# English Early Stage 1 learning sequence – focus on character

**Learning sequence description**

Students understand that characters in imaginative texts are visual, verbal and aural representations of people who participate in the narrative.

## Syllabus outcomes and content

**ENe-1A** - communicates with peers and known adults in informal and guided activities demonstrating emerging skills in group interactions

* use interaction skills including listening while others speak, using appropriate voice levels, articulation and body language, gestures and eye contact
* carry out instructions involving one step
* engage with and respond to a range of oral and aural texts for enjoyment and pleasure

**ENe-2A** - composes simple texts to convey an idea or message

* share writing with others for enjoyment
* identify and use words around the classroom and in books during writing
* compose texts using some sight words and known words

**ENe-3A –** produces most lower and upper case letters and uses digital technologies to construct texts

* understand foundation movements that underpin NSW Foundation Style
* produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations

**ENe-4a** - demonstrates developing skills and strategies to read, view and comprehend short, predictable texts on familiar topics in different media and technologies

* recognise high frequency words, including own name
* identify literal meanings presented in texts, e.g. character, setting and events
* create visuals that reflect character, setting and events.

[English K-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/english-year-10/english-k-10) © 2012 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

## Suggested routines

### Independent reading

Encourage students to read every day. For early stage 1 students this, includes reading decodable texts and re-reading texts that are self-created.

Reading a familiar text helps develop independence and confidence, which in turn fosters fluency and frees cognitive load, allowing students to concentrate on reading for meaning. Reading a text that meets learning needs, such as a decodable text, allows students to demonstrate their ability to blend phonemes to read words.

Record daily reading using a reading log with parental feedback. A ‘record of text’ is included in Resource 2 - student workbook.

### Phonics, high frequency sight words, handwriting

This 2-week learning sequence follows a recommended order of explicit sound-letter relationships. It is acknowledged schools use a variety of programs with varying sequences. The pace suggested in this sequence may not meet your school’s expectations. Monitor and adjust as required.

### Speaking and listening

Encourage students to use clear enunciation, appropriate volume, lengthened sentences and experiment with increasingly sophisticated words.

Appropriate body language, gestures and eye contact are attentive listening behaviours students may typically demonstrate.

### Recording students’ learning

Students may record their work in a blank exercise book or the associated student workbook, Resource 2. For those with access to the internet/devices, student responses may be uploaded to class online platform.

## Lesson 1

Students are learning to:

* engage in conversations and discussions
* experiment with describing words.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 1.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students look in the kitchen and without gesturing or hand signals, describe one object (common noun) in detail without naming the object. Students are encouraged to use adjectives (descriptive words).  Students describe the object to an adult.  In response, the adult describes a different kitchen item and the student infers what the object could be. |  |  |
| 1.2 | **Reading and viewing**  **Students listen to the story Big Rain Coming by Katrina Germein and illustrated by Bronwyn Bancroft, published by Penguin Random House. At the conclusion ask students for their opinion about the text. Discuss the character of Old Stephen and how the illustrator cleverly creates distance from the viewer.** |  | [Resource 1 – Big Rain Coming](https://vimeo.com/410572459/063a5773a7)  [video] |
| 1.3 | **Writing and representing**  Discuss with students something, an event, or someone they have had to wait for, comparing it to the community waiting for the ‘big rain’ to come.  Discuss the concept of time and how waiting can be both exciting and dreadful. This might be, for example, waiting for Christmas, waiting until a tooth falls out or waiting for the arrival of a new sibling.  Students draw a picture, detailing what they have had to wait a long time for. They can attach labels to add detail to their picture. Students are encouraged t**o write a sentence describing their image.** |  | [Resource 2 – Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/english/media/documents/english-es1-student-workbook-character.docx) |
| 1.4 | **Handwriting**  **View handwriting video lesson i, I .**  **Complete the supporting handwriting activities for i, I, in resource 2: student workbook.**  Ensure students have correct posture and encourage appropriate pencil grip. |  | [Resource 3 - Handwriting ‘i’](https://vimeo.com/412191688)  **[video]**  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 1.5 | **Reflection**  Students to discuss with an adult:  Why is Old Stephen important to this story? Why are characters important in a text? |  |  |

## Lesson 2

Students are learning to:

