 Spelling, punctuation and comprehension

In the English K-10 syllabus for Years 7-10

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Implementing new curriculum – building capacity

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Welcome

Welcome to the Spelling, punctuation and comprehension in the English K-10 syllabus for years 7-10 resource.

This resource is designed to assist you to:

* understand how spelling strategies can be used to help ensure clear communication of meaning in writing
* understand how an appreciation of the English language can be developed through a focus on word origins
* understand the relationship between the use of complex punctuation and making meaning in texts
* understand comprehension strategies aimed to strengthen the reading skills of students in years 7-10.

Overview

This resource explores spelling, punctuation and comprehension in the English K-10 syllabus. It is organised into three main sections

The essentials – what do I need to know?

In this section you will be introduced to the new components of the English

K-10 syllabus in the areas of spelling, punctuation and comprehension through a consideration of the continuum of learning from Stage3 through to Stage 5.

Embedding the basics

* Spelling
* Punctuation
* Word origins
* Comprehension

This section contains strategies that may be used to embed the teaching of spelling, punctuation and comprehension in the context of studying texts and concepts in the English classroom. You will be shown some examples of how these strategies have been used by English teachers.

Professional reflection and discussion

This section contains resources to help you modify the scope and sequence of your existing Stage 4 or Stage 5 English programs to embed the spelling, punctuation and comprehension teaching strategies outlined in this resource.

Rationale

The purpose of this learning module is to build secondary teachers’ capacity to understand and appreciate essential content and text requirements that enable students to work towards course outcomes as specified in the English K-10 syllabus.

The essentials – what do I need to know?

Spelling, punctuation and comprehension are essential requirements for an effective engagement with language and literature. The English K-10 syllabus necessitates English teachers to engage explicitly with the teaching of these skills, enabling students to take their place as confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed and active participants in Australian society. These skills are embedded in the content of the English K-10 syllabus and are best taught in the context of studying texts and concepts relevant to a students’ developing world-view.

This section gives you an overview of the skills and knowledge required of students in the areas of spelling, punctuation and comprehension through a consideration of the continuum of learning from Stage 3 through to Stage 5 in the English K-10 syllabus.

Download

The following documents show stages 3-5 English syllabus outcomes relating to spelling, punctuation and comprehension in the form of a continuum of learning from Year 5 through to Year 10. Read through these continuums to familiarise yourself with the outcomes.

* [Stage 3-5 spelling continuum](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/cf2bd4bc-c188-4598-b339-9842378a9c3c/1/continuum_spelling.pdf)
* [Stage 3-5 punctuation continuum](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/b5dfc5fb-4a6e-4d18-be83-04b370144ef6/1/continuum_punctuation.pdf)
* [Stage 3-5 comprehension continuum](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/319c3215-3c43-4557-b507-dc1694f77efc/1/continuum_compreh.pdf)

Discuss

You may wish to download and use the following KWL documents[[1]](#footnote-1) as a means to: identify your understanding of the spelling, comprehension and punctuation outcomes; prioritise areas of focus for you and your students; and reflect on your professional learning as you explore this resource.

* [KWL spelling](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/f7f39193-0f3d-4f8c-8c83-a31944dc7ae0/1/KWL_spelling.doc)
* [KWL punctuation](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/f7f39193-0f3d-4f8c-8c83-a31944dc7ae0/1/KWL_punct.doc)
* [KWL comprehension](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/f7f39193-0f3d-4f8c-8c83-a31944dc7ae0/1/KWL_compreh.doc)

Embedding the essentials

This section contains strategies that may be used to embed the teaching of spelling, punctuation, word origins and comprehension in the context of studying texts and concepts in the English classroom. You will be shown some examples of how these strategies have been used by English teachers

Spelling

NSW Department of Education resources

* [Programming and strategies handbook](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/c29eccb1-925a-4408-b3fc-55902cf01018/1/Programming-strategies-handbook-primary.pdf) – spelling pp 89-118
* [Teaching spelling K-6](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/curr_support/literacy/sl_strategies/spellk6_whole.pdf)
* [Focus on literacy: spelling](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/curr_support/literacy/sl_strategies/focspell_whole.pdf)

Watch

Watch the video [Word study in action: spelling patterns](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpoMk-Ncv8o) to see how a primary teacher uses a variety of spelling strategies to help her students strengthen their spelling as a means to improve their written work. Consider the effectiveness of her approach and how it might be adapted for the 7-10 classroom.

