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What is involved in moving from Level 3 to Level 4 in reading?

→ Securing progress through Level 3

The National Curriculum attainment target defines Level 3 reading in the following terms:

Level 3

Pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately. They read independently, using strategies appropriately to establish meaning. In responding to fiction and non-fiction they show understanding of the main points and express preferences. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information.

The Level 3 reader has a secure foothold on the mechanics of reading, and can cope with texts containing everyday words, clear sentences and familiar content. They are comfortable, for example, with school books written specially for their age group. They will be able to read independently, though some readers will be slower than others.

The key difference between a reader at Level 3 and a reader at Level 4 is between literal reading and reading between the lines. This comes about because as the Level 3 reader becomes competent in the mechanics of reading, they find they have spare mental capacity to devote to imaginative response. As long as the text does not trip them up too often on complex vocabulary and taxing sentence structures, they begin to engage with implied as well as explicit meanings.

Imaginative participation is core to the continued development of Level 3 readers into Level 4. The task for the teacher is to develop their capacity to interact with the text, animating the words in their minds so that they create a virtual world in which the events or information are played out. Our quest is to create active readers, who see images as the text unfolds in their imagination; who ask questions (Why is she doing that? What's going on here? What will happen next?); who make judgements; who compare the textual experience with their own life experiences; who empathise and sympathise; and who reread and revise their opinions. The advanced Level 3 reader becomes increasingly engaged and involved in what they read. If we could listen in to their reading consciousness, we would hear a mental rehearsal of the text. And over time it becomes fuller and more sophisticated.



The Level 3 reader is still grappling with the mechanics of reading, of course, but has a growing repertoire of skills to help them through. They have sight vocabulary, reading experience, skills and strategies to support them. Much of their success in reading depends on their ability to increase this repertoire and make it work for more complex texts. They have to be equipped to deal with words that are unfamiliar or irregular, and able to scan longer and more complex sentences.

One of the main reasons that pupils get stuck at this level is that teachers leave off teaching them because they have attained a certain amount of independence in their reading. And for some pupils this does work. They generalise from their experience. Thoughtful provision of texts leads them in careful steps to the next stage. But it is reasonably safe to assume that if they reach secondary schools still at Level 3, this method has already failed. Something more is needed. It is teaching. This does not mean abandoning independent reading; rather, it means doing both. That is what this scheme attempts to do: to combine teaching with texts.

To summarise, the progress of pupils over Level 3 is principally about developing their imaginative response to texts, and securing their confidence in tackling longer and more complex reading texts.

→ Progressing to Level 4

Level 4 is what we expect most young people to be achieving when they leave primary school and arrive at secondary school at age 11. It is a particularly fitting expectation, for it represents the reading competences pupils need if they are to access the secondary curriculum and get the most out of it. It is also the level at which private reading can be rewarding and self-sustaining. Luckily, Level 4 in reading is one of the clearest and easiest of the reading levels to identify and teach.

- **In the early stages of Level 4**, readers start to move out of the comfort zone of literal texts. They attend to the sense of what they are reading, and this becomes their prime motivation to read. A sure sign is that they have an ear for errors. They do not accept nonsense from themselves when they read, but go back and self-correct.

Not only do they see images of the events as they unfold in the text, identify with characters and anticipate what will happen next, they take a giant stride forward when they allow themselves to move beyond the literal events of the text to read between the lines. They accept and respond to the text as it is given by the author, but they begin to fill in gaps, make inferences, draw conclusions and deduce the likely and desirable progress of the text.



→ **The developing Level 4 reader** has understood that the reading experience is a sort of contract between the writer and the reader to play an imaginative game within guidelines set by the writer and filled out by the reader. The reader accepts the yoke of the given text in return for space to let their imaginations roam within it. Typically, they will begin to feel that they know the characters, can predict how they will behave, and harbour hopes and fears for them. They will compare events with those in their own lives. Reading has become a personal experience, a sort of mental sport, a virtual reality, a sedentary form of active participation. Its close rivals are the computer game and peer gossip.

