

# Text features

## Stage 2

### Overview

#### Purpose

This literacy teaching strategy supports teaching and learning for Stage 2 students across all key learning areas. It targets specific literacy skills and suggests a learning sequence to build skill development.

Teachers can select individual tasks, or a sequence, and embed into their teaching and learning program according to their students' needs. While exemplar texts are provided throughout this resource, it is recommended that teachers select texts which are relevant to their students and curriculum.

#### Learning intention

Students will learn to identify features in text which impact and emphasise meaning, including italics, punctuation and brackets.

#### Syllabus outcome

The following teaching and learning strategies will assist in covering elements of the following outcomes:

- EN2-RECOM-01: reads and comprehends texts for wide purposes using knowledge of text structures and language, and by monitoring comprehension

[NSW English K-10 Syllabus \(2022\)](#)

#### Success criteria

The following Year 3 NAPLAN item descriptors may guide teachers to develop success criteria for student learning.

- identifies the purpose of bracketed information in an information text
- identifies the purpose of an exclamation mark in an information text
- identifies the purpose of italicised text in an information text
- identifies the purpose of italicised text in a text
- identifies the purpose of italicised text in a narrative

# National Literacy Learning Progression guide

## Understanding Texts (UnT6-UnT9)

Key: C=comprehension P=process V=vocabulary

### UnT6

- uses phrasing and punctuation to support reading for meaning (e.g. noun, verb and adjectival groups) (see Fluency and Grammar) (P)

### UnT7

- identifies language and text features that signal purpose in a predictable text (e.g. diagrams, dialogue) (P)

### UnT8

- uses knowledge of the features and conventions of the type of text to build meaning (e.g. recognises that the beginning of a persuasive text may introduce the topic and the line of argument) (P)
- uses sophisticated punctuation to support meaning (e.g. commas to separate clauses in complex sentences) (P)

### UnT9

- evaluates text features for relevance to purpose and audience (C)

[National Literacy Learning Progression](#)

## Evidence base

- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2017). [Effective reading instruction in the early years of school](#), literature review.
- Konza, D. (2014). Teaching Reading: Why the “Fab Five” should be the “Big Six”. Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39(12).
- Oakhill, J., Cain, K. & Elbro, C. (2015). Understanding and teaching reading comprehension: A handbook. Routledge.
- Quigley, A. (2020). Closing the reading gap. Routledge.
- Scarborough, H.S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickson (Eds.), Handbook for research in early literacy (pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

**Alignment to system priorities and/or needs:** [Five priorities for Literacy and Numeracy](#), [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#), [School Excellence Policy \(nsw.gov.au\)](#).

**Alignment to School Excellence Framework:** Learning domain: Curriculum, Teaching domain: Effective classroom practice and Professional standards

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## Teaching strategies

Task	Appendices
<a href="#">Types of font for emphasis</a>	<a href="#">Appendix 1 - Bold, italics, underline and capital letters</a>
<a href="#">Bracketed information</a>	<a href="#">Appendix 2 - Adding brackets to sentences</a>
<a href="#">Punctuation for effect</a>	
<a href="#">Exclamation marks in action!</a>	

# Background information

## Layout

The spatial arrangement of print and graphics on a page or screen, including size of font, positioning of illustrations, inclusion of captions, labels, headings, bullet points, borders and text boxes.

## Brackets (parentheses)

Punctuation markers used to enclose an explanatory word, phrase or sentence, an aside or a commentary, for example 'She was referring to her friend (Shirley) again'. Brackets (parentheses) have a variety of functions and are used by writers to:

Function	Example
Clarify meaning by providing a comment or additional information and separate information that isn't essential to the meaning of the rest of the sentence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will meet John (who went to school with me)</li><li>• ... spent rockets, redundant satellites (over 200!), metal fragments (many of which are the results of collisions) ...</li></ul>
Indicate an aside or comment revealing a character's point of view in narratives.	He called me shorty (he should talk!) and then offered to stack the top shelves.
Introduce an acronym, initialism or abbreviation, or the expansion of an acronym, which will be used independently later in the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ACARA (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities) has developed syllabus documents for Australia</li><li>• The Assistant Principal (AP) supports the grade.</li></ul>
Enclose the name and date of a letter to the editor or an article that a writer is responding to.	The article ('Plummeting Penguin Numbers', 13/1/96) signified a dramatic shift ...
Enclose optional additions	Students must bring pen(s), pencil(s) and writing paper with them.
Indicate in quotes the insertion of a word, prefix, suffix or capitalisation in order to fit the quote into the sentence so it will flow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My "add(ing) curry powder to taste' was different to everyone else's taste."</li><li>• (T)he former vice president's accusations of criminal behaviour against ...</li></ul>
Use brackets around the italicised word sic (from Latin, meaning 'thus,' or 'thus it is,') to indicate that an error or peculiarity in a quotation is being reproduced exactly as it was originally said or written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I love ya (sic) all!</li></ul>
Use brackets around numbers in text lists (numbers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Here are the rules: (1) Keep your room tidy, (2) do your homework, (3) be ready for school on time.</li><li>• Phone number additions and clarification (02) 5555 5555</li></ul>
Use brackets to enclose figures following and confirming written-out numbers, especially in legal and business documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The fee for my services will be two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00).</li><li>• Blueback (2004) was written by Tim Winton.</li></ul>