Punctuation

Internet resource

The English K-10 syllabus requires teachers to strengthen students’ understanding of the relationship between complex punctuation and making meaning in texts. Years 7-10 English teachers are responsible for ensuring students have a solid understanding of the following: (Click on each of the terms for definitions / examples.)

* [Colons](http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/colons.asp)
* [Semicolons](http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/semicolons.asp)
* [Dashes](http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/dashes.asp)
* [Brackets](http://www.scribendi.com/advice/how_to_use_brackets_properly.en.html) (parenthesis) in formal and informal texts

Download

The file [English teaching resources: Punctuation](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/b1c809fd-a3e6-4f14-a0f1-e5d98eaaafc6/1/puctuation_resources.pdf) is a collection of resources and activities you can use to strengthen your students’ understanding and use of complex punctuation from the DEC’s Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre (CLIC).

Word origins

The English K-10 syllabus requires teachers to develop students’ appreciation of the English language through a focus on etymology (the study of word origins), including a knowledge of the Latin and Greek roots of words. This new content in the English syllabus will help students better appreciate the evolution of the English language as well as helping them to become better spellers.

Etymology

The origins of, and changes to, words in relation to meaning, for example words derived from earlier or other languages, place names, words derived from people’s names and coinages (eg googling). (See Word origin)

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Studying a variety of texts in English gives teachers the opportunity to create rich and engaging learning activities that encourage students to think deeply about the origins of, and changes to, the English language. Making these activities fun and embedded by responding to and composing texts will better develop an appreciation for the evolving English language.

Watch

Access [The History of English in ten minutes](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA03075BAD88B909E) animation created by The Open University (2011). United Kingdom. The animation is a fascinating and entertaining resource that synthesises how the English language grew from a small and remote language to the global language that English is today.

Comprehension

Comprehension involves responding to, interpreting, analysing and evaluating texts. Texts include oral, aural, written, visual, electronic and multimodal texts.

[Literacy continuum K-6](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/literacy/literacy-continuum), NSW Department of Education

Comprehension improves when we engage students in rich discussions that allow students to integrate knowledge, experience, strategies and textual insights.

Pearson, P. D. (2008) ‘Teaching reading comprehension: Research, best practice and good teaching’ viewed 7 October 2009, available at – <http://www.scienceandliteracy.org/sites/scienceandliteracy.org/files/biblio/pdpearson/Pearson_TeachingReadingComprehension2009.pdf>

The super six comprehension strategies

The following are metacognitive practices rather than student activities. Metacognitive practices allow students to think about meaning itself: how it is constructed and the impact meaning has. To effectively use the following Super six comprehension strategies, teachers will need to explicitly teach what the strategy is, how students will use it and why they need to know it.

Download

Download a copy of [‘Super Six’ comprehension strategies](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/ec1e06c7-8760-4904-bd15-017802d2dc7d/1/super_six.pdf). You may wish to print the file in a poster format and display it in your classroom.

Watch

Paula Madigan, Learning and Development Consultant, North Coast Region, explains why the [‘Super six comprehension strategies’](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/ec1e06c7-8760-4904-bd15-017802d2dc7d/1/super_six.pdf) are so important in a years 7-10 setting.

Step 1 – select a text

Texts can range from easy to challenging. The criteria for text selection should focus on text usefulness for teaching a particular strategy or set of strategies, student interests and connections to literacy themes. If the text is challenging use ‘read-aloud’ when modelling.

Step 2 – explain the strategy

Focus on two questions:

1. What is it?
2. Why is it helpful/necessary for comprehension

Provide examples to assist this explanation and wherever possible make connections to students’ background knowledge and prior learning.

Step 3 – model the strategy

Read a section of the text aloud and use teaching activities such as ‘Think aloud’ or create a visual representation (symbol, chart, etc.) to share ideas with students. NB: ‘Think aloud’ involves orally explaining precisely what is triggering thoughts and how it is affecting understanding, explain thinking so that students have a clear idea of the cognitively active process in the readers’ experience. If a strategy requires a written or sketched response, model that during this step.