* experiment with describing words (adjectives) and understand the meaning they carry
* identify literal meanings presented in texts, e.g. characters, setting and events
* understand that characters can invite positive or negative responses.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 2.1 | **Speaking and listening**  **Vocabulary**  Using a familiar character from a movie or book (e.g. Spiderman, Elsa, Mickey Mouse, Pig the Pug) student play ‘Bounce’ with an adult.  Taking turns, the players use a word or short phrase to describe the character, including physically (e.g. bossy, tall, pointy ears, messy, sad, lonely) until all options have been exhausted.  Then another familiar character can be chosen, and the Bounce game resumes. |  |  |
| 2.2 | **Reading and viewing**  **Shared reading – Think Aloud**  **Students watch the video lesson Big Rain Coming – Think Aloud. Think Alouds give teachers the opportunity to demonstrate curiosity by posing leading questions which can be answered over the course of the lesson series.**  **Discuss with students the setting of this story. Ask students to locate evidence in the text to support their claim. Compare and contrast this setting with their own personal setting.** |  | [Resource 4 – Big Rain Coming shared reading](https://vimeo.com/410580251/3127fe8ccc)  [video] |
| 2.3 | **Writing and representing**  **Following the discussion about the setting of Big Rain Coming in lesson 2.2, and the differences and similarities of where they live, students can draw their personal setting and the setting described in Big Rain Coming. Each picture can be labelled to draw attention to the similarities and differences.** Students are encouraged t**o write a sentence describing their image using high frequency sight words and stretching out words so articulated phonemes can be recorded.**  **Opportunity for monitoring**  **What to look for:**   * creates ideas to write and draw about * articulates thoughts and ideas about writing * takes responsibility for own work. |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 2.4 | **Reflection**  **Students are to consider that not all characters are likeable, but many are interesting. What makes an interesting character in a text?** |  |  |

## Lesson 3

Students are learning to:

* blend through phonemes to read words with increasing degrees of confidence
* discuss new vocabulary and demonstrate growing understanding by experimenting to use these words in context.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 3.1 | **Speaking and listening**  **Students play Eye Spy as a game of revision, using the learnt phonemes: a, s, t, p.** |  |  |
| 3.2 | **Reading and viewing**  **explicit phonics**  **Students watch the explicit phonics lesson for i, n. Students can read Foldable Decodable (resource 2) text aloud.**  **Shared reading - Vocabulary**  Students watch the Big Rain Coming vocabulary lesson. Discuss the newly introduced vocabulary: ‘huddle’ and ‘echo’.  **Opportunity for monitoring**  **What to look for:**   * begins to experiment with increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structures * uses the words huddle and echo appropriately in context. |  | [Resource 5 - Explicit Phonics](https://vimeo.com/412732364)  [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook  [Resource 6 - Shared reading](https://vimeo.com/410576812/9a3e96fad1)  [video] |
| 3.3 | **Writing and representing**  **Together brainstorm when people, animals and things that ‘huddle’. Such as: people out of inclement weather, elephants to protect their young, dirty clothes thrown in the laundry. Students create a picture to describe one event of animals/people/things huddling and may record using labels or a short description to explain their picture.** |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 3.4 | **Reflection**  **Students are to discuss with an adult or with classmates, what they should do when they come across an unfamiliar word.**  **Encourage their articulation of the skills of blending learned phonemes to read and that their practising of high frequency sight words will also help them read continuous text.**  **Reaffirm and commend their determination as they learn to read and remind them that nobody is born reading, it is a skill we must all learn.** |  |  |

## Lesson 4

Students are learning to:

* use adjectives to describe emotions
* demonstrate understanding of key, common adjectives through expression
* create a description of a character’s appearance and personality.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 4.1 | **Speaking and listening**  An adult will reveal to the student an emotion card (in the student workbook) which shows, for example: surprised, angry, happy, excited, disappointed, sad expressions.  Students demonstrate and discuss:  What would your face look like if you were feeling this emotion?  What would your body look like?  What is something you might say when you are feeling this emotion?  When have you felt that emotion? |  | Resource 2- Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 4.2 | **Writing and representing**  **Selecting four emotions from lesson 4.1, students can speak to, discuss and then draw an image reflecting that emotion. Students are encouraged to discuss the use of colour and line to symbolise emotion. The image may be when they have felt each of those emotions.** |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 4.3 | **Reading and viewing**  **High frequency sight words**  **Students become familiar with the high frequency sight words – ‘in’ and ‘and’ in lesson 1. Students can play Bingo in the student workbook to consolidate learning.** |  | [Resource 7 - HFSW](https://vimeo.com/413572299)  [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 4.4 | **Handwriting**  **Students have the opportunity to specifically practise the formation of the letter ‘n’ in this video lesson 2.**  **Practise the letter formation of both lower and upper case N n in the student workbook.** |  | [Resource 8 - Handwriting](https://vimeo.com/412215844)  [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 4.5 | **Reflection**  Students to discuss: what emotion do you like to feel the most?  Which one the least? Why?  If everyone feels emotions, then why is it sometimes not obvious what people are feeling? |  |  |

