the class. Marking on the board every time it is identified.
SP PPT (Slide 4)	**Activity 2: Practise the Chant** 1. Teacher leads class in chanting using the /a/ sound and words. Model each line for learners to repeat: **A, a, a... apple, apple, apple!** **A, a, a... ant, ant, ant!** **A, a, a... arrow, arrow, arrow!** **A, a, a... axe, axe, axe!** 2. Teacher introduces actions for each word. Practicse the chant line by line with actions: • apple: mime eating action • ant: crawling fingers • arrow: pointing motion • axe: careful chopping motion 3. Class performs complete chant with actions together. Teacher monitors pronunciation and supports learners in coordinating words with actions. **Teacher Notes: Full Chant Practice** o Start slow o Build speed o Maintain actions o Keep rhythm
Stretch	Learners create new verses using other /a/ words they know. Lead the class in performing new verses.
Support	Practise one line at a time, focusing on sound and action before adding next line. Use actions to reinforce memory of words.
SP WP (Worksheet)	**Writing Practice** **Activity 1: Handwriting Practice** 1. Draw the line guides on the board (representing the same lines in the book). 2. Teacher MUST model the formation of the lower-case and upper-case letter 'A'. Teacher displays a small red dot where the letter begins and ends. Demonstrate: • Capital A: "Start at the top, down to the left, back to the top, down to the right, then across the middle". • Lowercase a: "Start in the middle, go around in a circle, then straight up and down"

	3. Learners follow the teacher with their finger in the air - forming the letter and making the sound. Teacher watches the learner's formation and invites a learner to model a 'super A' on the board. 4. Learners to then use their 'magic writing finger' to form uppercase and lower-case 'a' on the back of their hand, on the table and on their partners hand. Teacher to model this activity. 5. Lower-case and upper-case letter 'a' formation. Learners begin by tracing the first line and then independently form letter 'a' on the next line. **Activity 2**: Write 'a' and match words to pictures. Learners draw lines to match each word with its correct picture. Teacher to support learners with reading the 'a' words. Encourage learners to say /a/ sound and 'a' words -- teacher to model on board using the word *ant*. **Teacher Notes:** The teacher must model the correct letter formation (as is in the book) at the beginning of the activity and throughout if learners require additional guidance in the correct way to form/write the letters. Reinforce 'a' sound throughout the modelling and encourage sound response from the learners.
Stretch	Learners can be asked to write simple CVC words with 'a' when the teacher is modelling *ant*.
Support	For some learners, tracing the letter 'a' will be challenging enough. Teacher can provide more tracing paper for the learners who find it challenging.
Resources	**Plenary**
	Sound Detective Game 1. Teacher tells learners they are going to be sound detectives, listening carefully for the /a/ sound. 2. Teacher says a list of simple words (mix of /a/ and other sounds). When learners hear a word beginning with /a/, they pat their head. If it doesn't begin with /a/, they pat their knees. **Teacher Notes:** Teacher should speak clearly, emphasise initial sounds and pause between words for learners to respond. Use familiar vocabulary including words learned today (ant, apple, arrow, axe) mixed with other known words (sun, top, dog, etc.).

Phonic Support Lesson: Tt-Sound

LESSON PLAN	LESSON: 1 - Tt
	Learning Outcomes: • ENG.01.1.1.XX.001 Listen and identify all phonemes. • ENG.01.2.3.XX.052 Produce each phoneme correctly. • ENG.01.3.1.XX.001 Accurately reproduce modelled language.

Resources	Starter
SP PPT **(Slide 2)**	**Time Traveller Game:** 1. Teacher tells learners they are going on a journey with the letter T: • Stand in a circle • Teacher shows Tt card • Everyone becomes a ticking clock • Make ticking sounds and movements together 2. Teacher leads rhythm activity: • Soft tapping: "tiny ticks" • Loud tapping: "TALL ticks" • Fast tapping: "tiny quick ticks" • Slow tapping: "tired ticks" **Teacher Notes: Sound** **Exaggerate Mouth Position:** • Tip of tongue touches behind top teeth • Lips slightly parted • Quick release of tongue • Short, sharp sound • No voice (just air) **Common Errors to Watch For:** • Adding 'uh' after /t/ (saying 'tuh') • Tongue position too far forward • Making /d/ sound instead (voiced) • Sound too forceful • Not releasing tongue quickly enough

