



FIRST FACTS READERS LEVEL 4

Teacher Book with Copymasters

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Introducing First Facts Readers



The Reading and Writing Link

"Across evaluations of beginning reading programmes, emphasis on writing activities is repeatedly shown to result in special gains in reading achievement."

Marilyn J. Adams *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990.

First Facts Readers introduce non-fiction features using a structured approach. They contain simple, accurate and easy-to-read examples of non-fiction, with each book concentrating on a specific factual structure or skill. At this early level, pupils are encouraged to develop strategies such as classifying, labelling and finding connections — all essential skills for understanding non-fiction. The text in each book then provides a model for pupil writing through activities provided in the *Linking to Writing* lessons. The *First Facts* series has been developed to foster this reading and writing link.

Learning About Non-fiction

Important differences in structure, content and purpose mark fiction and non-fiction — narrative and information text. Non-fiction text is often unfamiliar to young readers but, as we read non-fiction to learn, it is important for pupils to learn how to understand its structures. Pupils need to be exposed to a variety of non-fiction texts and to be taught different strategies for comprehending it.

One of the main features of non-fiction is that information is grouped together under chapters or headings. The ability to group information together needs to be learnt and is a major underlying theme in all the *First Facts Readers*. Many non-fiction reading books at this level are simply a random series of facts with few organising structures to aid pupil comprehension. All *First Facts Readers* include a contents page and chapter headings to familiarise pupils with the structures of non-fiction. These structures help pupils to look for similarities and differences, to compare and contrast, and to make connections to their own experience. This makes the reading experience memorable, and the text easier to understand and more enjoyable to read.

Writing Workshop in a Comprehensive Literacy Programme

In a comprehensive literacy programme, writing is as important as reading. During the reading block, pupils learn reading skills so that they can construct meaning from a wide range of texts. In the writing block, pupils develop the ability to organise their ideas and to express them in print. Just as with guided reading lessons, guided writing lessons allow the teacher to give explicit instruction in targeted skills and strategies. The lessons in this guide provide strong teacher support, including detailed notes showing how to model a variety of reading and writing skills and strategies.



Using First Facts Readers Level 4

First Facts integrates science and society and environment with reading and writing. The books are ideal for use in the literacy programme, or during a thematic unit about one of the topics in the series.

There are three strands to the series — Science and Technology, My World (Society and Environment) and a mixture of the two, the Animal World. Each strand begins with the child's directly experienced world, and then moves out gradually to the wider world as you move up the reading levels. Level 4 is the last of four levels of carefully graded readers.

Reading the Non-fiction Text

Grouping: small groups

Pacing: 15–20 minute sessions. Some may take two days to complete the copymaster and share.

The reading lessons in this guide are suitable for small groups and fit easily into the guided reading component of the literacy lesson. The lessons teach effective reading strategies for processing non-fiction texts. The teacher introduces the text and the teaching points before pupils read independently. The lessons encourage oral participation from pupils, which provides further teaching opportunities. At the end of each lesson pupils complete a copymaster or other activity.

Using the Writing Non-fiction Lesson Notes

Grouping: small groups or whole class

Pacing: One or two sessions of 15–20 minutes.

By following each reading lesson with a lesson in writing non-fiction, pupils learn to use the structures modelled in the *First Facts* books in their own writing. By the end of the series pupils will have worked on a variety of purposeful writing activities.

The teacher models a writing strategy by thinking aloud while writing. Pupils participate by telling the teacher what to write, or by helping plan and write some of the text. Each lesson has a copymaster or other writing activity.

The Writing Non-fiction lessons are suitable for small groups or the whole class. They encompass the guided and independent writing and investigation components of the literacy lesson. They could also be used over a two-day period, teaching the strategy on day one and then supporting pupils to apply the strategy and share their work on day two.