## Lesson 5

Students are learning to:

* use persuasive language to convince
* recognise the typical features and structures of a narrative.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 5.1 | **Speaking and Listening**  Using persuasive language, students attempt to convince an adult using 3 reasons why:  they should have pets at school  they should eat whatever they like all day.  **Opportunity for monitoring**  **What to look for:**   * **articulates clearly with appropriate volume** * **speaks in phrases that are increasingly sophisticated** * **formulates reasons to support their stance.** |  |  |
| 5.2 | **Writing and representing**  Students draw 3 representations of their argument, as per the activity described in 5.1. Praise efforts as students attempt to record their persuasive reasoning through labels and statements. |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 5.3 | **Reading and viewing**  **Shared reading: concept**  **Students watch the video lesson. At the conclusion of the lesson, discuss with students what they have learned and ask students to identify the clear beginning, middle (complication) and end (conclusion) of the narrative.**  **Explicit phonics**  **Students watch the explicit phonics video lesson 2 and read the Foldable Decodable text, book 2.** |  | [Resource 9 - Shared reading: Concept](https://vimeo.com/410839330/4c6f54c815)  [video]  [Resource 10 - Explicit Phonics](https://vimeo.com/412737931) [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 5.4 | **Reflection**  **Ask students why they think many narratives follow a predictable structure of beginning, middle (complication) and end (conclusion). What happens when a narrative is not resolved? Does every story need a conclusion?** |  |  |

## Lesson 6

Students are learning to:

* explore how tone, volume, pitch, articulation, body language and facial expressions contribute to communication
* identify that imaginative texts are about characters
* compare character attributes in texts.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 6.1 | **Speaking and listening**  **Opportunity for monitoring student learning**  Expression - Oral task  Focusing on expression, students say ‘How are you today?’ as a different person, for example: The Queen, a school principal, their best friend, a very old person, a toddler, the Prime Minister.  Encourage students to think about their facial expression, tone and body language.  **What to look for:**   * adjusts pace, volume, pitch and pronunciation to enhance meaning and expression * uses body language and facial expressions to suit the character. |  |  |
| 6.2 | **Reading and viewing**  **Shared reading – Listening**  **Students listen to the new text Let’s get a Pup! by Bob Graham, published by Walker Books.** |  | [Resource 11 - Shared reading](https://vimeo.com/412541957)[video] |
| 6.3 | **Writing and representing**  **In response to the shared text, students discuss the characters Rosy and Dave. They will develop, through literal and inferential information, 4-6 adjectives that describe each (e.g. Rosy is broad, old, calm, trustworthy, comforting. Dave is energetic, funny, small, hairy, lovable). Students are to draw and label these two characters. Some students may write a short statement, placing these adjectives into sentences.** |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 6.4 | **Handwriting**  Students view video lesson 3 and complete the two supporting activities for ‘m, M’.  Ensure students have correct posture and encourage appropriate pencil grip. |  | [Resource 12 - Handwriting](https://vimeo.com/412233978)  [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook |
| 6.5 | **Reflection**  Students to discuss with an adult how they think they are progressing with their handwriting. What do they think they do well, and what do they need to focus on? |  |  |

## Lesson 7

Students are learning to:

* describe in detail, familiar places and things
* make inferences about characters’ actions and feelings.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 7.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students are to look around their immediate space and select an item. Then students describe this item to an adult without saying what the item is.  The adult will guess the item based on the descriptions given. Students are encouraged to use descriptive language. Reverse the roles and the adult describes an object and the student is to infer what it is. |  |  |
| 7.2 | **Reading and viewing**  **Explicit phonics**  **Students watch the explicit phonics video lesson 3, practising i, n, m, d, and blending phonemes to read words. Students read the Foldable Decodable text book 3 independently.**  **Shared reading – Think Aloud**  **Discuss with students the characters of Rosy and Dave. How are they alike? How are they dissimilar? What common goals do you think they share?** |  | [Resource 13 - Explicit Phonics](https://vimeo.com/412745558) [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB)  [Resource 14 - Shared reading](https://vimeo.com/414580560)  [video] |
| 7.3 | **Writing and representing**  **Students imagine a conversation between Rosy and Dave, discussing their new home. They may discuss their past and their hopes for the future. Ask students to draw, label and possibly write a short description of the conversation between them.** |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 7.4 | **Reflection**  Students to discuss with an adult - what makes an interesting main character? If you were to write a story, what traits would your main character have? |  |  |

## Lesson 8

Students are learning to:

* read high frequency words quickly and accurately
* make inferences about characters’ actions, motivations and feelings.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 8.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students view a G rated movie poster to make inferences about characters’ actions and motivations (teacher selection).  Examples of G rated movie posters to view are Meet the Robinsons, The Little Mermaid, Finding Nemo. Try and select a movie poster that the students may not have seen.  Students view the characters in the poster and will make inferences about the characters and their actions and motivations.  As students may be unfamiliar with the characters, it will be based on how the characters look, what they wear, how they stand and their facial expressions. |  |  |
| 8.2 | **Writing and representing**  **Using the G rated movie poster as stimulus, students select one of the characters based on the discussion in 8.1 to draw. Once the character has been drawn the students can label. They are encouraged to write a short description of the physical attributes and one about their personality, as interpreted through the image.** |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 8.3 | **Reading and viewing**  **High frequency sight words**  **Students watch the high frequency sight word video lesson 2, practising has, to, had. Students can play Bingo, which is included in the student workbook. The teacher can write the words on flash cards and post-it notes and routinely practise them with the students.** |  | [Resource 15 - HFSW](https://vimeo.com/413578930)  [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 8.4 | **Handwriting**  Students view video lesson 4 and complete the two supporting activities for D, d.  Ensure students have correct posture and encourage appropriate pencil grip.  **Opportunity for monitoring**  **What to look for:**   * forms the uppercase letter D and lowercase letter d correctly * demonstrates developing fine-motor control * writes letters with improved uniformity in size and shape. |  | [Resource 16 - Handwriting](https://vimeo.com/412262002)  [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 8.5 | **Reflection**  What was one thing you are doing well when reading independently?  What is one part of your reading you would like to focus on?  Discuss and share with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 9

Students are learning to:

* blend phonemes to read words in continuous text
* experiment to use novel vocabulary appropriately
* identify and describe a character’s identity.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 9.1 | **Speaking and listening**  **Students to express a point of view and opinion about the text Let’s Get a Pup! They are to deliver a short presentation to recommend or not recommend the text, giving at least two reasons to support their endorsement.** |  |  |
| 9.2 | **Reading and viewing**  **Shared reading – vocabulary**  **Students watch the video lesson of the book Let’s Get a Pup! Discuss the introduced vocabulary: immediately, instantly and radiate.**  **Explicit phonics**  **Students watch explicit phonics lesson 4, learning about the phonemes and graphemes i, n, m, d.**  **The Foldable Decodable allows students to practise blending to read words using the graphemes: i, n, m and d.**  **Opportunity for monitoring**  **What to look for:**   * **recalls the grapheme-phoneme relationship quickly** * **blends through phonemes to read words.** |  | [Resource 17 - Shared reading: vocabulary](https://vimeo.com/414599976)  [video]  [Resource 18 - Explicit Phonics](https://vimeo.com/412757395) [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 9.3 | **Writing and representing**  **Discuss the meaning of opposite and conclude ‘slowly’ is the opposite of immediately or instantly. Using the newly introduced vocabulary, ‘instantly, immediately’ students contribute to a joint construction, detailing what happens when events occur - ‘immediately’ or ‘slowly’. For example;**  **When I drop a carton of juice I….clean it up.**  **If I bang my toe on a rock I move….**  **I move ….when I am sleepy,**  **After the joint construction, students can draw and label their own example of moving immediately, slowly or instantly.** |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
|  | **Reflection**  Students to discuss with an adult, why do we learn new vocabulary?  How does knowing about, and using, precise words to describe things, help us as readers and writers? |  |  |