The teaching task is delightful: it is to encourage and stimulate active participation in the reading process. It opens up the opportunity for creative and imaginative teaching. It means encouraging pupils to envisage what is presented in the text, perhaps in drawing. It means asking pupils to predict how the story will develop, and find evidence for their views. It may mean evaluating characters and guessing at their motivation. It involves detective work and investigative approaches. Mostly, it means working from evidence to understand what lies behind the words and action in the text. The work can truthfully be sold to pupils as the development of problem-solving skills, with the bonus of respect for individual interpretation and insight.

Some Level 4 readers are still slow, but they have a grip on meaning. When they read aloud, you can tell they understand the basic action of the sentence. Their hesitations are not stumped silences; they are pauses in which they are thinking and deploying problem-solving strategies. These pauses are a good sign of self-help. One of the key teaching messages for this stage is not to jump in to help too quickly when such pauses occur, but rather to allow time and encourage this process to take place. Their hesitations will reduce in length as their skills become more practised.

→ **The established Level 4 reader** becomes more enquiring and acquires a critical edge. Involvement turns into engagement. The head as well as the heart is engaged, and the intellect becomes more active. Not only does the developing reader animate the text, but they begin to ask critical questions, look for patterns, recognise literary effects and read between the lines. The use of inference and deduction leads them to recognise implied, subtle and even symbolic meanings, and they acquire an ear for tone and irony. They become aware of themes and morals in the text.

The acquisition of inference and deduction is the defining moment of Level 4 and will propel pupils into Level 5, where they will recognise (and study) the text as an artefact created by a writer and comparable with others. It is the beginning of literary criticism.



Curiously, greater mental engagement in the text sometimes means a drawing away from external interference such as reading aloud, interruptions and talking to teachers. Readers are sometimes occupied by their own thoughts as they enact the book in their imaginations, and this can present itself as withdrawal. It is a period when the teacher needs to leave a little space around the reader to enjoy and engage in text before rushing them into follow-on activities and intrusive questions. As a rule of thumb, questioning should follow the grain of the reading experience, interrogating readers' responses, thoughts, feelings and emergent reactions to texts. Reading journals, open questions and sharing of responses will be important approaches at this time.

Over time, readers at Level 4 develop a certain amount of stamina, fluency and a feeling of competence in reading longer texts such as stories and novels. They become more sure-footed and independent in their management of the reading process. They are happy to read privately and understand that it requires mental investment and imaginative effort, though there is a lot of evidence that this last realisation arrives more readily and earlier with girls. Feminine values of empathy and personal involvement may be in play, fuelled by the strong cultural premium on psychological realism in fiction.

Some of the problems relating to stamina, fluency and confidence are eased in reading non-fiction. Because much non-fiction comes packaged in shorter bites of text, and depends less on sequential reading, it does allow for readers with less stamina. It also appeals to those readers who shy away from the practice of empathy and personal identification. It should not surprise us, therefore, that more boys prefer non-fiction. The type of access it demands fits more readily into masculine paradigms. This is not a coy way of saying that non-fiction is easier – it is not – but it does treat literacy as a tool rather than an indulgence, and offers textual participation without emotional risk.

The task in teaching non-fiction is to develop active reading in much the same way it is developed in reading fiction. Rather than passively churning through information, the Level 4 reader is beginning to pick out significant points and record them for later use. They also become aware of the rhetoric of the writer influencing them as readers. This is the stage at which teachers should sensitise pupils to the difference between fact and opinion, even if it is a subtle difference.

Purposeful reading is the key. In the secondary curriculum most pupils depend on print for research, study and revision. Finding, selecting and recording significant points has to be a main feature of teaching non-fiction at this level.

In short, the Level 4 reader has reached a particularly important staging point in their development, reaching beyond the literal to infer and deduce meaning, and becoming more aware of text as manipulation.

