Teaching English First Additional Language

Grades 1-3
Teaching English FAL Grades 1 to 3

Strategies for teaching reading and phonics, using the CAPS

Contents:

1 Introduction to the Foundation Phase CAPS: First Additional Language

2 Reading
   2.1 Shared reading
   2.2 Group guided reading
   2.3 Independent/paired reading

3 Phonics
   3.1 Sample Grade 1 phonics lesson
   3.2 Sample Grade 2 phonics lesson
   3.3 Sample Grade 3 phonics lesson
1. Introduction to the Foundation Phase CAPS: First Additional Language

CAPS stands for Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, which replaces the NCS. The English FAL Grade 1 teaching programme starts on page 30 of the CAPS document. The English FAL Grade 2 teaching programme starts on page 55 of the CAPS document. The English FAL Grade 3 teaching programme starts on page 80 of the CAPS document.

The skills covered for First Additional Language are:
- Listening and speaking
- Reading and phonics
- Writing

The Department of Basic Education does not prescribe how to break down the time into the different components although the following suggestions are made for each grade. Teachers need to decide at each school whether they will follow the maximum or minimum times below.

**Where maximum time is given to the First Additional Language:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE</th>
<th>GRADE 1</th>
<th>GRADE 2</th>
<th>GRADE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening &amp; Speaking</td>
<td>1 hour 30 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading &amp; Phonics</td>
<td>1 hour 15 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour 30 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Use</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 hours per week</td>
<td>3 hours per week</td>
<td>4 hours per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where minimum time is given to the First Additional Language:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE</th>
<th>GRADE 1</th>
<th>GRADE 2</th>
<th>GRADE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening &amp; Speaking</td>
<td>1 hour 30 minutes</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading &amp; Phonics</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Use</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 hours per week</td>
<td>2 hours per week</td>
<td>3 hours per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this workshop we are going to focus on how to teach Reading skills and phonics, although all the skills are integrated in many activities. For example, in all of these lessons learners will be speaking and listening, so there will be practice of oral skills. Often in phonics lessons there will be some written work.
2. Reading

You begin with shared reading, then progress to group guided reading and when learners can read by themselves they can do independent reading.

Note that independent reading is introduced very gradually, and will probably not happen at all in Grade 1. Reading is only introduced in the third term of Grade 1, and then only basically, for example, with the teacher labeling objects in the classroom. But it is possible to start developing literacy skills by reading stories to learners. This introduces them to concepts such as how to use a book, how to look at illustrations. You can find more detail about this in points 2.7 and 2.8 of the CAPS document.

Also bear in mind that learners only start Group guided reading and Paired or Independent reading in Grade 2 and 3. However, they will be doing this type of reading from Grade 1 in their Home Language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of reading</th>
<th>Who reads?</th>
<th>What kind of text?</th>
<th>Grade it is introduced for Eng FAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared reading</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Big Book or poster</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group guided reading</td>
<td>Learner, in a small group with teacher present</td>
<td>Readers with different difficulty levels</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired / Independent reading</td>
<td>Learner by him or herself</td>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1 Shared reading

Learners should sit up close to the teacher, on a mat, where they can all see the Big Book or poster text. Read the story aloud to the class, using methods to involve learners in an active way, such as pointing to pictures and asking questions.

A sample Grade 1 lesson is given on the next page. It is best to use the Big Book story over a few 15 minute lessons, doing pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities.

These activities are based on the first text in the *Platinum English Grade 1 Big Book: I like.*
Sample shared reading lesson: *Platinum English Grade 1 Big Book: I like*

**Pre-reading**
Ask learners to tell you their favourite colours, foods and sports. You will need to model the language construction for them.

a) Start by pointing to something you are wearing, and saying: “My favourite colour is blue/pink/green (or whatever colour you are wearing).” Then ask about one third of your class to say what their favourite colour is. In order to develop their vocabulary, use one of these methods. Either have a colour chart in the classroom, with the English words on it. Or allow learners to use their home language, and you say the English word, and write it on the board.

If your class is struggling with vocabulary, then you can simplify this by writing some of the basic colours on the board (red, green, orange, yellow, pink, blue, brown, white, black). Then get learners to repeat after you: *I like ____.*

b) Now move on to talking about food. Again start by saying what you like to eat. Then ask the next third of the class to say what they like to eat. As before, you can simplify this by getting the class to repeat sentences after you.

c) Finally, write the words *running, soccer, netball* and *swimming* on the board. Ask the learners who have not yet spoken to tell you which one of those activities they like.

