



## Who is this written for?

This resource is written for anyone who wants to help another adult improve their reading and writing skills. It presents some practical suggestions which are based on an understanding of how we, as efficient readers and writers, use our literacy skills.

It offers suggestions which are relevant to adults with a wide range of literacy needs and abilities - from the beginning reader/writer to the person who reads reasonably well but has little confidence in their spelling ability. It is also relevant to people from a non-English speaking background, provided their spoken English is sufficiently developed to carry on a simple conversation.

As adults, we use our literacy skills in diverse contexts – in using an automatic teller machine, sending a text message on a mobile phone, reading stories to the children or leaving notes for fellow workers...etc. This resource will suggest ways of helping your student to develop reading and writing skills which are appropriate to the context of their lives, whatever they may be.

The resource is basically a practical set of how-to's. It is not a complete literacy tutor training course. Ideally, the person using this resource will have some background in language learning and/or adult learning. The brief sections on those topics are included as a refresher for someone who has studied these topics before and as a reminder of the theory which underpins the teaching/learning strategies which follow.

## How to use this resource

You probably don't need to read all of this resource. However you will need to read most of this first section. Even if you have previously been trained as an adult literacy tutor, you should read the sections on *How do we read?* and *The adult learner* as a refresher. You should also read *Assessing your student's needs*.

The main part of this resource has been divided into four: *The Beginner Reader/Writer*, *The Intermediate Student*, *The Vocational Student* and *Writing and Spelling*. Read the descriptions below to decide which one most suits your student.

### **The beginner reader/writer**

A beginning reader is not necessarily someone who cannot read anything at all. That may be what they say, but this is rarely the case. In this resource, the term also refers to someone who may know the names of all, or most, of the letters in the alphabet, may be able to recognise or work out a few simple words and write a few words such as their name and address. They may have had some schooling in Australia or be from a non-English speaking background. However, it is assumed that they can speak English well enough to carry on a simple conversation (National Reporting System Level 1 and less).

### **The intermediate student**

In this resource, an intermediate reader can recognise most of the words in a short newspaper item and can try to sound out a word with an understanding of most letter/sound relationships. They will, however, probably read slowly with loss of comprehension and will have limited word attack skills to draw on when they reach a problem word (National Reporting System Levels 2 and 3).

### **The vocational student**

This is a student who is enrolled in a vocational course such as a TAFE course and who is struggling with the reading and writing demands of the course. The main focus is on the reading and writing they need to do for that course.

### **Writing and spelling**

This section is of relevance to all adult literacy tutors whether your student is a beginner, an intermediate student, a vocational student, or just wants to improve their writing and spelling. This section can be read in conjunction with any of the above three sections or may be used by itself for the student who only wants to improve their spelling.

The remainder of the resource is comprised of sections which may or may not be relevant to your student. Look through the *Contents* page and decide which ones you need.

# How do we read?

## Who is this section for?

Anyone who is going to help someone learn to read and write should read this section first. Even if you are a trained tutor and have previously learnt about reading theory you should refresh your memory and understanding of the theories on which the resource is based.

## How do we read?

Before you read on, pause for a minute to think about how you think you learnt to read and how, as an efficient reader now, you manage to turn those squiggles on the page into meaning.

You probably said to yourself something like: *I learnt the sounds made by the letters then learnt to blend them together then understood the meaning of the word. Now, as an efficient reader, that process is simply faster.*

That is only part of what is involved in reading. Many people who 'know their sounds' still have trouble with reading. This section will point to some other very important aspects of the reading process.

In order to experience some of the frustrations which your student may be facing, try to learn the sounds which correspond to the following symbols. Give yourself 30 seconds to memorise them and cover up the rest of the page while you do it.

ξ - u	Γ - s
‡ - n	∩ - r
ς - t	ÿ - e
Ж - d	Ю - h



Now cover that and try to work out what this word says:

ς Ю ξ‡ Ж ÿ ∩

Did you have trouble?  
Does this make it easier?

As the storm approached we could hear a clap of ς Ю ξ‡ Ж ÿ ∩ and see a flash of lightning.

It was difficult for you to read the word by itself but easier to read it in a whole sentence because you could use the rest of the sentence to guess at the meaning. This is a very important aspect of reading.

