

“Focused Reading”

Focused Reading should work like Novel Study, but with smaller extracts from a variety of texts. You could base a week’s worth of Focused Reading on an extract from a novel, a poem, or the lyrics of a song.

The idea of Focused Reading is to expose children to high level texts without them being required to read and access the whole of the text. Through this, they are exposed high level vocabulary, varied punctuation and are also given the opportunity to discuss and answer questions that will hopefully prepare them for the end of KS2.

Focused Reading can be organised into mixed-ability groups and the teacher should rotate which group they work with every day so that they can support and scaffold discussion.

In terms of differentiation, Focused Reading can be accessed by all pupils as the teacher is reading the text. Children should work together and discuss answers to questions in mixed-ability groups. This will expose all children to differing ideas and those children that are able to access the questions can model how to find the answers to those children that would typically struggle.

Focused Reading should be used to link to your writing. So, if you are looking at descriptive language in English, choosing an extract that would model excellent descriptive language will help them to generate and magpie ideas when they are writing.

The level of text will vary for each year group but below is an example extract for Year 5 and a timetable with example questions for the week.

EXTRACT – The Book Thief

The last time I saw her was red. The sky was like soup, boiling and stirring. In some places, it was burned. There were black crumbs, and pepper, streaked across the redness.

Earlier, kids had been playing hopscotch there, on the street that looked like oil-stained pages. When I arrived, I could still hear the echoes. The feet tapping the road. The children-voices laughing, and then smiles like salt, but decaying fast.

Then, bombs. This time, everything was too late.

The sirens. The cuckoo shrieks in the radio. All too late.

Within minutes, mounds of concrete and earth were stacked and piled. The streets were ruptured veins. Blood streamed till it was dried on the road, and the bodies were stuck there, like driftwood after the flood. They were glued down, every last one of them. A packet of souls.

Was it fate? Misfortune? Is that what glued them down like that?

Of course not. Let's not be stupid. It probably had more to do with the hurled bombs, thrown down by humans hiding in the clouds.

Yes, the sky was now a devastating, home-cooked red. The small German town had been flung apart one more time. Snowflakes of ash fell so lovely you were tempted to stretch out your tongue to catch them, taste them. Only, they would have scorched your lips. They would have cooked your mouth. Clearly, I see it.

I was just about to leave when I found her kneeling there. A mountain range of rubble was written, designed, erected around her. She was clutching a book. Apart from everything else, the book thief wanted desperately to go back to the basement, to write, or to read through her story one last time. In hindsight, I see it so obviously on her face. She was dying for it – the safety of it – but she could not move. Also, the basement didn't even exist anymore. It was part of the mangled landscape.

Please, again, I ask you to believe me.

I wanted to stop. To crouch down, I wanted to say: "I'm sorry, child."

But that is not allowed. I did not crouch down. I did not speak.

Instead, I watched her awhile. When she was able to move, I followed her. She dropped the book. She knelt.

The book thief howled.

TIMETABLE

Monday	<u>FLUENCY</u> Teacher reads the text to the children and every child has a copy of the extract. Teacher reads the text a second time and children highlight any words they are unfamiliar with. Class discussion on unfamiliar vocabulary – add these to V Books. <i>Teacher tells the children what these words mean and discuss any required background knowledge.</i> Children have a go at reading along with the teacher. Formative assessment opportunity – ask a different 6 children to read aloud each week to assess fluency. Also an opportunity for the teacher to pick up on aspects to aid with writing <i>e.g. I would talk about the use of metaphor in this extract and why it is effective.</i>
Tuesday	<u>Vocabulary Questions</u> <i>Use the VIPERS document and questions types to create questions.</i> Why has the author described the rubble as ‘a mountain range’? Find and copy two words that are used to describe the temperature of the ‘snowflakes of ash’. What does the author mean by ‘humans hiding in the clouds’? How does the author compare the sky to food? Find and copy the phrase that suggests the streets were cracked and broken.
Wednesday	<u>Retrieval Questions</u> <i>Use the VIPERS document and questions types to create questions.</i> What would happen to your lips and mouth if you tasted the snowflakes of ash? Where did the Book Thief want desperately to go back to? Why couldn't she go back to the basement? What was she clutching? Why did the narrator not crouch down to help the Book Thief?
Thursday	<u>Inference and Deduction Questions</u> <i>Use the VIPERS document and questions types to create questions.</i> Why were the sirens and cuckoo shrieks on the radio too late? What does the author mean when they describe the sky like soup? Why doesn't the basement exist anymore? Who is narrating the extract? Male or female? Why do you think this?
Friday	<u>Evidence and Explanation</u> <i>Use the VIPERS document and questions types to create questions.</i> <i>These sorts of questions are to prepare the children and build their understanding and confidence in those questions that require longer answers. The answers should preferably have multiple elements to the answer and multiple pieces of evidence that can be used to support it. One or two of these questions and lots of discussion should be enough.</i> How is the Book Thief feeling at the end of the extract? Use evidence to support your answer.

PLEASE NOTE: Every element of VIPERS does not need to be addressed every week. For instance, non-fiction texts tend to lend themselves more to vocabulary and retrieval and less to inference. As there aren't enough days in the week, some weeks you will have to miss out on one or more of the question types.