Internet resource

For more information on ‘Think aloud’ strategies, please visit [West Virginia Department of Education’s page on the strategies](http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/ThinkAloud.html).

Step 4 – guided support

Read the next section of the text aloud and ask students to work with a partner to apply the new strategy. Discuss the response from paired students and read aloud another section of the text.

Step 5 – independent practice

Monitor students as they work independently within the whole group. Either continue reading sections of the text with reduced teacher support or invite students to read independent texts on their own. Regardless, students independently use the strategy. Differentiate instruction by providing scaffolding for those students who need more support (through further modelling or guided support), and by releasing the task to those students who are ready to use it. The goal is to ensure that students know the strategy and the process for using it. Ultimately students develop a range of strategies that they can use as needed when they are reading on their own.

Step 6 – reflect

Ask students to reflect on how using the strategy helped them to understand the text. Invite them to share their reflections in small groups or with the whole class. Discuss how they can use the strategy when they are reading on their own.

Explore

For further information on teaching comprehension strategies, download the booklet [Teaching comprehension strategies, curriculum K-12](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/66644cd1-6015-45fd-ad3a-bdf594712aec/1/combook.pdf).

Watch

See how a high school English teacher uses [‘Making connections’ from the Super Six comprehension strategies](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmtFsxuC5Yc) in her Year 9 class’s novel study in this 10 minute video.

Professional reflection and discussion

This section contains resources to help you feel more confident with the syllabus outcomes relating to spelling and word origins, punctuation and comprehension. The activities may be used by individual teachers or form part of a faculty/group discussion regarding the implementation of spelling, punctuation and comprehension into your English scope and sequence of study.

Discuss

Working individually or with a group/faculty, re-read the ‘W’ column of the KWL documents you completed for the continuum of Stage 3, 4 and 5 syllabus outcomes found in the ‘The essentials – What do I need to know?’ section of this teacher resource. (Page 4) Identify and discuss areas of need for your Stage 4 & 5 students.

Download

Choose from the collection of strategies documents listed below. Complete the tables in the documents, identifying how you could embed the teaching of spelling strategies into your existing lessons or units of work. An example has been given.

* [Spelling strategies: English K-10 syllabus planning](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/4141611a-f148-4629-b61d-98cbafd66654/1/spell_plan.doc)
* [Complex punctuation: English K-10 syllabus planning](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/e6a7c9fd-f6e5-4f7d-abfd-1bbdef1897b7/1/punct_plan.doc)
* [Word origins: English K-10 syllabus planning](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/5da515ca-33b4-4425-8d9b-be36b6dd3005/1/wordorig_plan.doc)

Discussion

Download the example of a scope and sequence document that embeds spelling, punctuation and comprehension into the study of [English in Year 9](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/a4aba658-b2f0-42e5-8172-7029190d8378/1/scopesequence_yr9.pdf). Use the example of the scope and sequence as a focus for discussion /comparison with your own scope and sequence documents.

Additional resources

Explore

* A year in texts. An explicit reading program Kerry Gehling, 2000 – ([PETAA](http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis_prod/w/Store/Item_Detail.aspx?iProductCode=PET067&Category=BOOK))
* Strategies for reading success - Marchelle Holliday, 2008 ([PETAA](http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis_prod/w/ItemDetail?iProductCode=PET090&Category=BOOK))
* [Make their heads spin! - Improving learning in the middle years](http://www.stepspd.com/au/resources/steppingout.htm). Developed by Pat Kiddey and Greg Robson, 2001. Curriculum Corporation Department of Western Australia.
* [Success for all: selecting appropriate learning strategies](http://www.stepspd.com/au/resources/steppingout.htm). Developed by Pat Kiddey and Felicity Waring, 2001. Curriculum Corporation Department of Western Australia.
1. You can find out more about KWL tables at ([Wikipedia page on KWL tables](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KWL_%20table)) and ([Education.com page on KWL tables](www.education.com/definition/KWL)). Complete the ‘K’ column with what you/your students know, the ‘W’ column with what you and your students want to know and use the ‘L’ column as a further reflection tool identifying what you have learnt after you have explored this resource further. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)