## **The efficient reader uses four sets of clues:**

### **1. The flow of the language**

Fill in the blanks in this sentence:

Joe had cereal as well ..... coffee for his breakfast before he left ..... the office.

How did you know which words to put in? You knew because they just sounded right. They make the sentence flow as we expect it to. However, someone from a non-English speaking background who does not speak English very well may not be able to fill in those blank spaces. We need to have a feel for the flow of the language.

### **2. The meaning of the text**

Neil Armstrong was the first ..... to land on the .....

How did you know which words to put there? You were helped here by what you knew about the subject. If you had not heard of Neil Armstrong then you would have trouble guessing which words fit in those blank spaces.

However, if we, as fluent speakers of the English language, and as people who know who Neil Armstrong was, were to read such a passage with all the words printed there rather than blank spaces, we wouldn't have to look carefully at those words as we read them, because we can already predict what they may be. We can predict on the basis of our feeling for the flow of the language and our knowledge of the subject.


Efficient readers predict, or guess, much of what they are reading. They do not look carefully at every letter of every word. They just take in a sample of the print to help their predictions and to confirm that they are right.

### **3. The letter/sound clues**

We also need to know something of the possible sounds made by the letters as we are reading. But it is important to remember that the four sets of clues interact and support each other so learning about letters and sounds in isolation from real texts makes the learning difficult.

#### 4. The context of the text

When we are reading in real situations (as opposed to 'learning to read' lists of words), we have another set of clues to help us and these come from the context of the material. Real texts don't have to be whole passages of writing. A real text might just be the student's name and address written on a dummy application

form. Or it might just be the word  on a road traffic sign. The more clues there are to suggest what the word might be, the easier it is to identify the sounds made by the letters.

For example, when we pick up the sports section of the newspaper we already make predictions about what we are going to read there and the kind of language we will meet. Those predictions are different from those we make if we are looking at the TV guide, or the motor traffic handbook, or a flier advertising the specials at the supermarket, or the street sign at the end of the street.

These four systems of clues interact to produce efficient reading:

1. The letters in the words
2. The flow or grammar of the sentence
3. The meaning of the passage
4. The context of the text.

#### Implications of this for helping your student

- You need to help your student use all four sets of clues, not just the clues given by the letter/sound relationship. 'Sound it out' is not the only answer.
- For this reason, it will be easier for your student if they learn to read using whole, real language in real contexts rather than lists of isolated words and letters.
- Teach the correspondence between letters and sounds in the context of whole words in meaningful contexts.

## The value of prediction

Read this passage:

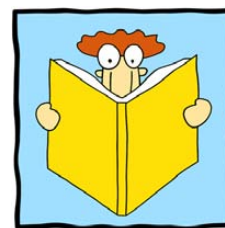
There was a door on the  
right and one on the left.  
As they all went in though  
the right hand door past the  
the telephone, it started to ring.

Did you notice the mistakes? **Th**rough is mis-spelt and **the** is written twice before telephone.

If you did not notice those mistakes (and most people do not) the reason is that you were predicting what the words would be. You did not expect to read **th**ough in that position in the sentence and you did not expect to see **the** written twice together. Your eyes did not rest carefully on each word. You just took little peeps at the print and filled in the rest from what you already knew about how the sentence should flow.

Although this passage was specially written to make it highly likely that you would 'make a mistake', you undoubtedly make 'mistakes' in your reading constantly as all good readers do. Where a text says **J**ohn said, efficient readers will often read **s**aid **J**ohn, or they will omit a word or put in a word and as long as the passage still makes sense they will not realise that they have done it.

We make these 'mistakes' because we are concentrating on meaning and predicting ahead. Our eyes just skip across the page. This is not just a lazy habit we get into. We need to be able to read quickly to understand what we are reading about, so this guessing strategy is essential for intelligent, meaningful reading. If we spend too much time and effort looking carefully at words and sounding them out, then we lose track of the meaning of the passage.



However, even though you probably consider yourself a good reader, there are occasions when we all find reading difficult; when we find ourselves trying to read something we have no background knowledge about. For example, if we have no scientific background, reading a scientific journal pulls us all up short. Not many of us can read a text book on Quantum Physics confidently. Even if we can understand all the words, or give a dictionary type definition for most of them, our eyes are not able to skip confidently across the page, making predictions about what is coming on the basis of our knowledge of the subject. Also, the language may be used in an unfamiliar way. Think of the problems most of us have with legal documents.

