



Building Foundational Skills

Scaffolds and routines are used to support ELs in their development of code-related skills. These include decoding and word reading, (which include modeling of phonemic awareness and phonics routines), defining words and using gestures and visuals to make word meanings clear, and providing opportunities for additional practice in making sounds not present in their home language.

Guided Reading

Before reading

Post standards – By posting and reviewing standards, teachers make students aware of the knowledge and standards-based skills they are expected to master during a lesson. Standards for ELs include content standards as well as English proficiency standards. Scaffolds for ELs include glossaries for challenging vocabulary associated with the standards.

Use the title to introduce the text – Students are asked to infer what the text is about from the book, chapter, or section title. Scaffolds include definitions for target words in the title that might be challenging for ELs and visuals associated with the title if there any handy.

Create means to make something. The title of this passage is "Creating a Nation." What do you think the passage might be about?

Develop background knowledge – Before engaging with the text, students may need to acquire background information (e.g., US culture and history) to help them understand the text. The background information teachers provide should be applicable to the specific text being studied, rather than general information related to the text. The background information provided should neither be a summary of the text nor eliminate the need for a close reading of the text. For the text above, developing and making available to ELs a brief passage that described the relationship between England and the colonies at the time of King George III would be helpful. There are a variety of materials that can be used to develop background knowledge, including auxiliary texts; short video clips; and other types of visuals such as pictures, photos, maps, time lines, tables, and graphic organizers. Scaffolds for ELs that make background materials comprehensible include glossaries for challenging words and phrases, as well as sentence frames and starters to help ELs at lower levels of proficiency answer questions about the background materials. Methods for developing background knowledge that use visuals and graphic organizers support ELs' comprehension.

Have students read and listen to the passage in their home language. For struggling English readers, have students listen to the passage in English as they read along. Note: Wonders provides summaries in 14 languages.

Provide short selections and questions related to King George III, Parliament, the concept of representation (having representatives that are elected speak for the people), and taxes.

Provide a short selection and questions related to the problem-and-solution text structure, and provide a graphic organizer students can use to note problems and solutions as they read the text

During reading

Work with smaller chunks of text – To help ELs comprehend text, chunk it into smaller segments and engage students in multiple readings of each segment of the text, each for a different purpose. In this way, students will understand prior sections of text before they tackle new sections.

Engage in multiple readings of the same section of text – During the first reading, teachers might read the text aloud to model fluent reading while students listen and follow and/or read along. During this first reading, teachers can define challenging words and phrases. In a second reading, students might work in pairs to respond to questions inserted in the text, which are intended to help students uncover the meaning of the text. All students answer the same questions (e.g., King George III had a problem, what was it?). However, ELs with entering and emerging levels of English proficiency are given word banks, sentence starters, or sentence frames to help them respond to the questions. In a third optional reading, students can be given opportunities to annotate the text, identifying words that they still do not understand and/or parts of the text that they still find challenging. Following this annotation, the teacher can engage students in a discussion so they can help each other figure out word meanings and clarify challenging sections of the text.

King George III had a problem. What was the problem and how did he try to solve it?

1. King George III had a problem. What was it?

Advanced [no starters for frames]: King George III had a problem. What was it?

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Throughout reading

Support vocabulary development – Throughout the lessons, there are many opportunities for ELs to learn vocabulary. Words and phrases are selected for instruction based on three criteria: 1) importance for understanding the text, 2) frequency in texts across content areas, and 3) importance for acquiring the skills indexed by the language standards (e.g., learning about figurative language).

Scaffolds for ELs include comprehensible definitions for target words, examples familiar to students that illustrate word meanings, visuals to make word meanings clear, home language definitions for target words, opportunities for partner talk to give students practice using words, and additional opportunities for reinforcement through engaging activities like dramatization. A word-learning strategy particularly beneficial for ELs whose home language shares cognates with English is to draw on home language knowledge to understand words in English text that are cognates.

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