

Book and Passage Selection

Books and passages are selected with a view to what the students need to know and develop in their own writing.

Before you start:

- Read the text several times and become very familiar with what it has to offer your students.
- Analyse the illustrations. What do they tell us that the written text doesn't?
- Understand the author's purpose, even in different parts of the text.
- Understand the author's stance - how will that 'position' the reader - what will be known & felt?
- Clarify the teaching purpose -

"What do I want to teach my students about reading and writing by using this text?"

When choosing passages we are looking for passages where the language or structural choices made by the author can provide models for students to pattern to improve their own writing competencies. The teacher must have a clear idea of what features will be useful, and how they contribute to the success of the text.

"Why did the author make the choices he/she made? How do they affect the reader?"

The teacher makes explicit to the student the reasons behind the choices.

"Explicit teaching makes the learning visible"

Authors' language choices are critical in 'how they tell'.

These may include:

- Text structure eg. orientations, developing a complication, building suspense and the complexity of the sequence of events.
- Introducing a character in a dramatic way. 27th AHR
- Making a smooth transition from one sentence to another.
- Building effective descriptions, which affect and position the reader.
- Using of punctuation to manage and organise the text.
- Using clauses and phrases to construct more sophisticated sentences.
- Describing characters by telling: GMM
 - What they do
 - What they look like, including what they wear
 - What other characters think of them

Language and structural choices can also affect a student's ability to make meaning from the text. Being aware of the patterns that authors use regularly in their writing, may allow students to develop familiarity and confidence with book language.

The structures of book language can be very different to those of spoken language and students need to understand the differences.

This can help improve their reading fluency, involves low risk (strongly modelled & guided) and can deliver an increased chance of success.