

ESL Developmental Continuum P–10

Teaching strategy – Before reading – Fiction

Focuses on

Speaking Listening **Reading** Writing

Most useful for students at stages

A1 A2 BL B1 B2 B3 SL S1 S2 S3 S4

Purpose of this activity

A number of before reading activities can be used to prepare ESL students for reading particular texts. They support ESL students to have a clear understanding of what they are about to read and why. Before reading activities also help build an understanding that texts are written and structured for different audiences and purposes. This helps the students to consider how they might go about reading a particular text and what forms of language they might expect to find in a particular text type.

How this helps ESL students in particular

Before reading activities:

- set a clear purpose for reading
- draw on students' background knowledge
- allow known vocabulary to be revised, and new vocabulary to be introduced
- develop and extend students' knowledge of how different texts are structured
- allow for a focus on the language choices that can be expected within a text
- help students to consider how they might go about reading a text.

Before reading activities to use with ESL students – Fiction texts

Book orientation

- Provide a short overview or summary of the text.
- Read the title of the text and discuss the cover and ask students to predict what they think the text might be about, where it might take place, who the characters might be. Predictions can be extended by looking at the illustrations in the text. Where possible, use the language of the text to respond to and support the students' comments and predictions.
- If the text is a chapter book, look at the titles of the chapters if there are any.
- Ask students to think of other books they have read which have any similarities, for example, by the same author or illustrator, the same kind of 'story' such as a traditional tale, a fairy tale.

Asking questions

- Discuss the features of the book (title, cover, blurb, illustrations etc)

- Ask students to pose questions about the text that they would like to have answered as they read the text.
- After reading the text, review the questions.

Vocabulary choices

Build up a list of vocabulary items that might be expected within the text. For example, use the illustrations to list adjectives to describe the characters or verb groups to explore what the character might do.

Acknowledgments/reference

Education Department of Western Australia (2004). *Reading: Resource Book, 2nd ed.* Port Melbourne: Rigby Heinemann.