## Lesson 10

Students are learning to:

* describe in detail familiar people
* review simple imaginative texts
* read decodable texts independently by blending phonemes to read words.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 10.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students describe in detail a familiar person using adjectives. Ask them to describe: the way they look, speak, act and move. What likes and dislikes does this person have?  This person may be a relative or friend. Encourage students to include adjectives and detail (e.g. brown eyes, happy smile, jumps around like a kangaroo) |  |  |
| 10.2 | **Opportunity for monitoring student learning**  **Labels - collection of student work**  **Students draw a familiar person with as much detail as possible. Students explain their picture by writing one or two sentences and by creating labels.**  **What to look for:**   * attempts writing with confidence and independence * includes adjectives to improve their sentences or labels (e.g. thick hair). |  | Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 10.3 | **Reading and viewing**  **Shared reading – concept of narrative**  **After watching the video lesson for Let’s Get a Pup!, students can discuss the setting of the story. W**here could this story be set? How do you know? Discuss how and why we can relate to this family.  **Explicit phonics**  **Students practise the newly learnt phoneme-graphemes i, n, m, d to read words in continuous text in Foldable Decodable 5.**  **Opportunity for monitoring**  **What to look for:**   * **reads with growing independence and confidence** * **blends through phonemes to read words.** |  | [Resource 19 - Shared reading](https://vimeo.com/415053190) [video]  Resource 2 - Student workbook (DOCX 2.9MB) |
| 10.4 | **Reflection**  Students to discuss with an adult how they think their writing is progressing. What are they doing well?  What do they think might focus on as an area of improvement? |  |  |

**Reflection and evaluation**

These simple questions may help you reflect on your students’ learning and plan for next steps.

What worked well and why?

What didn’t work and why?

What might I do differently next time?

What are the next steps for student learning based on the evidence gathered?

## ESL scales links to the English syllabus

Teachers should use the ESL scales in conjunction with the syllabus to address the needs of EAL/D students and to assist them to access English curriculum outcomes and content. The ESL scales are designed to heighten awareness of English, how it is used, how it develops and how EAL/D students may be assisted to develop cognitive and linguistic competence.

The ESL scales can be found on the [Multicultural Education Page](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/multicultural-education/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect/resources).

### ES1 Speaking and Listening

The level on the ESL scales needed to achieve this English syllabus outcome is Oral Interaction level 4. An EAL student at this stage of schooling may be assessed at a range of levels on the ESL scales Oral Interaction strand from level 1 to level 4. Teachers plan a learning pathway for EAL students using the ESL scales outcomes and pointers. Teachers assess EAL students' current level of English on the ESL scales then plan teaching and learning activities to scaffold learning for students working towards the achievement of English syllabus outcomes. For EAL students to achieve this English syllabus outcome the teaching focus and pathway of learning will be mainly within the Communication ESL scales strand organiser. See ESL scales outcomes 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1.

### ES1 Writing and Representing

The level on the ESL scales needed to achieve this English syllabus outcome is Writing level 1. An EAL student at this stage of schooling may be assessed at a range of levels on the ESL scales Writing strand from Beginning level 1 to level 1. Teachers plan a learning pathway for EAL students using the ESL scales outcomes and pointers. Teachers assess EAL students' current level of English on the ESL scales then plan teaching and learning activities to scaffold learning for students working towards the achievement of English syllabus outcomes. For EAL students to achieve this English syllabus outcome the teaching focus and pathway of learning will be within the Communication and Language and cultural understanding ESL scales strand organisers. See ESL scales outcomes B1.5, B1.6, B2.5, B2.6, 1.9, 1.10.

### ES1 Reading and Viewing

The level on the ESL scales needed to achieve this English syllabus outcome is Reading and Responding level 1. An EAL student at this stage of schooling may be assessed at a range of levels on the ESL scales Reading and Responding strand from Beginning level 1 to level 1. Teachers plan a learning pathway for EAL students using the ESL scales outcomes and pointers. Teachers assess EAL students' current level of English on the ESL scales then plan teaching and learning activities to scaffold learning for students working towards the achievement of English syllabus outcomes. For EAL students to achieve this English syllabus outcome the teaching focus and pathway of learning will be within the Language structures and features and Strategies ESL scales strand organisers. See ESL scales outcomes B1.3, B1.4, B2.3, B2.4, 1.7, 1.8.