

Overview of progression in Year 3

READING

Word reading

In Year 3, following on from the work done to reinforce phonics in Year 2, most children should be secure in their decoding skills. Most children will have the phonic skills and knowledge to enable them to decode the majority of new and unfamiliar words accurately. They will normally read accurately and quickly enough to enable them to focus on comprehension rather than word-by-word decoding, and most children should no longer need to sound out the majority of the words they meet. Children will begin to use their knowledge of root words, common suffixes and prefixes to work out the meanings of unknown words, and they will build on this skill during Year 4. In Year 3, children will also be learning to read a wider range of words that are not entirely phonically regular.

Comprehension

Children's increasing fluency in word reading means that they can build on the comprehension skills and strategies covered in Year 2 and focus even more strongly on understanding what they read. During Year 3, they will be learning to justify their opinions and give reasons for their observations about texts. They will also become more experienced in drawing inferences from texts – understanding the reasons for characters' behaviour, or making sensible predictions. They will need support to do this at first. During Year 4, they will build on this experience and become more independent in expressing and justifying their opinions on texts.

In Year 3, children will meet a widening range of different text types. They will learn to compare and contrast themes and ideas across different texts (by exploring similarities between different books by the same writer, and by comparing different examples of the same genre). They will begin to think in more detail about authors' choice of language and its effects on the reader. In Year 3, children will need help to understand how to make these comparisons between texts; they will go on to develop this skill more independently in Year 4.

WRITING

Transcription

A strong emphasis on spelling continues from Year 2; in Year 3, most children should be able to spell most common words accurately. They will also learn a wider range of commonly misspelled words, homophones, prefixes and suffixes. They will use dictionaries more often to check spellings. This process will continue into Year 4. In handwriting across Years 3 and 4 there is increasing emphasis on joining letters (where appropriate) and developing a clear and consistent handwriting style.

Composition

In Year 3, children will use examples from their reading to help them plan their writing. They will increase their vocabulary through talk as well as reading, and will use new words in their writing. They will also increase the range of different sentence structures, and use a wider range of conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions. They will begin to think about how their grammatical choices can help them to express their meaning accurately – making sure their choice of pronouns is appropriate and clear, and using tenses accurately. During Year 3, they will learn to punctuate direct speech accurately, and to use apostrophes to indicate possession. In Year 3, they will need plenty of guidance with this new learning; during Year 4 they will become more independent in their accurate use of grammar and punctuation.