TEST 2

The Money Pit of Oak Island



Oak Island is a tiny island off the coast of Canada that has become famous for treasure that is said to be buried on it. Legend has it that the pirate Captain Kidd buried a treasure chest deep down in a pit for safe keeping during the 1600s. This was not unusual: many pirates hid their stolen coins and gold in pits and caves, where they could dig it up at a later date.

The island became famous in 1795, when three teenagers came across a dip in the ground covered by thick branches, which gave way to a deep tunnel. At first they tried to dig down into it, but just 2 feet under the ground they hit flagstones, and below the flagstones was a pit. At 10 feet, they found a wooden platform made of oak, and at 25 feet they gave up because they couldn't believe anyone would leave treasure that deep.

Extract continues on the next page.



But, in 1802, a man named Simeon Linds reopened the pit and began to dig deeper. At 30 feet he found another oak platform; and, at 90 feet, a stone with strange markings on it, perhaps a message written in code.

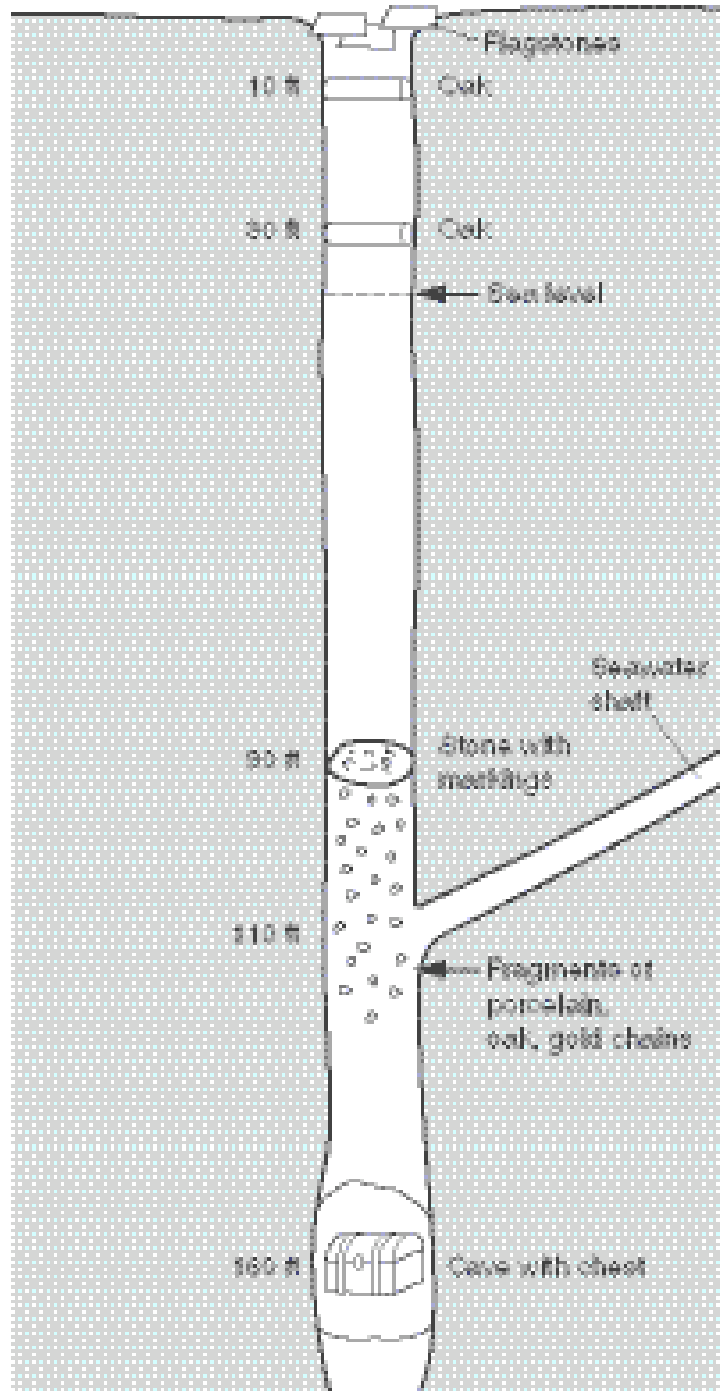
Next morning he returned to the pit, ready and excited for the next phase of the dig, only to find that it was flooded in 60 feet of water. He was forced to give up. The stone was mysteriously lost, and only a paper copy of the markings has survived, so there is no way of knowing if it is genuine. Some people say it is a hoax.