**Reading**

a) For the first reading, try to read through the story as a whole, with few stops, to let learners get a sense of the whole story.

b) Read the story again. While you are reading, run your finger or a pointer under the words.

**Post-reading**
For subsequent readings you can stop to ask questions, point out pictures or other elements. For example, in this story here are some questions you can ask:

*(page 2)*
What is green in this picture?
What is blue?
What other colours can you see?
What are the girls doing?
Are the girls happy or sad?

*(page 3)*
What colours can you see in this picture?
What is this girl eating? (as you point)
What is this girl eating? (as you point to the other girl)
Are they inside or outside?
Which girl is wearing a dress?
Which girl is wearing pants?
How many spoons can you see?

*(page 4)*
What are the girls doing?
Are they happy or sad?
Are they inside or outside?
How many white flowers can you see?
What other colours can you see?

Notice how these questions will help to develop vocabulary and general language skills.
Activity 1A
Work out your own lesson using the text “Where is baby”, from *Platinum English* Grade 1 Big Book 1.
Think of a pre-reading activity and an after-reading activity.

Activity 1B
Work out your own lesson for Grade 1, using the text “Getting ready for school”, from page 18 of *Day by Day English* Big Book 1. Think of a pre-reading activity and an after-reading activity. Here are some ideas you might like to use. You will need to decide whether they will work best as a pre-reading or a post-reading activity.
- Learners can mime or act putting on their jackets, socks and shoes.
- Learners can point to the words “puts on”, which are repeated on every page.
- Learners can talk about what they can see in the background of the pictures.
- The teacher can call out the words *vest, shirt, trousers, jacket, socks* and *shoes*, and learners can point to the correct picture.

2.2 Group guided reading

In group guided reading the teacher sits with a small group (about 6 to 8 learners), and they read a story together. Here are some strategies you can use.

a) When you first introduce group-guided reading in Grade 2, give a lot of assistance. Remember that it will take time to develop reading confidence and reading skills. For example, you read a sentence, then learners repeat it with you.

b) When you have read a story, you can ask learners to point to any high-frequency words. For example, if words are repeated, such as “Where is Thandi?” then you can ask learners to point to those words, or to read them as you point to them.

c) Later in Grade 2, and in Grade 3, you can read a story first. Then you can ask learners to take it in turn to read parts of a story.

Learners in each group should be of a similar reading level. The teacher offers help, guidance and support. It is important that in each session, the teacher hears each individual learner read. While you have one group sitting with you, the other learners are busy with the following kinds of activities:

- Paired or individual reading.
- Activities in the Learner’s Book or on a worksheet.

In some schools, there is another adult in the classroom to monitor the other learners while the teacher is busy with the group doing the group-guided reading. This can be a parent volunteer, or a teaching assistant.
Sample group guided reading lesson: Day by Day English Grade 2 Reader 2: Thandeka enters a talent competition

Pre-reading

You can use one of these two pre-reading activities.

Option A (if all learners in your class have access to television and have watched programmes such as “Idols”)

Ask learners to explain what a talent competition is. Ask them to name the sorts of activities that people do in talent competitions. Elicit from them answers such as playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing, acrobatics.

Option B (if you do not want to make the activity dependent on access to television)

Write a list of talent-competition activities on the board. These can include singing, dancing, playing instruments, acrobatics. Then ask learners to decide which activity is their favourite to do and watch. As you name each activity, learners can raise their hands if that is their favourite. The whole group can count aloud with you (in English!). Write the totals on the board. Then, at the end, ask these questions, using the home language if necessary to explain words like popular and favourite:

- What is the most popular activity?
- What is the second favourite activity?
- What is the least popular activity?

Reading

a) Read the story with the group. Read it once, just as a listening story.

b) Then read it again, this time pointing to some of the important words as you read. For example, you would point to the name Thandeka, to the word talent, and to the words dance and foot.

c) Read it a third time, asking learners to read aloud with you. Only ask learners to read aloud on their own if they are very competent.

d) You can make the activity interactive by asking learners to clap whenever the story says that the audience claps.

Post-reading

a) Learners can act the story. Decide who will take the roles of the performers in the talent competition, and who will be the judge. The other learners can be the audience. As you narrate the words, learners can act. Or learners can use their own words, reading these or remembering them from the story.
Remedial

If learners struggle with this reading activity, there are a number of remedial activities you can do.

a) Make copies of the pictures, and arrange them in a muddled order. Ask learners to select the correct picture as you read the story.

b) Ask learners to find the pictures that show these emotions on the faces: excited, sore, worried, proud. Use the equivalent words in learners’ home language if necessary.

