



TEACHER ASSISTANT Guide Handbook

Name: _____

Contact no: _____

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A note from Shine Literacy

At Shine Literacy, we believe that children who read better, learn better! Teacher Assistants (TAs) can support children with regular, positive and engaging Paired and Story Reading experiences. Individual paired reading sessions at the child's level help to improve children's vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and letter/word recognition skills.

Story Reading, when done well, brings the magic of stories and books alive! Listening to, and participating in discussions about stories, improves imagination, listening skills, vocabulary, comprehension and communication skills. More importantly, listening to stories creates a love for books and reading which lays a solid foundation for academic success.

TAs can play a vital role in supporting educators to improve literacy levels in their classrooms with Paired and Story Reading. With educator support and mentorship, TAs can develop the skills to support literacy in classrooms and use those skills in their own families, homes and communities, which ultimately contributes to Shine's Vision of "A Nation of Readers".

It is important to recognise, however, that skills alone are not enough. The Shine Ethos is at the heart of the TA Training (and everything we do at Shine Literacy) because we know that "How you do something" matters as much as "What you do". We know that people do not learn if they don't feel heard, valued and at ease. This means that a very significant part of the TA training provides participants with opportunities to learn and practice the Shine Ethos.

For more information about Shine Literacy, visit www.shineliteracy.org.za. You may also want to visit our data-free Storytime with Shine Mobi-Site at <https://www.shineliteracy.org.za/read/>

The Mobi-Site can be accessed on most mobile phones, without the need to register or provide an email address. It has hundreds of stories that can be read or listened to (in 7 different languages), as well as other resources and activities to stimulate and entertain children. There are also tips and resources for parents and caregivers. Plans to continue to develop and add new content to the Mobi-Site are underway, so watch out for new, improved content in 2023 and beyond.





Shine Ethos

Each individual matters

Shine creates an environment that affirms a child's importance.

Listen with respect and without interruption

The quality of our attention profoundly affects the quality of other people's thinking.

Treat each other as thinking peers

We learn from one another, regardless of age or qualification.

Ease creates, urgency destroys

An environment that encourages children to work at their own pace facilitates learning.

Practice the art of appreciation

Be generous and genuine with praise and words of encouragement.

Paired Reading

Step 1: The Picture Walk

Before reading a paired reading book, the Teacher Assistant should conduct a “picture walk” with the child. This means, look at the pictures in the book with the child to see what the book is about. A picture walk helps the child feel more comfortable and gives him/her an understanding of the story. During the picture walk, a child can voice his/her opinion, give input and use his/her imagination. The TA can introduce and explain any new ideas or concepts during the picture walk. **Remember to cover the text during a picture walk.**

Follow these steps then do a picture walk

- 1 Look at the cover of the book together then ask the child what he/she sees.
- 2 Relate what they see to their reality by asking anything that connects the child to the book cover. For example, “Yes, that is a dancer on the cover. What do you know about dancing?”
- 3 You can ask about the title, the author and content pages, if applicable.
- 4 Turn to the first page and ask what he or she sees, or what is happening. Cover the words on each page so the child does not read the text. Focusing on the pictures helps develop comprehension, vocabulary and general knowledge.
- 5 Ask different questions about what is on each page. This will help the child understand the story.
- 6 At the end of the story, you can ask the child to summarise the story in his/her own words.
- 7 Praise the child at every opportunity as means of encouragement.



Step 2: Reading the Text

During paired reading, a child reads a book aloud with his or her Teacher Assistant. The TA initially reads along with the child but withdraws as the child gains confidence to read aloud on his own. If the child starts to struggle, the TA joins in again until the child is ready to read alone again. The idea is to provide support by reading together at first, but to encourage the child to take control. This might not happen immediately and you will need to give lots of encouragement and praise to help them stay motivated.

