

Using Leveled Readers



The leveled readers can be used to build background knowledge, introduce new science concepts that will be revisited during science lessons, or help students process what they have been learning. The readers can also be used for reviewing science concepts and building reading skills.

As always, it is ESP's firm belief that science is best learned through direct experience and questioning. The hands-on approach is critical for helping students develop higher level thinking skills. Leveled readers can supplement science experience, but never replace it.

A typical guided reading lesson can be divided into three parts – prereading, during reading, and postreading. In the prereading phase, the teacher activates and builds background knowledge. This can be done through demonstration, by linking new vocabulary to known vocabulary, and by pointing out unusual text features, such as headings, tables or glossaries. The teacher should explicitly state the skill or strategy that students will be practicing while reading. For example, the students might be directed to ask themselves questions and search for answers as they read. Finally, the teacher will set the purpose for learning – what are the characteristics of solids, liquids and gases, for example.

During reading, students will be assigned the entire text or sections of the text to read. The teacher monitors the reading through brief interactions through which the teacher may question the student's thinking or review notes made by the student as he or she reads. Once all students have read the assigned portion of the text, the teacher will engage students in a discussion about what they read, so that comprehension can be assessed and misconceptions cleared up. Lastly, the teacher will want to remind students of the skill or strategy they practiced, and how this can help them as readers. The content becomes more meaningful as they relate their reading to science activities in which they have engaged.

Each of the readers in a leveled set included in this ESP unit contains the same content. They are unique in being written so that students with different reading abilities have access to the same content. The readers may use either non-fictional or fictional narrative text to accomplish the task of increasing science concept understanding.

A sample template for writing guided reading lessons using the leveled readers is also provided. The template was developed by Reading Specialist, Sue Witter. We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the leveled readers, and encourage you to share your guided reading ideas with us.