Almost 50 years later, another team tried to delve deeper. They sank drills into the pit, and brought up splinters of oak, clay and gold chains. They noticed that the water was salty, and deduced that a shaft ran between the sea and the pit so that it filled with water. Indeed, they found the end of the shaft under the sea in a nearby cove. They assumed that this was a crafty booby trap to stop thieves stealing the pirate gold at the bottom of the pit. The task of blocking off the seawater shaft promised to be difficult, and the team ran out of money before it was complete. They too gave up.

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The Money Pit of Oak Island



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Between 1851 and 1965 a number of attempts were made to block off the seawater shaft to allow miners to dig deeper into the pit. They used cranes, pumps and even dynamite to blast their way down to the hoped-for treasure, but none of them succeeded and they all ran out of money. Five men lost their lives during this period, and the only things they found were fragments of porcelain.

The pit is now owned by a company called Triton, but it has had no luck. However, it has sunk a tiny camera down a borehole into what seems like a cave below the surface. Although the image was blurred, it seemed to show chests and a human hand in the cave. In 1995, Triton surveyed the island with special equipment and described the results as 'not discouraging'. Meanwhile, nothing has been done to excavate the pit safely.

George Bates, a Canadian surveyor, says that it is probably true that pirates built the pit, but only so they could drain away seawater so pirate ships could come into a 'dry dock' for repairs. The seawater shaft is actually a drain, he reckons. William Crooker, an expert on the pit, wonders if it is just an ammunitions dump built by military engineers a few years before the boys first found the pit. Others say that the pit is just a pit, that the island is riddled with mines, tunnels and cave systems, and that the story is just a local legend with no factual basis. No one knows for sure.



Questions

About the text

- 1 What text type is this piece of writing? Point to features of the language that confirm your view.
- 2 Sum up the 3 main pieces of evidence that the pit on Oak Island does indeed contain buried treasure and 3 main arguments against that idea.
- 3 Is the writer giving you a personal opinion or balanced view? How do you know?

Other questions

- 4
 - Explain the meaning of the term *metaphor*.
 - What is the correct term to describe a vowel sound in one word which is echoed in another for effect?
 - Which of these is the correct spelling?
onomatopoeia onomotopia onomatopeia
- 5 Comment on the qualities of the following words from the text:
 - *safe keeping*
 - *blast*
 - *riddled*
- 6 Name 4 different genres of story.
- 7 Explain what is meant by the *moral* of a story.

Test 2: Mark scheme

Question 1: What text type is this piece of writing? Point to features of the language that confirm your view. (3 marks)

- Give 1 mark for identifying this as informative or discursive writing, then 1 mark each for any two points such as:
 - it is impersonal, avoiding the first person *I*
 - it keeps to facts and points to evidence; opinions are clearly identified as such
 - it avoids emotion, and doesn't dramatise or exaggerate
 - it starts with exposition of the issue, then works chronologically through the attempt to excavate the pit

Question 2: Sum up the 3 main pieces of evidence that the pit on Oak Island does indeed contain buried treasure and 3 main arguments against that idea. (3 marks)

- Give a half-mark for each point that recognises circumstantial evidence, such as:
 - For**
 - pirates certainly did leave gold in such pits
 - fragments of gold chain and porcelain have been brought out of the pit
 - a video camera image seems to show chests, which is what you would expect
 - there has been an attempt to protect the content of the pit by making it deep and with a flooding mechanism which could be a deterrent to thieves
 - Against**
 - no treasure has actually been found
 - no-one would bury gold in an inaccessible pit; it would be pointless
 - it could just as easily be an ammunition dump or a dry-dock pump
 - there is no historical evidence linking pirate gold to Oak Island