	Correction Strategies: • Use "Tiny tap" analogy • Feel breath on hand • Watch tongue position in mirror • Practise quick tongue taps • Compare to clock ticking sound
Resources	**Main activity**
SP PPT **(Slide 2)**	1. Using the PPT or picture word cards, introduce the words tree, tap, ten, tiger with appropriate actions: tree: stretch up tall with branches tap: tap fingers on table ten: show ten fingers tiger: make clawing/ roaring motion 2. The teacher places emphasis on the initial sound in each word so that learners can see that each word begins with /t/. For example, 't-t-tree', 't-t-tap', 't-t-ten', 't-t-tiger'. Have learners repeat the words and identify the /t/ sound in each word. 3. Teacher to say one of the /t/ vocabulary words and ask individual learners to approach the board/picture word cards and point to/choose the correct picture. Then, ask learners to repeat the /t/ sound and the word.
Stretch	Learners create new actions for words.
Support	Focus on two words at a time with repeated practice.
SP PPT **(Slide 3)**	**Activity 1: Sound Chant** 1. Teacher leads class in practicing the chant using the /t/ sound and words. Model each verse clearly: Tick, tock, Tick, tock, Tick, tock goes the clock! Tip, tap, Tip, tap,

	Tip, tap on my lap! Tip, toe, Tip, toe, Tip, toe, here we go! 2. Teacher introduces actions for each verse and practises with class: - Clock verse: swing arms like pendulum - Tap verse: tap hands on lap - Tip-toe verse: tip-toe movement with fingers 3. Learners work in small groups to practise the chant and actions together. Each group performs for the class while others join in with actions.
Stretch	Learners work in groups to think of more words they know that begin with the letter 't'. Groups create their own verse to add to the chant and share with the class.
Support	Teacher uses actions to introduce each verse. For group work, mix confident and emerging learners together.
SP PPT **(Slide 4)**	**Activity 2: Board Game** 1. Teacher draws learners' attention to the board game slide, pointing to each /t/ word image and eliciting vocabulary from learners while emphasising the initial /t/ sound (tree, tap, tiger, ten). 2. Teacher models following the path from 'start' to 'finish', stopping at each space and clearly saying the /t/ sound and word shown. The whole class repeats each word. 3. Learners volunteer to come to the front of the class to move along the board path. When they land on a space, they must: - Say the /t/ sound - Say the complete word - Class repeats word together - Continue to next space

	4. Teacher supports learners in reading the words and encourages clear pronunciation of initial /t/ sound throughout the game.
Stretch	When landing on a space, learners can make a simple sentence using the word (e.g., "I see a tall tree").
Support	Teacher provides picture cues alongside words and models sound/word again if needed. Class can help by doing actions for each word.
SP WP **(Worksheet)**	**Handwriting Practice:** **Activity 1:** Trace the letters. Say the sound. Write the letter. 1. Draw the line guides on the board (representing the same lines in the book). Teacher must clearly explain how the lines show where tall letters reach, where small letters sit and where letters fall below the line. 2. Teacher MUST model the formation of the lower-case and upper-case letter 'T'. Teacher displays a small red dot where the letter begins and ends. For capital T, start at the top line, draw straight down to the bottom, lift pencil, return to the top and draw across. For lower-case t, start near the top line, straight down to the bottom, lift pencil, then cross in the middle. 3. Learners follow the teacher with their finger in the air - forming the letter and making the sound. Teacher watches the learner's formation and invites a learner to model a 'super T' on the board. Ensure correct starting position and direction of strokes. 4. Learners to then use their 'magic writing finger' to form uppercase and lower-case 't' on the back of their hand, on the table and on their partners hand. Teacher to model this activity, emphasising correct formation sequence each time. **Activity 1:** Lower-case and upper-case letter 't' formation. Learners begin by tracing the first line and then independently form letter 't' on the next line. Teacher should monitor pencil grip and sitting position throughout the activity while supporting individual learners as needed. **Activity 2:** Word-building activity. Teacher demonstrates connecting letters to make words, modeling the first example for the class. Learners then draw lines to connect letters while saying the /t/ sound. Practise reading completed words together as a class. **Notes:** The teacher must model the correct letter formation (as is in the book) at the beginning of the activity and throughout if learners require additional guidance in the correct way to