Reference: English K-10 Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2012 and 2022.

## Where to next?

- Text structure
- Main idea

# Overview of teaching strategies

## Purpose

These literacy teaching strategies support teaching and learning from Stage 2 to Stage 5. They are linked to NAPLAN task descriptors, syllabus outcomes and literacy and numeracy learning progressions.

These teaching strategies target specific literacy and numeracy skills and suggest a learning sequence to build skill development. Teachers can select individual tasks or a sequence to suit their students.

## Access points

The resources can be accessed from:

- NAPLAN App in Scout using the teaching strategy links from NAPLAN items
- NSW Department of Education literacy and numeracy [website](#).

## What works best

Explicit teaching practices involve teachers clearly explaining to students why they are learning something, how it connects to what they already know, what they are expected to do, how to do it and what it looks like when they have succeeded. Students are given opportunities and time to check their understanding, ask questions and receive clear, effective feedback.

This resource reflects the latest evidence base and can be used by teachers as they plan for explicit teaching.

Teachers can use classroom observations and other assessment information to make decisions about when and how they use this resource as they design teaching and learning sequences to meet the learning needs of their students.

Further support with [What works best](#) is available.

## Differentiation

When using these resources in the classroom, it is important for teachers to consider the needs of all students, including [Aboriginal](#) and EAL/D learners.

EAL/D learners will require explicit English language support and scaffolding, informed by the [EAL/D enhanced teaching and learning cycle](#) and the student's phase on the [EAL/D Learning Progression](#).

Teachers can access information about [supporting EAL/D learners](#) and [literacy and numeracy support](#) specific to EAL/D learners.

Learning adjustments enable students with disability and additional learning and support needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. Teachers can use a [range of adjustments](#) to ensure a personalised approach to student learning.

[Assessing and identifying high potential and gifted learners](#) will help teachers decide which students may benefit from extension and additional challenge. [Effective strategies and contributors to achievement](#) for high potential and gifted learners helps teachers to identify and target areas for growth and improvement. A [differentiation adjustment tool](#) can be found on the High potential and gifted education website.

## Using tasks across learning areas

This resource may be used across learning areas where it supports teaching and learning aligned with syllabus outcomes.

Literacy and numeracy are embedded throughout all syllabus documents as general capabilities. As the English and mathematics learning areas have a particular role in developing literacy and numeracy, NSW English and Mathematics syllabus outcomes aligned to literacy and numeracy skills have been identified.

## Text selection

Example texts are used throughout this resource. Teachers can adjust activities to use texts which are linked to their unit of learning.

Further support with text selection can be found within the [National Literacy Learning Progression](#) Text Complexity appendix.

The [NESA website](#) has additional information on text requirements within the NSW English syllabus.

# Teaching strategies

## Types of font for emphasis

1. Students read the following sentence and emphasise a new word each read. Discuss how meaning can change by emphasising different words.

<p><b>You</b> cannot eat my carrot cake.</p> <p>You <b>cannot</b> eat my carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot <b>eat</b> my carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot eat <b>my</b> carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my <b>carrot</b> cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my carrot <b>cake</b>.</p>	<p><i>You</i> cannot eat my carrot cake.</p> <p>You <i>cannot</i> eat my carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot <i>eat</i> my carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot eat <i>my</i> carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my <i>carrot</i> cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my carrot <i>cake</i>.</p>
<p><u>You</u> cannot eat my carrot cake.</p> <p>You <u>cannot</u> eat my carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot <u>eat</u> my carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot eat <u>my</u> carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my <u>carrot</u> cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my carrot <u>cake</u>.</p>	<p>YOU cannot eat my carrot cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my CARROT cake.</p> <p>You cannot keep my carrot CAKE.</p>

**Accessibility note:** Bold, italics, underline and capitals are used in the examples above to indicate emphasis. In the first sentence in each example the first word is emphasised (using the chosen font), on the second sentence, the second word is emphasised and so on.