Question 3: Is the writer giving you a personal opinion or balanced view? How do you know? (4 marks)

- Give 1 mark for recognising any of the following points, and for quoting any of the writer's cautious, conditional individual wording:
 - the writer gives a balanced or objective view rather than taking sides
 - the writer reports views that support *and* contradict the theory, e.g. the fact that the inscribed stone may have been a hoax
 - the writer clearly labels the story as *a legend* and *no one knows for sure*
 - the wording is cautious — e.g. *it is said that, probably, hoped-for treasure, he reckons, others say* — and it is not claimed as the truth

Add up the marks out of 10 for Questions 1–3.

This is the score for **Section D: Using Information.**



Question 4

- Explain the meaning of the term *metaphor*. (1 mark)

1 mark for defining metaphor, e.g. when one thing is described in terms of another

- What is the correct term to describe a vowel sound in one word which is echoed in another for effect? (1 mark)

1 mark for recognising the definition of assonance

- Which of these is the correct spelling: *onomatopoeia*, *onomotopia*, *onomatopeia*? (1 mark)

1 mark for recognising the first word as the correct spelling of *onomatopoeia*

Question 5: Comment on the qualities of the following words from the text (3 marks)

- *safe keeping* — note the compound word (*keeping* + *safe*) and that *safe* in this context means ‘secure’
- *blast* — note the use of onomatopoeia
- *riddled* — note the sense of the land being eaten away by tunnels, like an infestation or disease

Question 6: Name 4 different genres of story. (2 marks)

- Half-mark each for 4 valid genres, such as horror, crime, adventure, romance, thriller

Question 7: Explain what is meant by the moral of a story. (2 marks)

- 2 marks for understanding that the moral of the story is its message.

Add up the marks out of 10 for Questions 4–7.

This is the score for **Section E: The Critical Reader**.

Target cards

<p>A1 Reading targets: Review your own reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To review your reading habits ● To review what you find easy and hard about reading ● To review how well you cope with reading problems 	<p>A2 Reading targets: Keep a log</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To keep track of the plot ● To remember the characters ● To use a log to get you thinking 	<p>A3 Reading targets: Help yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To help yourself when a text becomes difficult ● To work out what a word means if you don't know it ● To catch the meaning of a hard text
<p>B4 Reading targets: Visualise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To see characters ● To imagine settings ● To respond to images 	<p>B5 Reading targets: Think as you go</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To think as you read ● To think ahead as you read ● To think back as you read 	<p>B6 Reading targets: Get involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To imagine how characters feel ● To feel for the characters ● To make links between the text and your own life
<p>C7 Reading targets: Read between the lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To understand the difference between explicit and implicit meaning ● To use hints and clues to draw conclusions ● To check your hunches 	<p>C8 Reading targets: Get the gist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To identify the gist of a piece of writing ● To summarise a piece of writing ● To edit down a piece of writing 	<p>C9 Reading targets: Tune in to older texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To recognise how language has changed over time ● To get a feel for older language ● To take account of historical context
<p>D10 Reading targets: Know your text types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To know the different genres of fiction ● To know the different types of non-fiction ● To recognise the language used in different genres and text types 	<p>D11 Reading targets: Choose and use information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To select relevant information quickly ● To record what is useful to you ● To present information in your own words 	<p>D12 Reading targets: Consider the facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To recognise the difference between fact and opinion ● To consider how far you can trust the facts ● To recognise when you are being influenced
<p>E13 Reading targets: Know your terms and how to use them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To know the key terms about reading ● To use key terms in context ● To know the spellings of key terms 	<p>E14 Reading targets: Spot the writer making choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To spot when writers choose words for effect ● To see how writers compose sentences for effect ● To see how writers choose details for effect 	<p>E15 Reading targets: Get the point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To recognise the theme of a text ● To understand the significance of the ending ● To recognise the writer's point or purpose



Teaching plans for the Pupil's Book

The five sections of the Pupil's Book constitute approximately 6 hours of teaching each, though the pace of delivery is flexible. Although the Pupil's Book is aimed at pupils at Levels 3 and 4, it does cover a number of objectives for the current year. These are listed below.