### Activity 2A

Use the text “Anansi rides Tiger”, from the *Day by Day English* Grade 2 Reader 2. Here the pre-reading activity is obvious: you will explain who Anansi is: that he is a naughty spider who we find in many traditional stories. Ask learners whether they know any other stories with Anansi. If not, they can tell you anything they know about spiders and tigers. Which one is stronger? Which one is more clever?

Then you will read the story, pointing out what Anansi is doing. Make sure in your reading that learners understand this is a funny story. Perhaps you will need to prompt them by laughing out loud when Anansi tricks Tiger.

Your task is to think of a post-reading activity. Here are three suggestions: learners tell you another story they know. Learners draw a picture of what happens when Tiger realises he has been tricked. Learners match the words *lion*, *tiger* and *spider* to the pictures. (This last suggestion is suitable as a support activity for learners who struggle to understand the story.)

### Activity 2B

Use the text “Places I know: Picnic Rules”, from the *Platinum English* Grade 2 Reader, page 18. Your task is to think of a pre-reading activity and a post-reading activity. Here are some ideas to help you. Your pre-reading activity could be to activate learners’ prior knowledge by asking them to describe when they eat outside, for example at a celebration, at a braai or a picnic. The post-reading activity can be creative, asking them to design a sign similar to those in the text. Or it can be about close reading of the illustrations, by asking them to find four good things and four bad things in the illustrations on page 20.
2.3 Independent / Paired reading

Learners can read by themselves when they finish an activity ahead of the other learners. Keep a collection of reading texts for this. Some learners who struggle to read independently can work in pairs with another more skilled reader.

Try to get your learners into the habit of reading something (even one or two sentences) every day.

Sight words

Another way to help learners read well is to give learners practice in reading high-frequency sight words. These are words that often occur in reading texts. Many of these words do not follow the regular sound patterns in English, so learners cannot apply their phonic knowledge to read these words. Examples of these words include another, high, these, are or often. A list of 300 sight words is given at the end of this module.

We will take an example of introducing the sight word friend for Grade 2 as an example.

Introduce the sight words.

1. Read a sentence from a reading text or a Learner’s Book containing the sight word: friend. Write the sight word on the board. Read the word aloud, running your finger under the word. Check that the learners understand the meaning in the home language.
2. Repeat the word. Draw attention to the beginning, middle and end sounds, especially if they are regular sounds that the learners know. Point out any tricky letters or sounds, for example the ‘ie’ in friend. Write sentences on the board, for example: The girl is my friend. Let the learners identify the sight words.
3. Call out a sight word. Let learners point in their reading text or Learner’s Book to the correct word. Go around and check.
4. Write up the sight words you have taught on a sight word chart.
3. Phonics

Learning to sound out sounds is a crucial part of learning to read. You should have a Phonics chart displayed in your classroom to use when teaching phonics. Here is some background information that might help you in teaching phonics.

List of consonants
b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z

List of vowels
a, e, i, o, u

List of common blends
bl (blue)
br (brick)
cl (clip)
cr (cross)
dr (drop)
fl (flower)
fr (fry)
gl (glue)
gr (grow)
pl (please)
pr (present)
sl (slipper)
sm (smile)
sp (spoon)
st (stew)
sw (swing)
tr (train)
wr (write)

List of common consonant digraphs (a digraph is different from a consonant blend because the two letters form a new sound, instead of being a blend of two sounds)
ch (chip)
ph (phone)
sh (shoe)
th (this)
wh (where)

List of common vowel digraphs
ai (rain)
ea (meat)
ee (seed)
ei (vein) (this is not as common as the others)
oa (boat)
oo (boot)
ou (sound)
ir (bird)
er (her)
ur (urn)
ow (cow)
Grade 1 phonics
Learners learn to:
- segment (break) words into syllables by clapping at each syllable
- recognise rhyming words
- recognise beginning sounds
- break down a word into its beginning sound and the rest of the word (for example, c-at, m-at, f-at)
- recognise the plural -s and -es aurally