When we are reading something unfamiliar, our reading becomes cautious. Under these circumstances, we don't make many 'mistakes'. We look closely at the words because we can't rely on our background knowledge and our feeling for the flow of the language for very much help.

This slow reading, concentrating on each word because we cannot guess what is coming next, makes it difficult to get to the meaning. This then presents a cycle of problems. If we do not understand what we are reading about, we have to read slowly. But if we read slowly, that makes it even harder for us to understand what we are reading about.

### Implications of this for helping your student

- You can break this cycle of problems by giving your student reading material which they know something about to start with, so that they can use the strategy of prediction.
- Ensure that the subject and the language are familiar.

## What is the difference between a good reader and a poor reader?

Is it just that the poor reader 'doesn't know their sounds'? No, it is much more complicated than that. For example, imagine that one reader reads the following sentence:

The tyres made a loud screeching <sup>*nose*</sup> noise.

The reader has read *nose* instead of *noise*. A seemingly small mistake as there is only a difference of one letter between the two words. However, it doesn't make sense so it is therefore a significant or 'bad' mistake.

Now imagine that a second reader reads the sentence this way:

The tyres made a loud screeching <sup>*sound*</sup> noise.

This reader has read *sound* instead of *noise*. *Sound* looks nothing like *noise* so it would seem to be a very careless mistake. However, it makes sense and shows that the reader is thinking of the meaning of the sentence and is predicting on the basis of meaning. This is in fact what all good readers do. It is therefore a 'good' mistake.

Both of these readers have missed or overlooked one of the sets of clues we use when we are reading. The reader who read *nose* has not used the meaning clues.

The reader who read *sound* has overlooked the letter/sound clues. These clues were missed because the reader's mind was on the meaning of the passage. They already had a pretty good idea what word might be there so they had no need to look carefully at the letters.

## What do we do when the prediction is wrong?

Good readers do make bad predictions. But one of the marks of a good reader is that they know when they make a prediction which doesn't make sense.

Read this passage:

The boys' arrows were nearly gone  
so they sat down on the grass and  
stopped hunting. Over at the edge of the  
wood they saw Henry making a bow  
to a small girl who was coming down the  
road.

She then gave Henry a note. Read  
to the boys, it caused great excitement,  
laughter and hilarity. After a minute  
but rapid examination of their weapons,  
they ran down to the valley.

What was going on in your mind at certain points in that passage? When you first read *bow*, *read* and *minute*, you probably mis-read them. You probably used *arrows* as a clue as to how *bow* was to be read then when you read on, you realized it didn't make sense and you automatically adjusted it in your mind.

If so, well done! That is just what good readers do. Try to become conscious of your reading behaviour and you will realise that you do this often.

### Implications of this for helping your student

When your student is reading to you and makes a mistake:

- If it makes sense, ignore it and let them read on.
- If it does not make sense, let them read on a little to give them time to work it out for themselves.
- If they read on and ignore it, stop them and ask: *Does that make sense? If it doesn't - what letter does it start with and what word starting with that letter would make sense there?*
- Of course, there are times when you will simply have to tell them what the word is.
- Encourage them always to monitor their own reading in terms of:  
*Does it sound right and does it make sense?*



# The adult learner

## Who is this section for?

Adult literacy programs usually define an adult as anyone who has left school. Even if your student has left school earlier than the legal age, or is at TAFE or other vocational training, they will want the world to treat them as adults, and that is the important consideration.

This section is important for anyone helping such students to learn to read and write.

## Adult learning

There are a number of aspects of the learning process for adults which are different from the learning process for children. It is important that we don't set up an inappropriate learning situation or environment for our adult students. This can easily happen if the learning environment we set up is modelled on the one we remember from our education as a child.

Some of the important points to remember are:

### Self direction

One of the qualities which differentiate adults from children is their need to perceive themselves and to be perceived by others as being self directed. Learning will be enhanced when our students are treated as self directing, responsible people who are encouraged to take an active role in decision making and planning their learning program.

Our students need to be consulted in setting goals (*Do you need to work on the reading and writing for work first, or shopping, or ... or ... ?*) and deciding on reading material (*Which of these stories in the paper interests you most?*). We need to seek their feedback on the learning strategies which we choose.