	form/write the letters. Reinforce 't' sound throughout the modelling and encourage sound response from the learners.
Stretch	Learners can write simple CVC words with 't' when the teacher is modelling connecting letters. More confident writers can create short phrases using /t/ words.
Support	For some learners, tracing the letter 't' will be challenging enough. Teacher can provide more tracing paper for these learners. Create supportive pairs for connecting activity, using peer support to complete the task.
Resources	**Plenary**
	Tap and Tell Game 1. Teacher explains that learners will listen for the /t/ sound and respond with actions. When teacher says a word beginning with /t/, learners must tap their head. If the word begins with a different sound, learners tap their knees. 2. Teacher models the game first: "Listen carefully - 'table' (tap head), 'dog' (tap knees), 'tiger' (tap head)." Ensure all learners understand the rules through demonstration. 3. Teacher says words from today's lesson mixed with other familiar words (tree, sun, tap, mouse, ten, cat). Keep a steady pace and observe learners' responses. 4. For the final round, teacher adds the drum/clapping to make a steady beat while saying the words. Learners continue the head/knee tapping actions in time with the beat. **Notes:** Teacher should use familiar vocabulary and speak clearly, emphasising initial sounds. Monitor learners' recognition of /t/ sound and maintain an engaging pace.

Teaching Techniques & Strategies

Phonics

Phonics is mainly based on listening skills and sounding letters. In this course, we focus mainly on synthetic phonics. Synthetic phonics emphasises a part-to-whole approach, letter-by-letter phonological decoding. The learner learns to sound and blend the sequential letter sounds. Sounds are learned in isolation and blended together e.g. /c/ /a/ /t/ leads to cat.

The synthetic approach emphasises the segmenting and blending of sounds early in reading development. Studies suggest that synthetic phonics have the most impact on those with reading difficulties and those from disadvantaged communities. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words are made up of sequences of speech sounds.

The reason that we follow the *'satpin'* arrangement, rather than the *'abcdef'* arrangement is so that learners can put their knowledge of phonics to work immediately with blending of two and three letter words.

How you Might Teach Phonics

Step 1:

Introduce picture cards of words beginning with the target sound, e.g, *souq, snake, spider, star, sandcastle, spoon*. Identify that each word begins with the /s/ sound.

Step 2:

Emphasise the sound in the word, e.g. *'ssssssouq'*. Write the word and underline the *'s'*. Repeat this for each 's' word so that learners can see that each word begins with /s/. Have learners repeat the sound both isolated and in each word.

Step 3:
Play a flashcard or phonics game to reinforce what they have just learned (see Activities section for some ideas).

Step 4: Use an activity to make sure they have to produce what they have just learned.
You may have to be patient at this stage and do a lot of demonstration but it is important to get the learners into a routine so that they become familiar with the steps that will be taken with each new phonic sound. It is important to make the activities multi-sensory to reach the needs of each of the learners.

Learners need to learn word attack skills. These are organised into different levels:

- Level 1:
  Recognise, say, write the letter names and sounds of the alphabet including lower-case and upper-case letters.

- Level 2:
  Recognise, blend, segment and build three-letter words in a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern e.g. */c/ /a/ /n/ à can à /c/ /a/ /n/*

Phonics: Active Learning Strategies

- Sound Jump: Give each learner an alphabet card which they place on the desk in front of them. Each learner identifies their phoneme (sound), with help from others if necessary. Teacher calls out a phoneme and the learner with corresponding grapheme (letter) jumps up quickly. Meanwhile, the rest of the class has to try to point to that grapheme before its owner has jumped up.

- Noughts and crosses: Divide class into 2 groups. In black, draw a noughts & crosses grid and write in 9 letters/diagraphs. A learner from Team A says the phoneme from the square he/she wants to choose. Someone else from Team A has to call out a word with a corresponding initial sound. The teacher then rubs out the letter and replaces it with a smiley face in that team's colour. Continue with Team B until either team wins by getting 3 smiley faces in a row.

- Find a sound: Learners sit in a circle. The box of cards are passed around the circle while chanting or rapping: *'Pass the sound box round and round etc …… what can you find?'.*

Learner identifies the phoneme and then finds something in the room beginning with that sound and places the card next to the object or brings it back to the circle.

- Initial Sound Bingo : Each learner has a board on which they place any 3 grapheme cards in the 3 columns. Each learner identifies their graphemes. The teacher holds up an object for the learners to name and identify its initial sound. The learner with corresponding card claims the object and places it next to its letter. The first learner with 3 objects is the winner.