Grade 2 phonics
Learners learn to:
- revise Grade 1 work
- tell the difference between sounds that are often confused (e.g. ‘a’ and ‘e’, ‘ee’ and ‘i’)
- build up and break down 3-letter words using sounds learnt (e.g. p-e-n, p-en, pen)
- group similar words together (word families) (e.g. bin, pin, tin)
- break down words which begin with a blend of two sounds (e.g. fl-at, sl-ip, cl-ap, pl-um; br-im, cr-op, dr-ip, gr-ab, tr-ip)
- break down words which begin or end with two consonants which make a single sound, called a consonant digraph (e.g. sh, th and ch)
- recognise 3 different vowel digraphs (e.g. ‘oo’ as in boot, ‘ee’ as in feet)
- identify common word endings (-ed, -ing, -y and -s)

Grade 3 phonics
Learners learn to:
- revise Grade 2 work
- recognise the silent e in words with the (e.g. cake, time)
- break down words which end with a blend of two sounds (e.g. ri-ng, i-nk)
- recognise the consonant digraphs learnt in Grade 2 as well as wh-.
- recognise at least 10 vowel digraphs (e.g. ‘oa’ as in boat, ‘ar’ as in far, ‘er’ as in her, ‘ir’ as in bird, ‘or’ as in short, ‘ur’ as in hurt).
- recognise and use some word endings such as (e.g. ‘-es’, ‘-ies’, ‘-ly’, ‘-ing’, ‘-ed’).
- tell the difference between long and short vowel sounds (e.g. ‘boot’ and ‘book’)
- break down a word into its beginning sound and the rest of the word (onset and rime) for more complex words (dr-eam, scr-eam).
- group similar words together (word families) for more complex words (e.g. ‘catch’, ‘match’).
3.1 A sample Grade 1 phonics lesson

Beginning sounds
Prepare phonics cards, or write these letters on the board. (Note that the letters \( h \), \( m \) and \( n \) will all have been covered in the handwriting lessons in Home Language, as they all follow the “bunny-hop” curve pattern.)

The letter \( h \), and these endings:
- at
- and
- en
- op

The letter \( m \), and these endings:
- at
- ap
- op

The letter \( n \), and these endings:
- et
- o
- nurse

The focus here should be on oral work, not written. Assist learners by reading the end sounds aloud, and ask learners to decide which of the sounds \( h \), \( m \) and \( n \) can be used to make words. Then write the completed words on the board. Consolidate by asking learners to read the words with you.

Note that the Maskew Miller Longman books have worked out all the phonics lessons for you.
3.2 A sample Grade 2 phonics lesson

Long and short vowel sounds

a) Introduce this activity by showing learners a picture of a mat. Write the word *mat* on the board. Learners repeat the word after you. Then tell them that the word *mate* means friend. Ask some learners who you know are friends to say “XX is my mate.” Write the word *mate* on the board. Learners repeat the word after you. Make sure that they can all hear and see the difference.

b) Now read all the words in the box. This worksheet is taken from *Platinum English* Grade 2 Teacher’s Guide. Read each word to the class. Then the learners repeat the word aloud with you.

c) Write the words “Long sounds” and “Short sounds” on the board. Ask learners to tell you which column each word goes into.

d) Learners can copy the answers. (Note that you can make this more challenging by leaving out one or two words from each column, and asking learners to complete this independently, in groups. But do not require them to complete the entire activity independently, as they still need extensive assistance.)

**Worksheet: Long sounds and short sounds**

Name: Date:

Write these words under the correct headings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hope</th>
<th>hat</th>
<th>hate</th>
<th>not</th>
<th>pin</th>
<th>note</th>
<th>pipe</th>
<th>pip</th>
<th>hop</th>
<th>pine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long sounds</th>
<th>Short sounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 A sample Grade 3 phonics lesson

Rhyming words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal assessment</th>
<th>Activity 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listen to your teacher. Circle the two words that sound the same in each row.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) snake</td>
<td>cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) plane</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) bird</td>
<td>gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) five</td>
<td>hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) bike</td>
<td>spike</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A) First read the words from each line aloud, or ask a competent learner to read the words.
B) Read the words a second time, so that learners can hear the sounds.
C) Then learners circle the two words that sound the same.
Sight words

The following are examples of suitable sight words for English First Additional Language.

Grade 1

and is the
can it they
he me we
I of you
in she

Grade 2

after home see
again how she
air is some
and its soon
any king the
are little there
big live they
but make things
can many this
car my today
do near too
down need tree
eat no two
fast not water
find one we
food other well
friend our were
from place where
go put who
has ran whose
have run you
he said your
his saw