Following these steps will help to ensure a successful paired reading time together:

- 1** Select two reading books that are appropriate for the child's reading ability and ask him or her to choose one. Educators can advise which level reader each child should start with.
- 2** Ensure that the book is squarely in front of the child. Agree to the signal that the child will use to indicate that they want to read alone (for instance, tapping on the page).
- 3** Start reading the book aloud with the child. Use your finger to follow each word as you read together and be sensitive to the pace of the child.
- 4** When the child gives the agreed signal, stop reading and allow the child to read aloud alone. Offer lots of encouragement.
- 5** If the child makes a mistake, allow a few seconds for him or her to correct it. Prompt the child to look at the letters and try to sound them. If the child still cannot read it, help him/her to sound the word out and then continue reading.
- 6** If the child is struggling, read together again until he or she gives you the signal to read alone. You may repeat this process several times while you are reading the book.
- 7** At the end, encourage the child to reflect on the story by making observations and asking questions.
- 8** Praise the child for her/his effort.



A few other Paired Reading Tips

- It is better for children to read a simple book first to boost their confidence. Try to read most of the books in one level before moving on to the next.
- Children enjoy repetition. By reading the same book several times, they will become more familiar with sight words and will develop fluency, expression and confidence. However, it is also important that children do not become bored.
- While it is a good idea to ask children to sound out words during paired reading, be wary of doing this too often so that the flow of the story is interrupted. Consider moving to a lower level book if the child needs to sound out/doesn't know too many words.
- Give plenty of encouragement throughout. Watch the children's body language to gauge their level of anxiety or enjoyment and respond accordingly.

Story Reading

During Story Reading, the TA reads a storybook to the children. The purpose is for the children to be able to listen and enjoy a well-read story. Lots of conversation about the book helps to bring the story alive and increases enjoyment and understanding.

How to — Story Reading

Story Reading is first and foremost about enjoying the story.

By following these steps, TAs can create a successful Story Reading time.

- 1** Read different types of books to children. Choose some fiction, and some non-fiction. Share chapter books by reading a chapter or several pages per day.
- 2** Before reading, use the title page and pictures in the book to discuss what the story might be about. Encourage the children to make initial links with their own experiences and knowledge.
- 3** Start reading the book. Read at an even pace and use intonation to indicate where sentences start and end. Use inflection, pauses and emphasis to bring the story alive.
- 4** During reading, comment or ask questions to help the children to engage with the story. However, try not to interrupt the flow too often as children may become impatient or lose interest.
- 5** After reading, encourage the children to reflect on the story, by making observations and asking questions.
- 6** Always praise the child's responses, any attempt at answering questions or sharing their thoughts should be valued, even if they aren't correct.



A few other Story Reading Tips

- Choose books that reflect the children's interests and general level of understanding.
- Look for opportunities to relate the book to the children's own lives and to help them make links with what they already know.
- Welcome the children's comments and listen carefully and respectfully to their ideas.
- Keep an eye on the children's mood. If they become restless, they might be struggling to understand, or the story is being read with too many interruptions.
- Children often enjoy hearing the same book repeatedly. This is fine and can help them to build confidence, but encourage children to explore new books too. Later, when they are ready, introduce some non-fiction.

English Letter Sounds

When reading with a child, be sure to emphasise the *sounds* instead of the names of letters. Phonetic spelling helps children learn how to decode new words. Here is a list of the sounds you should use when reading through words your child does not know.

Use actions to demonstrate the sounds.

A said like the “A” in APPLE

B — BOUNCE

C — CATCH

D — DANCE

E — ELEPHANT

F — FALL

G — GO

H — HUG

I — IN

J — JUMP

K — KISS

L — LAUGH

M — MAN

N — NOSE

O — ON

P — PUSH and PULL

Qu — QUIET, QUEEN

R — READ

S — STOP

T — TIP TOE

U — UNDER

V — VUVUZELA

W — WALK

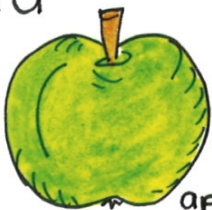



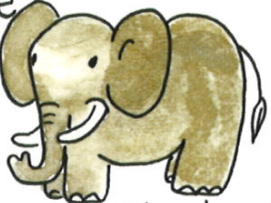
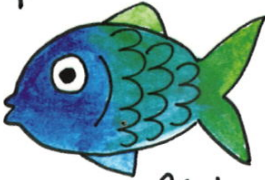









