Understanding reading ages

A guide to interpreting reading data for classroom teachers of all subjects

Reading ages 10-11 years

Overview

This document contains…

This document contains pen-portraits of students with reading ages between 10 and 11 that set out what students with these reading ages are likely to be able to do or to struggle with, plus suggestions for ways to support them to develop their reading further and address the barriers that they encounter in reading.

Points to consider when using this resource

This document is a sample of the complete resource that comes with the training, which gives ideas of ways to scaffold, support and stretch students with reading ages between 6 and 17. The webinar accompanying the resource will exemplify and explain the strategies suggested.
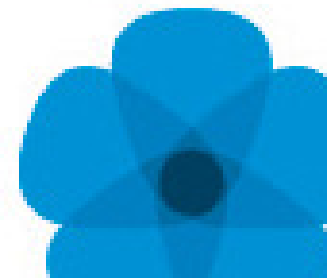
Reading age 10-11

Students with a reading age of 10-11 usually show competent word reading and are able to decode most words with confidence; however, some students with this reading age may have some difficulty with decoding that slows down the fluency of their reading and has an impact on their comprehension of the text. They may have a relatively narrow knowledge of vocabulary and find surprisingly common words difficult or may struggle to keep track of longer sentences with more than two clauses. If they also have difficulty with limited working memory, they may find it more difficult to keep track of a longer piece of text.

Most students with a reading age of 10-11 have a largely accurate understanding of fairly straightforward texts; they can often be more ambitious in reading fiction or about topics in which they have an interest and therefore good subject knowledge to support their understanding of a more challenging text. Reading more ambitious material in lessons helps students to become more confident to use active reading strategies and build their range of reading.

Teachers of all subjects can support and enable students with a reading age of 10-11 to improve their comprehension by consciously scaffolding reading material with pre-teaching or reminders of content and vocabulary before reading, use of active reading strategies and pauses to summarise and check understanding during reading and checks of overall understanding after reading, and by giving sufficient time for reading key materials in class.

*Note: An adult with a reading age of 11 or below is deemed to be 'functionally illiterate' and will struggle with the literacy demands of everyday life.

Supporting a student with a reading age of 10-11

Discuss prior knowledge that is relevant to the text before reading. Prime memory of prior learning and experiences. Show images, clips, key words, diagrams etc in order to support comprehension.

Support vocabulary understanding by anticipating vocabulary that may be tricky. Supply vocabulary in phrases and explain meanings of words clearly. Consider using images to support the meanings of some words.

Read texts aloud in lessons, reading animatedly and emphasising key words in each sentence. Pause appropriately for emphasis and ensure that students can hear phrasing in your reading.

Plan in points during reading to pause and check for understanding. Summarise sections of text and ask students to summarise in their own words. Create regular opportunities to practise these strategies.

Explain and discuss understanding of what has been read. Give time to comprehension questions and recall of key points of the text. Support students to differentiate between fact and opinion.

Use both open ('Tell me what you know from paragraphs 1-3') and cued ('We learned that there are three main exports of Brazil. What are they?') retrieval questions.

Use a range of questions to encourage inference and deduction, including true-or-false questions, multiple choice questions and tasks such as tables to complete. Consider using examples of correct answers to scaffold.

Ask questions and prompt pupils to make predictions and draw inferences; ask follow up questions if necessary to encourage students to justify their points with evidence from the text.

Teach and demonstrate note-taking strategies, use graphic organisers for information from the text and use dual coding to capture understanding of key content.

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