2. Discuss if the same effect is made with bold/italics/underline/capital letters or if there is one that is stronger than another. Create a class display of the intensity incline of these four font styles.  
*Additional task:* Students can create their own versions and trial with a partner.
3. Display the following four sentences for students to read and discuss. Students notice how emphasis changes how the reader understands the sentence:
  - The class was **extremely** noisy.
  - The sunflowers were growing with *stamina*.
  - If you throw that mashed potato one more time, I will get very ANGRY!
  - Please remember to bring your water bottle for the trip.
4. Discuss that authors use these four types of font style to draw attention to vocabulary for different purposes. Review the following information. Reinforce that authors will emphasise very small amounts of words to ensure emphasis is not lost.

<b>Bold</b>	<u>Underline</u>	CAPITAL LETTERS	<i>Italics</i>
<p>Bold is used to draw attention to key parts of a text and catch the reader's attention.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Important words</li> </ol>	<p>Underline is not used as much for emphasis and can get confused with hyperlinks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Indicating a heading or subheading</li> <li>2. Emphasising a word</li> <li>3. Defining something such as AP</li> </ol>	<p>In narrative texts, this may be used to emphasise how something is said.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To show screaming or shouting</li> <li>2. For an acronym like NASA</li> </ol>	<p>Italics is used within a sentence to emphasise a word.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Specific vocabulary or technical terms</li> <li>2. Quotes</li> <li>3. Titles of books and other texts</li> <li>4. Thoughts of a character</li> </ol>

5. Discuss other ways authors might draw attention to words such as colour, size of font and style. Students might make a poster displaying different font types and how they might be used to enhance meaning.
6. Students use [Appendix 1 - Bold, italics, underline and capital letters](#) and match the font styles with an effect on meaning for the reader.
7. Students find as many examples for each of these four types of text typography in a range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction; these can be linked to a current unit of learning. Discuss examples and how the author uses them to emphasise a word.

## Bracketed information

1. Discuss: Brackets and parentheses are occasionally used to separate a set of characters, a word, phrase or a sentence from those on either side. These punctuation marks show the reader details. They allow the reader to hear what the author would have said if the text was being read aloud. For example: 'She was referring to her friend (Shirley) again'. If you remove the information that is inside the parentheses, the sentence must still make sense. We often use commas instead of brackets in writing.  
The two most commonly used forms are round brackets (parentheses) ( ) and square brackets [ ]. Full stops, question marks or exclamation marks are usually put outside the brackets (unless the brackets enclose a complete sentence).
2. Teacher models reading aloud using brackets to hear the author's voice to add detail. It is important that students hear the difference when read aloud – it is read as an aside to the audience.
  - I miss seeing Sarah (my best friend from primary school) every day.
  - I went to the park to meet Valance (my eldest brother).
  - Our final game is planned for next Saturday and it is supposed to rain (oh no!).
  - I enjoy my Personal Development, Healthy and Physical Education (PDHPE) class.
3. Read aloud a range of sentences which contain bracketed information and ask students to verbally identify the bracketed information. (This can be done by sharing with the class, with a partner using a whiteboard or indicating with their hands in a cupped 'bracket' shape.)

4. Bracket hunt: Students work in teams to read through a range of texts linked to a current unit of learning or a range of picture books to hunt for examples of bracket use. Students present a short skit to the class to teach students when to use brackets in the sentence using some examples from texts.
5. Teacher models reading a sentence aloud and discuss where students would place brackets. For example:

- Matilda was the Assistant Principal (AP) of the primary school.

Brackets are used to show initialism.

- An Open Swimmer (1982) was written by Tim Winton.

Brackets are used to show the year the book was published.

- I ran to stand next to my friend (Michelle).

Brackets are used to show more information

6. Students use [Appendix 2 - Adding brackets to sentences](#) to add brackets to sentences and share with the class. Students read aloud and answer the questions:
  - What extra information is added?
  - Why did the author choose to use brackets?
7. To support [higher order thinking](#): provide students with a range of complex sentences which feature either brackets or commas to separate clauses. Students discuss (with justifications) whether the commas could be replaced with brackets, or vice versa, and explore the effect (if any) on meaning.

## Punctuation for effect

1. Revise the following boundary punctuation: full stop, question mark and exclamation mark. Discuss when they are used and how this impacts our voice when reading and model with a visual representation of voice pattern.
2. Display a sentence and change the end boundary punctuation and have students read aloud, changing voice and discussing what impact this has on the meaning of the sentence. For example:  
The class was filled with curious children.