Our students can only do this however, if we explain to them the reason for the learning activities. Each of the activities in this resource has an aim which is expressed simply, and some background information which you should discuss with your student. Remind them that you won't be their learning helper forever. Your role is to help them develop some strategies to help themselves to learn. Think of yourself not as a teacher but as a learning facilitator.



However, many tutors find that initially, their students are unwilling to take this self directing role. This is probably because they are modelling their learning situation on what they remember of school. They expect you to be in the teacher role and to tell them what to do. Initially you may have to respect this, but it is in the student's best interests if you slowly move them to the position of taking more responsibility for their learning.

### **Help your student to:**

- set their own goals
- evaluate their progress
- give feedback on the usefulness of teaching/learning activities.

## **The role of experience**

Adults have a rich reservoir of experience to draw on in a new learning situation. There are several points here. One is that this reservoir of experience is an invaluable resource to draw on in the learning situation. For example, if we are reading about a topic we are familiar with, the process of reading is easier.

If adults can link new learning to something they already know about, the learning is more effective. Any learning not directly related to past experience is slower. This is true of any learning, but we tend to think of child learning largely as making marks on a blank slate. Adults are not blank slates. As 'learning facilitators' we must find ways of making links to the marks that are already there whenever possible. For example, when learning to spell or read a new word, try to link it to one your student already knows.

The final point is related to our self concept. Malcolm Knowles (1973), one of the best known writers in the field of adult learning, puts it this way:

*Because an adult defines himself [sic] largely by his experience, he has a deep investment in its value. And so, when he finds himself in a situation in which his experience is not being used, or its worth minimized, it is not just his experience that is being rejected, he feels rejected as a person.*

- Talk with your student about their life and experiences and show you are interested.
- Use their experiences and interests as a guide to choosing topics for reading and writing.
- Whenever possible, try to link new learning to something they already know about.

## Immediate needs

Many people decide to learn to read and write or improve their reading and writing when they are adults, in response to some critical event in their lives. Your student may have just been offered a promotion at work, or may have been made redundant and is looking for a new job, or their child has begun to ask them to read books to them.



Such points in our lives are times of high motivation. If we take advantage of these learning needs, progress is likely to be enhanced. Adult learners are learners in a hurry, so we need to start working on their immediate needs. Even if your student is a beginner reader and writer but needs to reply to some formal business letters, you can start there, by providing them with some model letters which they can copy to meet their immediate needs. You can then use those pieces of writing to teach them about sounds and letters, spelling etc. That learning is likely to be more effective than if you start with 'the basics' and tell them you will get to the business letters in six or twelve months time.

- Find out what your student needs to use reading and writing skills for now, and start to work on that.

## Relaxed learning environment

As adults, our response to anxiety is negative. Extra stress from the learning situation causes a slowing down of learning. Most of us enter a learning situation in a state of stress or anxiety and any further stress can lead to lower performance. You don't need to 'push' your student as they will bring their own motivation. Encouragement and praise will help much more.

- Avoid putting your student in a testing situation.
- Warmth ... encouragement ... praise.

## The importance of success

Because adult learners are usually voluntary learners, we can (and do) choose not to continue if we feel we are wasting our time. Early success is important.

This is particularly so for adult literacy students. Your student probably has few, if any, memories of successful formal learning situations. Adult literacy students are, almost by definition, failed learners at school (with the exception of some non-English speaking background learners). Your student is undoubtedly entering this learning situation with a fear of failing yet again. You need to ensure that your student experiences some success from the beginning, but you will need to manage the learning situation so that the success is genuine. Adults know when false praise is being heaped on them.

- Give activities which ensure success, so that you can give frequent and genuine praise and encouragement.

## Physical aspects

There are a number of physical aspects to being an adult which also affect the learning process.

### The negatives

- Eyesight starts to decline noticeably after about 40 years. If your student hasn't been a reader and has had no other need to do close work, they may not know that their eyesight needs attention - possibly glasses - before they can read comfortably.
- Hearing starts to decline steadily from about 10 years. Make sure you are sitting so that your student can hear you comfortably.
- Our short term memory begins to decline so we need plenty of review activities to make sure the learning goes into long term memory. We also need greater time for reflection after learning activities to reinforce learning. We remember something best if we draw it back to memory often after the initial learning activity.