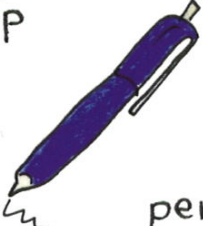

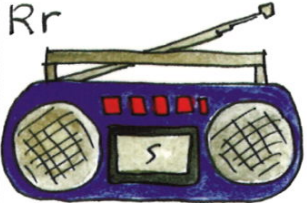
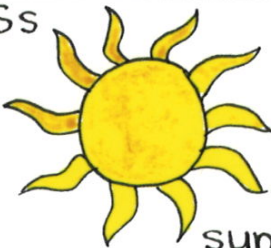







X — SIX

Y — YES

Z — ZIP



Alphabet chart

Aa  apple	Bb  bed	Cc  cat	Dd  dog
Ee  elephant	Ff  fish	Gg  gate	Hh  hat
Ii  inside	Jj  jump	Kk  key	Ll  lion
Mm  man	Nn  nest	Oo  oranges	Pp  pen
Qq  queen	Rr  radio	Ss  sun	Tt  table
Uu  umbrella	Vv  van	Ww  watch	Xx  x-ray
Yy  yo-yo	Zz  zebra	a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z	

Rainbow Resource for CVC Words

Use the rainbow to visually highlight first sounds (at the start of the rainbow), middle sounds (at the top of the rainbow) and end sounds (in the pot of gold). You can place the rainbow in a plastic sleeve and use a whiteboard marker to write letters at the start, middle and end which make up simple three letter, consonant, vowel, consonant (CVC) words.



Comprehension Building

questions and strategies

Prediction:

Guessing what is going to happen based on information in the text.

What do you think she will find in the box? Will she find what she is looking for? Why do you think so?

Evaluative/Judgement:

Share an opinion or judge/evaluate something.

Do you think he was being fair when he said that? What do you think he could have done differently in that situation?

Summarizing:

Recall the main events/ideas in the story in summary format. Only main/important points, not all details.

Can you tell me what happened in this story?

Monitoring:

Check understanding as you read by listening to the child's comments and asking questions.

Why was Wanda afraid for her teacher to see her? All questions are a form of monitoring!

Visualizing:

Children picture ideas/ concepts in their mind.

Can you imagine you are at the castle with Biff and Chip? What kind of clothes are you wearing?

Text Scanning:

Finding information directly stated in the text.

Where does it tell us the dog's name? Who does the hen ask to help her bake the bread?

Inferencing:

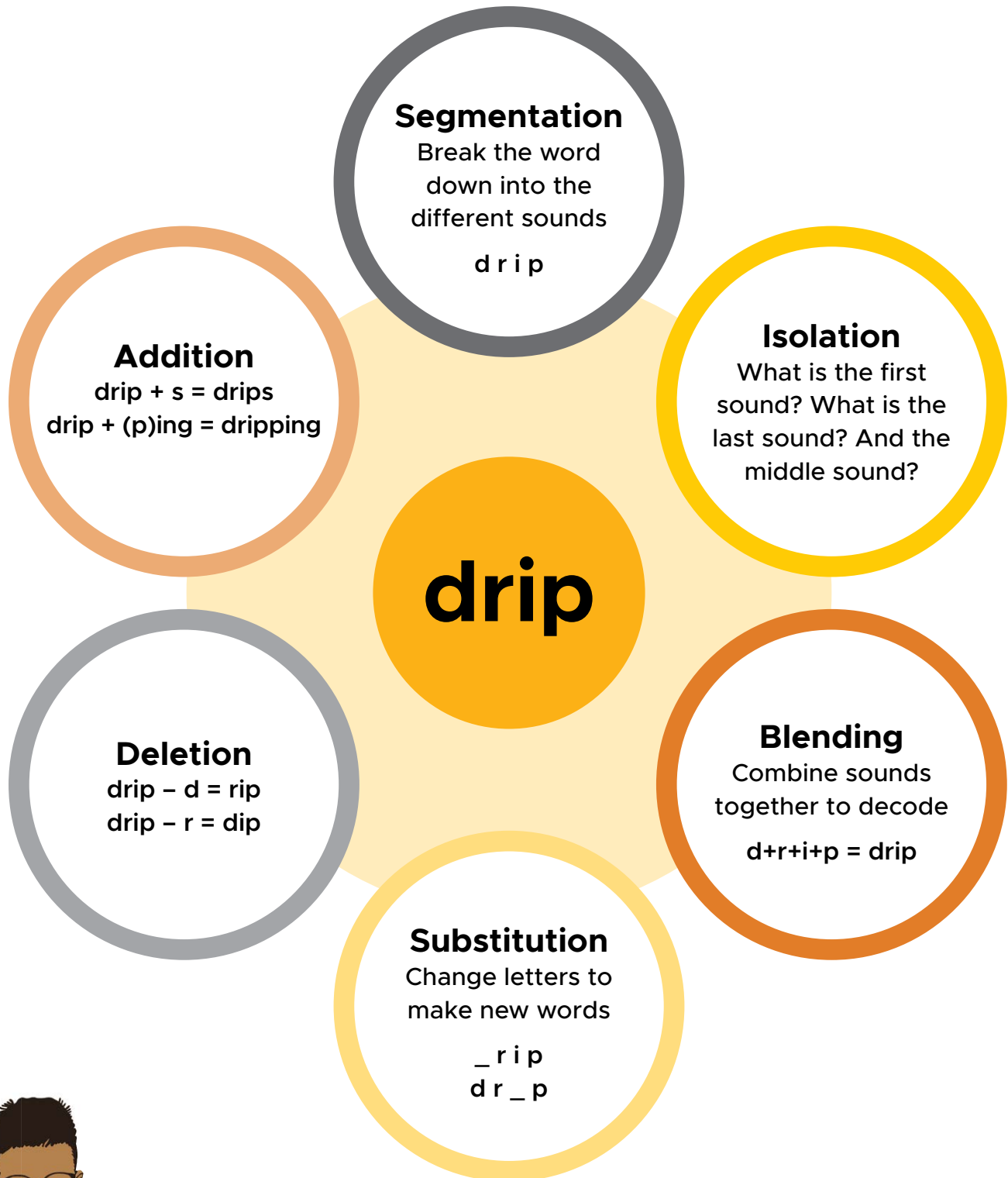
The information is not stated directly in the text, children must use information in the text to make conclusions.

What do you think might be wrong with the sick dog? What do you think caused the fire?

Sample Questions to Develop Comprehension when Reading

1. Can you remember the title of the book? (End of story)
2. What do you think of the pictures in the book? Are they painted, drawn or photographs?
3. What do you think might happen next in the story? (During story)
4. If you were writing this story would you have ended it the same way? (End)
5. What did you like or not like about this story? (End)
6. What is the author was trying to say to us and how did you know? (During or end)
7. What was the best part of this story? (End)
8. Who did you like in this story? Why? (End)
9. Did anyone in the story make you think of someone you know? (End)
10. Can you think of any other books that are like this one? (End)

Activities to build phonemic awareness





Games

Many of these games can be played in any language! Don't be afraid to play them in your home language. The games can also be used to fill in gaps during the school day. If you have 3 to 4 minutes, you can play a quick game to help with the building of the child's language.

I spy with my little eye

Aim of the game: To guess the object that the other person is thinking of.

How to play: One person picks the name of anything he/she can see and then tells the other person the sound of the first letter of that word. The other person tries to guess what the object is. Let the children have a turn finding an object and giving the first letter while the adult guesses.

Example:

Adult: "I spy with my little eye, something beginning with "b".

Child: Ball?

Adult: "Yes, ball does start with "b", but it is not what I am thinking of".

Child: Bicycle?

Adult: "Yes, well done! Now it's your turn."

Child: I spy with my little eye, something beginning with "d"...