Handwriting

Handwriting reinforces letter recognition and fine motor skills, helping learners with both writing and reading. Practicing handwriting ensures that learners can write legibly and correctly form letters, building their confidence in written communication.

Handwriting: Active Learning Strategies

- Sky Writing: Teacher models the formation of a letter in the air using large arm movements while saying the letter's name and sound. The learners then use their entire arm to mimic the letter formation, writing it in the air.

- Sand or Salt Trays: The teacher fill a shallow tray with sand or salt and have learners trace letters with their index fingers. As they trace, they can say the letter's name and sound. After tracing, the tray can be gently shaken to erase the letter, allowing learners to start fresh and repeat the process.

- Playdough Letters: Learners are given small portions of playdough, which they roll and shape into letter forms. The teacher demonstrates the process, guiding learners to form each letter correctly. While making the letter, learners say the letter's name and sound, reinforcing their phonemic awareness.

- Rainbow Writing: Learners are given a template with lightly printed letters, which they then trace multiple times using different coloured markers or crayons. This helps reinforce letter shapes and stroke order while keeping the activity fun and dynamic.

Reading Skills – Level 1

Word Families

Word families are groups of words that have a common feature or pattern- they have some of the same combinations of letters in them and a similar sound. To teach word families begin with meaningful little words such as *–an: can, fan, man, pan, ran*. It is important to get the learners to identify the common sound in all the words and underline the letters that make this sound e.g. *c<u>an</u>.* When they are ready, you can add four letter words – *band, hand, land, sand*. It is important to get learners to find small words inside bigger words e.g. *garden – den, catch – cat, etc.*

Word Families: Active Learning Strategies

- Word Family Sorting Relay: Write several words from different word families (e.g., -at, -it, -og) on flashcards. Include a mix of correct words for each family and unrelated words. Prepare sorting mats or charts labelled with word family headings (one heading per family). Divide learners into small teams. Place the flashcards in a pile at the front of the room. One learner from each team runs to the pile, picks up a flashcard, reads it aloud and places it under the correct word family heading on their mat. Continue until all cards are sorted. Once sorting is complete, review the words as a group. Teams can earn points for correct placements. Extend the activity by having learners create sentences or a short story using words from a specific family.

- Build-a-Word Family Game: Provide each learner with letter tiles or magnetic letters and a word family ending card (e.g., "-an" or "-ig"). Learners take turns selecting a consonant to place before their word family ending to form a word (e.g., "b" + "-an" = "ban"). After forming a word, the learner says it aloud, spells it and writes it on a mini whiteboard or notebook. Continue until all learners have had a turn. Extend the activity by timing learners to see how many real or nonsense words they can create in one minute. Review the real words, discussing their meanings.

Blending

Blending means smoothly joining sounds to come up with a pronunciation close enough to a word to access the word. Make sure learners are hearing the word when they blend the letters together. Blending is an important stage in the learning process and do not move on until each learner has mastered blending. This is usually where learners begin having difficulties. The more practice learners have with three-letter words the easier it becomes for them to blend four and five letters. There are various blending activities outlined in the Activities section later in the Teachers' Handbook.

Segmenting

Segmenting sounds is the opposite of blending sounds. While segmenting sounds is an important reading skill, the best application for it is for writing. If learners can hear and say each sound in a word and match it to a symbol, they can write words! Segmenting can be emphasised by pronouncing a word and telling the learner that this is the *fast way* to say the word and give an example of the *slow way.* For example, football (*fast way)* and f-oo-t-b-a-ll (slow way). Give the learners another word, eg. Bed and ask if they can say it the *slow way* (b-e-d).

Tips for Teachers

- If the learner calls the sound by its letter name tell him/her 'Yes, its name is 'eff' but its sound is 'fffff'. Keep emphasising sound as when it comes to blending it is best to avoid having the learners trying to blend *'eff' 'aaa' 'enn'* à *'effaenn'* instead of *'fff' 'aaa' 'nnn'* à *'fan'.*

- Explain to learners that they will see 'a' in a different format in different books. In the Literacy Skills book, 'a' has been used so as not to confuse the learners as they learn the letter but when they look at other books they may see 'a'. Similarly, make them aware that 'I' and 'I' are the same thing also. Explain that sometimes capital I (i) and lowercase l (L) look the same sometimes also.