A The Reading Experience

Aims of this unit of work

- To help pupils to review their own reading patterns, habits, strengths and weaknesses
- To show pupils how to use a reading log to record the characters and the plot and to develop their own imaginative response to the text
- To develop pupils' ability to help themselves when faced with a challenging text, unfamiliar vocabulary or difficult language

Objectives addressed (by year)

Year 7 objectives	Year 8 objectives	Year 9 objectives
Wd16 Unfamiliar words	Wd7b Unfamiliar words	R13 Evaluate own reading
R4 Note-making	R3 Note-making formats	Wr2 Exploratory writing
R6 Active reading	R4 Versatile reading	Wr17 Cite textual evidence
R8 Infer and deduce	R12 Independent reading	
R17 Independent reading	Wr3 Writing to reflect	
Wr3 Exploratory writing		
Wr19 Reflective writing		

Delivery

The unit is organised in three masterclasses of around 2 hours each:

Masterclass 1: Review your own reading

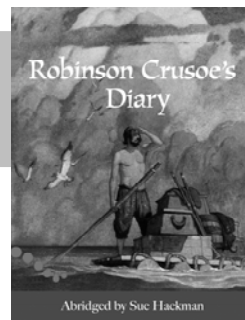
Masterclass 2: Keep a log

Masterclass 3: Help yourself

Total: 6 hours

2 Robinson Crusoe's Diary

by Daniel Defoe



Synopsis

Robinson Crusoe, an 18th-century sailor, is shipwrecked on a desert island and is forced to survive alone using his wits and the few resources he has with him. His diary covers the first nine months of his solitude and it chronicles his struggle for survival. In this period, he salvages goods from the broken wreck of the ship, and learns to kill wild animals for meat. He equips himself with shelter, cereal, light and tools. The island is subject to extreme temperatures, and during this period the narrator experiences an earthquake and a hurricane. He is vulnerable to low spirits, illness and fear. Worst of all, his faith in God is lost, until a terrible fever brings him close to death.

This reading book follows up these masterclasses

- Masterclass 3: Help yourself
- Masterclass 5: Think as you go
- Masterclass 6: Get involved
- Masterclass 9: Tune in to older texts
- Masterclass 14: Spot the writer making choices

You will need

- Sheet 2.1: Reading instructions (pp.55–56)

Extension teaching points

- Pupils can be directed to other accessible sections of the novel from which this diary is taken. The shipwreck itself makes good reading, as do the events which follow immediately after the diary.
- Pupils can be directed to other desert island fiction:
 - *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
 - *Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann Wyss (translation, 1813)
 - *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson

Robinson Crusoe's Diary

Sheet 2.1

Reading instructions

Before you read

Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* when he was 60 years old. It tells the story of a man who is shipwrecked on a desert island and forced to spend many years alone before he is rescued. The novel is based on the true story of Alexander Selkirk, who spent five years alone on a desert island between 1704 and 1709. *Robinson Crusoe* has been described as the first proper novel ever written.

- Desert islands are common in stories. Can you think of others?
- If you found yourself alone on a desert island, what would you need to survive?

Read up to and including *January 3rd*

- Which of his needs does Robinson Crusoe look after first?
- Writers of the time did not explore the emotions in the way writers do today. What do you notice about the moments when the narrator tells you how he is feeling?
- The meaning of words shifts over time. What exactly is meant by the words *fly* (September 30th) and *kid* (October 31st) and *wanted* (November 18th)?
- Can you see other words which have changed meaning over time?
- A number of religious festivals such as Christmas fall in this period. Why does he not mention them?
- Why, for the first few months, does he not mention God at all, then on January 3rd he does? Can you explain this?

Read *April 16th*

- Discuss how the language is different from modern English.
- Explain the events of April 16th.