Sentence	Voice pattern	Impact on meaning
The class was filled with curious children.		Reads as a statement – the class had many children who were curious.
The class was filled with curious children?		Makes the reader ask the question: are the children actually curious? Is the class filled?
The class was filled with curious children!		Shows excitement that there are so many curious children – lots of fun to follow.

3. Thirds: Divide the learning space into thirds: question mark (?), exclamation mark (!), and full stop (.). Teacher reads aloud a range of sentences and questions with students indicating which final punctuation best reflects the sentence by standing in one of the thirds.

To increase [abstraction](#), students justify why they moved to that third.

## Exclamation marks in action!

1. Discuss the role of exclamation marks as indicating expressions of sudden strong feelings such as anger, surprise or alarm and usually end with an exclamation mark. Provide examples: How amazing! I'm shocked! What a cute basket of kittens!
2. Teacher revises what an adjective is, and what a noun group is, directing students to the examples on the board. Adjective = amazing, shocked. Noun group = cute kittens.
3. Class to brainstorm a bank of adjectives and noun groups based on themes from current units of learning. For example, the teacher could ask students for adjectives and noun groups on frogs. Students could reply with green, slimy, croaky, tiny tadpoles.
4. Teacher supports students to create examples of exclamation marks using their word bank:
  - How + adjective!
  - What + adjective!
  - What + noun group!
6. Teacher uses a think-aloud to discuss the mood and tone created by exclamation marks, and how this makes meaning in texts and shapes an audience's response. The teacher then provides students with a range of sentences. In pairs, students add an exclamation mark and discuss how this punctuation may change the purpose of the sentence.  
  
For example, 'The large, slimy frog hopped into the pool.' (Statement, no mood/atmosphere.)  
  
'The large, slimy frog hopped into the pool!' (May add fear, excitement, contain a warning.)
7. To support [higher order thinking](#), ask students to consider what happens when an exclamation mark is omitted? Does the meaning change? Is there a way to maintain meaning without the exclamation mark?

# Appendix 1

## Bold, italics, underline and capital letters

Example	Which font style can you see? <b>Bold</b> , <i>italics</i> , <u>underline</u> or CAPITAL LETTERS?	Effect How did this change the meaning?
I have read the books <i>The Day the Crayons Quit</i> .		
The laughing was getting <b>very</b> loud.		
The DoE stands for the Department of Education.		
I could not <b>believe</b> that they did it again!		
This process is called <i>photosynthesis</i> .		
Please bring your water bottle, coat and <u>school hat</u> .		
NASA's astronauts have landed on the Moon.		
The track was becoming narrow- <i>surely not much longer...</i>		

**Accessibility note:**

The Day the Crayons Quit is in italics

'very' is in bold in the sentence 'The laughing was getting very loud.'

The D and E in DoE is in capitals

'believe' is in bold in the sentence 'I could not believe that they did it again!'

'photosynthesis is in italics

school hat is underlined.

NASA is in capital letters

'surely not much longer very' is in italics in the sentence 'The track was becoming narrow- surely not much longer...'

## Appendix 2

### Teacher copy: Adding brackets to sentences

I bought a gift for you (and maybe one for me).

The new house (on Warrena Street) is being built quickly.

I ran to stand next to Dave (my best friend).

If you are looking for more information on caring for animals (see below):

The egg white (albumen) is mostly water, protein and some minerals.

Lockie Leonard, Legend (1997) was one of Tim Winton's books for younger readers.

The stringy tough brown husk (coir) can be woven into ropes and yarns for household goods.

To learn more about coconuts (p. 32).

Hay fever makes Jen sneeze (non-stop!).

If you make me wear that (the crocodile costume) I will just have to leave!

In fact, even though birds have feathers and (usually) fly, they're actually just a special group of reptiles.

*Jackson, T. The Conversation (2020)*

Black mamba venom is designed for rapidly taking down birds as well as mammals, and this turns out to be an important point. If you've seen Jurassic Park (if you haven't, stop whatever you're doing and see it immediately!) you know birds are descended from dinosaurs.

*Jackson, T. The Conversation (2020)*

## Student copy: Adding brackets to sentences

I bought a gift for you and maybe one for me.

The new house on Warrena Street is being built quickly.

I ran to stand next to Dave my best friend.

If you are looking for more information on caring for animals see below:

The egg white albumen is mostly water, protein and some minerals.

Lockie Leonard, Legend 1997 was one of Tim Winton's books for younger readers.

The stringy tough brown husk coir can be woven into ropes and yarns for household goods.

To learn more about coconuts p. 32.

Hay fever makes Jen sneeze non-stop!

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