Blending & Segmenting: Active Learning Strategies

- Snail Talk: Place a small number of picture cards in front of the learners. Tell them you are going to say a word using "Snail Talk" a slow way of saying words (e.g., /fffffllllaaaag/). They have to look at the pictures and guess the word you are saying. It is important to have the learners guess the answer in their head so that everyone gets an opportunity to try it. Alternate between having one learner identify the word and having all learners say the word aloud in chorus to keep them engaged.

- Blending Slide: Draw a picture of a playground slide on the board. Have cards for each letter in a target CVC word ready, for example, c, a, t. Place 't' at the bottom of the slide and ask learners what sound it makes. Then place 'a' at the top of the slide and ask learners what sound it makes. Demonstrate 'a' moving down the slide, getting the learners to say 'aaaa' 'ttttt' with decreasing time between the 2 sounds as the letters on the board come closer together. Put the 2 letters together at the bottom of the slide and get learners to say 'aaattt' à 'aatt' à 'at'. Then, put the 'c' at the top of the slide and ask learners to make the sound. Repeat the process with learners saying 'cccc' 'at' with decreasing time between them until they are finally saying 'cat'. Repeat with various words.

- Tap Along with Phonemes: The teacher calls out word and learners tap on their desks the number of phonemes in the word. The teacher prompts learners to announce the number of phonemes in the word. The teacher then confirms the number of phonemes in the word. The teacher sounds out the phonemes, separating them vocally. Learners repeat the sounding out of that word's phonemes. Repeat with next word.

- Blocks: Teach learners how to stretch words, saying them slowly, so they can hear the sounds that make up a word. The teacher invites learners to say the word slowly as they listen for the individual phonemes. The teacher should be sure the learners are actually saying the words. After learners have learned how to say the words slowly, use small, coloured blocks to mark the different phonemes. Example: Say 'g…o…t' and use three different coloured blocks to represent the sounds. Later, the teacher asks learners to tell how many blocks they will need to represent the sounds in other words.

- It's In the Bag!: The teacher gives a learner a brown paper bag with an object or flashcard inside. The learner looks inside but s/he will not show the object to the class. The learner holding the bag then segments the name of the object/flashcard and the other learners guess what the object is by blending the sounds back together to make the word. Take the object or flashcard

out, show it, segment the object name again and set it to the side. The learners take turns segmenting the names of objects or flashcards in the bag for the other players. (Suggested items to get you started: fork, pen, shell, sock, bottle, brush).

Reading Skills – Level 2

High Frequency Words

High Frequency Words (HFWs) are words that occur frequently in text, for example, *the, I, was, what, this*. Automatic recognition of these words helps learners to improve fluency, make use of context clues and focus more on comprehension than on decoding. Many HFWs have irregular spelling patterns and sounding out these words can be pointless and frustrating. High Frequency Words are learnt through whole-word recognition. That is through recognising words by shape, size and spacing. High Frequency Words (HFWs) are words that cannot be sounded. Teachers should teach and expose learners to these words in various ways through activities, games and text readings. Flashcards can be used for drilling the words but learners need to do lots of word and picture matching activities.

High Frequency Words: Active Learning Strategies

- Dry Erase Boards: Write the word over and over until it is learned, erasing each time. This is a writing task, not a copying task. If the learner is using paper and pencil, fold the paper over each time or use another paper or card to cover the previous word. If the learner needs a model to start with, provide it. Then cover it and allow the learner to peek if necessary. Then remove it altogether.

- Find and Frame: After a learner reads a text/passage, ask him/her to frame one or two high frequency words.

- HFW Swat: Write a list of HFWs on the board. Divide the class into two teams. Give a flyswatter to the first learner in each team. Say a sentence that includes one of the words. The first learner to touch the correct word earns a point for his/her team.

- Making Sentences: Start by giving each learner 2 cards face down. Each learner thinks of a sentence that uses those two words. When a learner recites his/her sentence, ask the class, "Can we guess what the two words are?" Learners may look at the word wall for help. Gradually move up to more words.