For this reason, you need to encourage your student to do some 'homework' every night if possible. This might just be looking over spelling words, or new sight words, or 'having a go' at reading the newspaper, or writing a few lines in a diary. If they only open their books once a week when they are with you, they will most surely forget whatever they learnt last week. They will experience failure once again and become frustrated. We forget most in the first 24 hours, and particularly the first hour, after the initial learning, so reviewing or practising what they have learnt very soon after the session with you is very important.

- Encourage your student to do some homework or look over their work several times during the week.
- Give them plenty of opportunity to go over, or review, new learning.

- Adult literacy students who are successful are those who practise at home between tutoring sessions!

### **The positives**

However, ageing is not all negative! There are some positive aspects to maturity which compensate for declining eyesight and short term memory etc.

- The role which experience plays is a powerful one.
- Motivation is likely to be high. Many, many adult literacy students say:  
*If only I had known when I was at school what I know now ...*
- Also, verbal ability usually increases with age.

## Assessing student's needs and progress

### Who is this section for?

Any adult literacy tutoring program must start with an informal needs assessment, so this section is for anyone who is helping another person with their reading and writing skills.

Because all adult literacy students have different reading and writing needs and different skill areas that need to be worked on, every student needs a different learning program. There is no one program that suits everyone. For this reason, an assessment is crucial so that you are not wasting your student's time with something that they are not interested in, or don't need to read or write, or can do anyway.

### The initial assessment

Before you can begin to help your student, you need to find out:

- what they want and need to be able to read and write
- what they can read and write now
- what their literacy strengths are
- what skills need to be worked on
- why they haven't learnt to read and write as well as they would like.

If your student has come to you from an adult literacy coordinator, this assessment will have been done already. If not, then you need to work through these questions with your student. There are some forms at the end of this section to help you record some of the information.

- Remember, this is an informal assessment. You are not testing your student. You are trying to elicit information in an informal conversation that is focused around a number of issues.
- The assessment should be done in your first session, but may continue over two or three or more sessions in order to get a complete picture. In fact, assessment is an ongoing aspect of your tutoring. The needs which your student is able to articulate on the first occasion may change. Their skills will almost definitely be better than they suggest to you initially.
- This will be a time of high anxiety for your student. It will help if you acknowledge the stress. Many of our students say this is the most difficult thing they have done in their lives.

Spend the first part of the session just talking. Don't ask them to read or write anything until you have had a chat and they feel a little more at ease. Many students welcome the opportunity to tell 'their story'; the reason why they can't read and write as well as they would like.

- You are assessing not only your student's needs but also their strengths. Try to make them feel good about what they can do.

## 1. Student background

It is important that you know something of the student's schooling and family background as this often explains why they didn't learn to read and write as well as they would like. Many students say *I have got this dyslexia* or *I think I'm just dumb*. But when you start to talk to them you discover that they had five different schools before they were 9 ... or spent most of second class in hospital ... or had undiagnosed deafness until they were 12 ... etc. Just being able to talk about that is often liberating for many students.

### Examples of background information you will need to know:

- **Non-English speaking background?**

What is their first language? Script ?

How did they learn to speak English?

Language usually spoken at home?

Years of schooling?

Post-secondary study or qualifications?

English language classes since arrival in Australia?



- **Schooling background**

How many schools?

Any lengthy absences?

Age left school and grade reached?

How did they feel about school?

Any ideas why they didn't learn as well as they might at school?

- **Health issues**

As a child or now?

Medication which may affect learning - as a child or now?

Eyesight?

Hearing?

- **Current personal details**

Occupation? Interests?

Family details - Children? Ages?

Remember, this is not a formal interview. Just keep these questions in mind to structure your conversation with your student over a number of weeks.

## 2. Goals and Needs

Very few (if any) of our students come along 'just to learn to read and write'. They want to learn to read and write in order to do something and you need to find out what this is. Some students may not know how to express their needs, and you will need to prod a little by asking questions about their lives and the reading and writing aspects of the daily tasks that they find difficult. Or ask them what things that they can't do now that they would like to do when they can read and write better.

It is really important that you help your student to establish short term and long term goals. Just learning to read and write is a lifetime task. It needs to be broken down to achievable chunks to give feelings of success. For example, a student's long term goal might be *to get a promotion at work*, but some short term goals related to this might be *to learn to spell 10 work related words and write a change of shift report properly* in one month.