Assessment

Suggestions for informal assessment appear throughout the reading and writing lessons. Page 32 provides an assessment checklist rubric, as well as a merit certificate. Teachers can photocopy one page per pupil and record each pupil's progress in reading and writing non-fiction texts.



People Who Help Us

Teaching Focus

Information report

Introducing the Text

At home you get help from your parents but there are other situations where you need help from other members of the community. These people often have special skills. For example, when my dog is sick I take her to the vet.

Say to pupils: *Lets make a list of people who help us.*

Give pupils a sentence beginning, such as 'The ___ helps me when —'. Ask volunteers to complete the sentence orally. *The dentist helps me when I have a toothache.* Allow each pupil to have a turn.

Reading and Discussing the Text

1. Show pupils the front cover of *First Facts People Who Help Us* and tell them this is an information report about people who help us. *What is the man doing? How is he helping? What is his special name?* (barber)

Turn to the back cover and ask what is happening in this photo. Point out that one person may be a nurse. Some pupils may not have seen this type of thermometer. Read the blurb. Allow time for pupils to say the names of people, other than family, who help them.

2. Turn to the title page and ask pupils to describe what they see. *Why do we need people to help us cross the road? What could happen if there was no one to help us on a busy road?*
3. Turn to the contents page and read the chapter headings to pupils. Remind them that the contents page tells readers how information is arranged in the book.
4. Turn to the first chapter and read the book to the class. Then choose different pupils to re-read the book. During this reading, ask questions which stimulate pupils' thinking and revise and improve their language skills.

Pages 4 and 5 — *Have you ever seen a fire engine? Why do people have to wear safety suits around fire? What other people might wear a safety suit?*

Ask pupils to find the word firefighters. Say:

The word is a compound word which means two words joined together. What are the two words joined together?

Pages 6 and 7 — Encourage pupils to discuss their personal experiences regarding health professionals.

Who has helped them? Why was help needed?

Ask pupils to look at the photos. *Has anyone ever had their eyes checked?* If there are pupils in the class who wear glasses, allow them to tell of their eye tests. Point out that the words 'hospital' and 'optometrist' are bold. Turn to page 16 and discuss the use of the glossary.

Pages 8 and 9 — *Find the apostrophes. What does it's mean?* Point out that the apostrophe takes the place of a missing letter or letters. Find another apostrophe. This one is different. There is no missing letter. It means the box belongs to the cat.

Pages 10 and 11 — *What skills have teachers helped you to learn?* Read the caption on page 11. *What do you think it means?*

Pages 12 and 13 — *Some people say the library is the most important part of a school. Why do you think they say this? Do you agree or disagree? Why?*

Pages 14 and 15 — Discuss different sports and musical instruments that pupils play. *How does a coach help us?* Tell pupils that even when older people are very good at something they often have a coach. Give an example such as a famous sports person.

Page 16 — Show pupils the index and discuss how and why indexes are used. *When you're looking for information about a particular thing you use an index.* Show pupils that indexes are in alphabetical order.

6. Show pupils **Copymaster 1**. Ask them to read the words in the word bank. They then read a statement, choose a word to match and write it in the space.

Linking to Writing

1. Say: *You are going to write an information report about someone who has helped you. Think about what that person does and how they do it.*

Brainstorm with pupils and write a list of ideas on the board. Pupils choose one person to write about. Allow volunteers to read their reports to the class.

2. Ask pupils to draw a picture of someone who helps them. Encourage them to draw all the 'tools' used by that person and label them. Prompt them to write sentences saying how the person helps them.

Reading

Name _____

Date _____

Who am I?



Choose a person from the Word Bank to fill each space.

vet**coach****teacher****doctor****barber****music teacher****firefighter****nurse**

1. I help to put out fires. _____
2. I help pets when they are sick. _____
3. I help people to learn. _____
4. I help people when they are sick. _____
5. I help you to play the piano. _____
6. I help you to swim faster. _____
7. I look after people in hospital. _____
8. I cut people's hair. _____