Tips

- Use the sound of the letter and not the name of the letter. (For example, say "b" as in bounce rather than "bee", and "m" as in man rather than "em".)
- Remember that everyone must be able to see the object you choose.
- You can also give clues... "Something beginning with "b" and it helps me get to the shops very quickly".

Playing with Words

The word games below will help the child to learn the meaning of new words and to recognise words that are used frequently. TAs should support lead the activities and support learners as needed.

Write your weekly class spelling words on a piece of paper or cardboard. Each word should be written out twice so you have matching words. Cut out each word – try to make each word card the same size. Here are a few ideas on how to use them:

- Ask the learner to make a nonsense sentence from the words.
- Ask the learner to make a proper sentence from the words. Read each word out loud as you arrange it. Read the sentence backward and laugh!
- If children struggle with some of the words, suggest that they write them in fun ways – on your back; in the air with her finger, with dough or Prestik. Let them think of other fun ways to do this.
- Play Word “Snap!” (Divide the cards between two players so each has a pile of identical words. Both players turn over a card from their pile at the same time. If the words on the cards are the same, the first player to shout “Snap!” gets both cards and puts them at the bottom of his pile. The first player to get all the cards wins.
- Write words in large letters on a piece of cardboard (you can use old cereal boxes). Cut each letter out separately, mix them up and ask the child to put them back together to spell the word. Ask her to see if there are any other words she can make out of the same letters.
- Play “Detective” together and see if you can find the specific letters or words in a newspaper, magazine, shop flyer or book.
- Draw a picture that includes as many objects as possible. Label the items in the picture using the words learned.
- Play a guessing game with the words. Lay all the word cards out so the child can see them. Now give the child clues about one of the words on the table and see if he/she can guess which word you are thinking of. For example, for the word “off” you might say, “This word is the opposite of on.” For the word “black” you might say, “This is the name of a very dark colour.”
- Choose a word from the list and ask the child if he/she can think of a word that rhymes with the word you have chosen. For example, if you choose the word “wish”, you would say, “Can you think of a word that rhymes with wish?” If your child struggles help them by giving them clues like, “What about an animal that lives in the water?”



Playing with Sounds and Letters

Below are some ideas for children who are just learning their letters and can't read many words. Again, these games can be played in any language and can be played anywhere! Use the alphabet sheet at the end of this document to assist children with these games.

"Spot the letter".

Pick an alphabet letter, remembering to use the sound instead of the letter name (say "buh" instead of "bee" for the letter b). Now ask the child to look around to see if they can find that letter (not an object, the actual letter) anywhere around them.

"Think of a word".

Pick an alphabet letter, remembering to use the sound instead of the letter name. Now ask the child to think of a word that starts with the letter you gave them. For example, you might say, "Can you think of a word that begins with 's' as in snake? If the child struggles, give them hints.

"Guess the first sound".

Think of a word that has a very clear first sound (don't choose a word that starts with a blend like ch, sh, st, etc.). Tell the child the word and ask them to tell you the first sound of the word. For example, you might say, "Can you tell me what the first sound is in the word bicycle?" Your child should say "b". Emphasize the first sound if they struggle. Continue with different words that have a distinct first sound.

"Guess the end sound".

Think of a word that has a very clear end sound (don't choose words that end in ch, th, sh, etc.). Tell the child the word and ask them to tell you the end sound of the word. For example, you might say, "Can you tell me what sound you heard at the end of the word 'pig'?" Your child should say "g". Use the rainbow on page 5 for this activity.

"Change the Letter".

Write three lines on a piece of paper like this: _ _ _

- Choose a simple three letter word to and write one letter on each line like this: c a t
- Now ask the learner to delete the first sound "c" and add a different first sound like this:
h a t m a t s a t b a t.
- Try the same activity but this time delete the end sound "t" and add a different end sound like this: c a b c a p c a n.
- Finally, try the same activity but this time delete the middle sound "a" and add a different middle sound like this: c u t c o t.





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NPO Number: 06-06-96 PBO Number: 930 025 382

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