

Some of the best...!

Strategies and approaches for...

Reading (for a purpose) at KS4

1. Reading for pronunciation – even at GCSE it is valid to ask students to read aloud to themselves (they can mouth the words rather than vocalise if they prefer but often if they all read aloud simultaneously they are less self-conscious). It is often a useful first step to comprehension.
2. Another way to do this is to display the text on the whiteboard and all read from there. If they mouth it through the first time to practise, then the teacher reads it and they mouth it through again, then they can read it chorally or according to any routine the teacher has (e.g. teacher could carry a 'reading wand' and assign the reading responsibility by indicating one learner followed by the next, etc..)
4. Reading for the main details: The 5 Ws and an H routine (What? When? Which? Where? Who? & How?)
Once learners know the question words in the foreign language, begin to introduce short articles, drawn from the news on the internet. (Sometimes these will need shortening and adapting but not too much! We just want learners to pick up the main details. If you include a picture clue and title with cognates learners will cue into the meanings very quickly.
5. Reading for unplanned talk: Hotseating – short texts on similar theme identified by name (as you find in many text books). Learners spend several minutes reading these and then choose one to be the 'expert' on – they must answer questions put by the teacher as that person. All close their books and the teachers asks questions orally – others have to identify who the learners' identities are.
6. Reading for skimming and scanning: gist to detail routines. Choose a challenging text with some unknown language and apply the following routine to it. 1. read once and match paragraph headings to the correct paragraph 2. read a second time and highlight any sentences that you can 'guess' the overall meaning of and record the number of sentences 3. read a third time and infer the meanings of several words from the words either side in the sentence 4. record your own impression of how much of the text you understand (this is important for teacher feedback later)
7. Reading to develop memory and comprehension skills. Material is at a distance from the learners who work in groups. They have questions to answer and go to the text with a specific 'mission' in mind. This helps them to focus on extracting main details from a text to complete a comprehension task.
8. Reading for preparing to talk. Learners read a short text and modify it (either for them personally or according to a brief given by the teacher) and then have to either answer questions orally or present themselves according to the modified text. If the latter then they might have the original text in front of them to guide and support their speaking.
9. Reading as narration (linked to writing and speaking). Working with stories, either adapting well-known stories or writing narrative scripts to accompany short video sequences, gives learners the opportunity to write with a purpose and then to read with a purpose and for an audience, which then in turns helps to develop their oral narration skills too.
10. Reading to test vocabulary. Rather than test individual words that students have been asked to learn, give them a vocabulary test at sentence level, with the target word missing. This improves reading comprehension skills as well as testing individual word knowledge.