Most long term goals can be broken down to several short term goals. You also need to work out what reading and writing skills you need to work on in order to achieve those goals. For the student who wants to get a promotion at work, the goals and skills involved might look something like this:

Long term goals	Short term goals	Reading/writing skills needed
<b>Get a promotion</b>	1. Write an end of shift report properly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spell key words</li> <li>• Use appropriate format</li> </ul>
	2. Write an accident report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spell key words</li> <li>• Use appropriate format</li> <li>• Develop proofreading and editing skills</li> </ul>
	3. Read safety information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise key words</li> <li>• Develop reading skills of prediction using context clues</li> </ul>
	4. Read other notices in workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise key words</li> <li>• Develop reading skills of prediction using context clues</li> </ul>
	5. Write meeting minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spell key words</li> <li>• Use appropriate format</li> <li>• Develop proofreading and editing skills</li> </ul>

At the end of this section is a form which you might like to use to record your student's goals, and another example of a student's short term and long term goals. This is something you work on together, and revisit every few months.

## 3. Interests

It is also important to know what your student's interests are, not only so that you know what things they would like to read and write about, but so you know a little more about them and show an interest in them as a person. This can sometimes be



difficult as many students don't know what to answer when you ask them what they are interested in. If you haven't been a reader, you don't know what you would be interested in reading. To ask them what sorts of things they watch on television can sometimes help.

#### 4. What can your student read and write?



Before you ask your student to read anything for you, ask them what sorts of things they can read. You then avoid putting them in the situation of asking them to read something which is far too difficult.

When you ask them to write something for you, start with their name and address. If they can manage that, ask if they could have a go at writing a few sentences about them self, perhaps about the kinds of things you have been talking about. Tell them not to worry about the spelling - just have a guess at it because you need to know what sort of mistakes they make in order to help them. And it is best to walk away while they do this. None of us likes writing while someone is looking over our shoulder.

Some students are very phobic about writing. It may be necessary to leave the writing until the next session.

Ticking off items which your student can read and write on the reading and writing checklist included at the end of this section. It is often a good confidence booster. Go through this with them before you ask them to read and write anything.

You should prepare yourself with a range of reading samples, ranging from images of signs and labels; a brief note such as you might leave for a tradesperson; advertising notices which come as junk mail and the newspaper or magazines. Always ask your student first *Do you think you could read this?* and start with pieces that are just a little bit easier than you think they can manage.

When your student has read a passage for you, ask if they can tell you what they've just read. Many students can read the words well enough, but don't really take in what they have read. Knowing this is an important part of the assessment.

#### 5. Why is your student having problems?

While your student is reading, take notice of the kinds of mistakes they make. Do they try to 'sound out' the difficult words? And if so, do they seem to know the sounds, even though it might not help with the word? Do they make incorrect guesses which result in nonsense? Do they seem to be monitoring their reading in terms of *Does it make sense?* or do they make mistakes and keep reading on, even though they have just read nonsense?

It may take some time to get a real picture of your student's reading strategies, but it is important information to help you choose appropriate learning activities. Below are some examples of appropriate activities to address particular problems:

Problem	Try this:
Does your student try to 'sound out' the difficult words without trying to predict what word might fit?	<p><b>The beginner reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language experience</li> <li>• Cloze</li> </ul> <p><b>The intermediate reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloze</li> <li>• Scan, question, read</li> <li>• Directed reading/thinking</li> </ul>
Does your student read nonsense and not monitor their reading in terms of <i>Does it make sense?</i>	<p><b>The beginner reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language experience</li> <li>• Cloze</li> </ul> <p><b>The intermediate reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloze</li> <li>• Scan, question, read</li> <li>• Directed reading/thinking</li> </ul>
Does your student make wild guesses and ignore the letter/sound clues?	<p><b>The intermediate reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster analysis</li> </ul>
Does your student read slowly, hesitantly and word-by-word?	<p><b>The beginner reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language experience</li> </ul> <p><b>The intermediate reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read-along</li> <li>• Repeated reading</li> <li>• 100 words per minute</li> </ul>
Does your student read something and not understand or remember what they have read?	<p><b>The intermediate reader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan, question, read</li> <li>• Directed reading/thinking</li> <li>• Mind mapping</li> </ul>

## The reading/writing checklist

At the end of this section there is a blank reading checklist and a writing checklist. You might find these useful to focus your discussion about goals at the first session. They are not exhaustive lists, but some suggestions to get you both thinking of the tasks that are relevant to your student's life. Turn over the page and add more if you need to.