High Frequency Word List

List 1	List 2	List 3
the	he	at
of	was	be
and	for	this
a	on	have
to	are	from
in	as	or
is	with	one
you	his	had
that	they	by
it	I	word
List 4	**List 5**	**List 6**
there	some	two
use	her	more
an	would	write
each	make	go
which	like	see
she	him	number
do	into	no
how	time	way
their	has	could
if	look	people

List 7	List 8	List 9
now	find	could
people	long	go
my	down	see
made	day	not
over	did	come
did	get	were
than	come	your
other	made	said
many	part	can
then	time	out

Grammar

Early grammar development for young learners focuses on helping them understand and use basic sentence structures, simple verb forms and common grammatical patterns. At this stage, learners are beginning to grasp how words combine to form meaningful sentences, often relying on repetition, visual aids and contextual examples provided by the teacher. At this stage, grammar lessons should be interactive and scaffolded, emphasising clear, simple rules and providing ample opportunities for practice. Teachers can support this development by modelling correct grammar, encouraging sentence-building activities and making the process engaging through games and hands-on exercises.

Level 2.1 Grammar: Active Learning Strategies

- Sentence Building with Word Cards: Provide learners with color-coded word cards for subjects, verbs and objects (e.g., *The cat*, *jumps*, *on the bed*). Have learners arrange the cards to form grammatically correct sentences, starting with simple structures and gradually adding modifiers. This activity helps learners see how sentence components fit together and reinforces basic grammar patterns in a hands-on, visual way.

- Action Verb Games: Use action verbs like *run*, *jump* or *clap* in a game where learners perform the actions as you say the words. Then, extend the activity by forming sentences together (e.g., "I run," "She jumps"). This builds understanding of verbs and subject-verb agreement, while physical movement keeps learners engaged and reinforces learning through multisensory experiences.

- Fill in the Blank: Provide learners with simple sentences with missing words (e.g., "The dog ___ fast"). Offer a choice of verbs or other parts of speech to complete the sentence. This helps learners practise using appropriate grammar in context while encouraging them to think critically about sentence structure.

- Story Sentence Scramble: Write sentences from a short story on strips of paper, then cut them into individual words. Have learners work in pairs or small groups to reorder the words into correct sentences. This reinforces word order and sentence structure while fostering collaboration and problem-solving skills.

Reading Comprehension (Level 2.1)

At the very early stages of reading comprehension, learners rely on a combination of strategies to make sense of text. Clues from accompanying pictures often play a crucial role, helping learners link visual information to written words and infer meaning. Teachers can support comprehension by asking targeted questions about the images (e.g., "What do you see here?" or "What is happening in this picture?") to elicit information that connects to the text. Highlighting key words in the text and linking them to objects or actions in the images can also deepen understanding. Other effective strategies include modelling how to use context to predict meaning, pointing out repetitive sentence patterns and encouraging learners to track words as they read. These approaches help build confidence while gradually developing the ability to comprehend simple written language.

Level 2.1 Reading Comprehension: Active Learning Strategies

- Picture Walk: Before reading, guide learners through the illustrations in the book, asking them to describe what they see and predict what the story might be about. This strategy activates prior knowledge, builds vocabulary and sets the stage for understanding the text by establishing a connection between the images and the story.

- Story Retelling with Props: After reading, provide learners with simple props or picture cards related to the story and ask them to retell it in their own words. This encourages comprehension by requiring learners to recall key events, sequence ideas and link text to tangible objects, reinforcing their understanding and memory.

- Interactive Read-Aloud: Read the story aloud while pausing to ask questions, clarify vocabulary and encourage predictions (e.g., "What do you think will happen next?"). Use expressive tone and gestures to keep learners engaged. This strategy models fluent reading, improves listening skills and engages learners in active thinking about the text, fostering deeper comprehension.

- Text-to-Image Matching: Provide learners with simple sentences or phrases from the text and corresponding images. Ask them to match the text to the correct image. This helps learners connect written words with visual representations, building vocabulary and reinforcing understanding of the text.

Motivating and Engaging Learners

The following approaches are recommended:

- Make literacy experience relevant to learners' interests, everyday life and to current environmental events.
- Provide a positive learning environment that promotes learner autonomy in learning and participation in lessons.
- Build strategies such as goal setting (asking learners to set their own targets), self-directed learning and collaborative learning.
- Give feedback that is motivational but not controlling. The best type of feedback is informational feedback that conveys realistic expectations and links performance to effort. It is better to praise learners for effort rather than to praise for ability.
- Give the learners opportunities to engage in meaningful reading and writing activities, including reading their own and peers' work.
- Offer learners access to a wide range of high-quality reading material.