Tick off all the things your student can do, and then date one or a few of the things you are going to begin working on. Then date it again in the next column when they feel reasonably happy with them. Then find something else to start on.

## Reassessment

Every two or three months you should set aside some time for a *How are we going?* session when you help your student assess their progress and set new goals. Ask yourselves questions such as *Have we achieved this goal? ... If not, was it too ambitious or has it turned out to be unimportant after all? ... What has given most satisfaction? ... What has given most frustration? ... Why was this easy to learn?... Why was this difficult? ... What next?*

It is important also that you focus on how your student feels about their progress. Most students say they begin to feel more confident about their skills long before they have actually reached their goals. The first indication that progress is being made is often just a 'lifting of the chin' and it has long been argued that this self-confidence is the foundation on which progress in the skills is made (Jones & Charnley 1978; Brennan, Clark & Dymock 1989).

## The student file

At your first session you should establish a student file. This should contain the reading samples and pieces of writing which your student does at the initial assessment and at each reassessment time. It should also contain the Reading and writing checklist and Goal sheet.

It is really important that you keep evidence of your student's progress as there will undoubtedly be periods when they feel that no progress is happening at all; when they hit a plateau. It is useful at these times to be able to demonstrate what progress has been made.

## Lesson records

Make sure you keep a brief record of what you do each lesson, and keep this in the student file also. Ideally, the student should write this themselves, but they will probably need your help to know what to write at first. Encourage them to reflect and record how they felt about it also. It might just be *This was hard. ... This was confusing ... I enjoyed this...* or *... This was useful.* This kind of feedback is important for you to know but it is important also that the student is encouraged to reflect on their learning and feels that you value and respect their responses. Reflection is a very significant part of learning.

## Short and long term goals (example)

What are my goals?	What steps do I need to take to reach my goals?	What reading and writing skills do I need to work on to reach my short term goals?	Date when started	Date when OK
1. Get my forklift driver's license.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get a copy of the manual.</li> <li>• Get Alison to read it onto tape for me.</li> <li>• Learn the information.</li>   <li>• Learn how to answer the test questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn to recognise the key words.</li> <li>• Learn how to understand and remember information.</li>   <li>• Learn to understand the question format.</li> <li>• Recognise the key words in possible questions.</li> </ul>		
2. Get a job as a fork lift driver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a CV.</li> <li>• Read job ads.</li> <li>• Write application letter or application form.</li> <li>• Practise answering interview questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study models of other CVs to work out possible format.</li> <li>• Study models of application letters to work out possible format.</li> <li>• Learn basic computer word processing skills so I can type CV and letters (with help).</li> <li>• Learn spelling of key words.</li> <li>• Learn to recognise and understand key words in ads.</li> <li>• Learn to scan job ad pages for fork lift driver jobs.</li> </ul>		

## Short and long term goals

What are my goals?	What steps do I need to take to reach my goals?	What reading and writing skills do I need to work on to reach my short term goals?	Date when started	Date when OK

## Reading checklist

√ if happy with		Date when started to work on	Date when OK but still need more practice
	<b>Name and address</b>		
	<b>Family names</b>		
	<b>Shopping</b> Shop signs and directions		
	Labels		
	<b>Forms</b> Medicare		
	Centrelink		
	Others?		
	<b>Letters</b> Personal		
	Business		
	<b>Notes</b> From family/friends		
	From school		
	<b>Newsletters</b> From school		
	From club or organisation		
	<b>Driving</b> Driver's license manual		
	Road signs		
	Street directory		
	<b>Instructions</b> Food packages		
	Cleaning products		
	Gardening products		
	Do-it-yourself kits		
	<b>Recipes</b>		
	<b>Telephone Book</b>		
	<b>TV Guide</b>		
	<b>Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)</b>		
	<b>Mobile Phone</b> Text messages		
	<b>Work</b> Instructions		
	Safety information		
	Messages		
	Standard operating procedures		
	<b>Meeting minutes etc</b>		
	<b>For a course</b>		
	<b>Newspapers</b>		
	<b>Magazines</b>		
	<b>Novels</b>		
	<b>Non-fiction</b>		
	<b>Computer</b> Email		
	Internet		
	<b>Other?</b>		

