



FIRST FACTS READERS LEVEL 3

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.

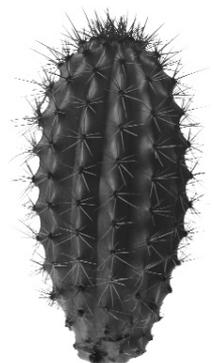
Learning About Non-fiction

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 3

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 3 is the third 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.



My School

Teaching Focus

Information report

Introducing the Text

Let's talk about our school. We are all going to say one thing about our school — it might be about the school's size, whether it's old or new, or something about our classroom or the playground. You can say anything which gives us information about our school. Tell pupils they must use a complete sentence and only give one fact. Let each pupil have a turn even if they repeat an already given fact.

Prior to the lesson, sketch a playground similar to the one on *First Facts My School*, page 12, on flip chart.

Reading and Discussing the Text

1. Show pupils *First Facts My School* and explain this is an information report about one school. *All schools are different but some things are similar.*

2. Look at the front and back cover. Read the back cover blurb and discuss what might be happening in the picture.

3. Read the contents page with the pupils. Point out that 'classroom' and 'playground' are both words made from two words joined together (compound words). Remind pupils that the pictures give us clues about what will be in each chapter.

4. Read, or ask volunteers, to read the book.

5. Re-read the book asking different pupils to read each page. Teaching points to consider:

Pages 2 and 3 — Ask pupils to describe the school buildings in the pictures. *The word it's is a contraction.* Explain that two words, 'it' and 'is', have been joined together. The apostrophe takes the place of the missing letter.

Page 4 — Ask pupils to point to the question. *What is the answer?*

Page 6 — Ask pupils to point to the words 'colourful pictures'. Explain that 'colourful' is a describing word (adjective) which tells us something about the pictures. Ask pupils to suggest other describing words which could be used (funny, bright). Then ask pupils for adjectives to go with books (big, exciting).

Page 8 — Help pupils to pronounce 'librarian'. *What has happened to the y in library when we changed it to librarian? What does borrow mean?*

Pages 10 and 11 — Encourage pupils to look carefully at the pictures. Talk about the playground. *What do you like to do in the playground?*

6. Turn to page 12. Prompt pupils to verbalise the information in the illustration. Display your enlarged sketch of page 12. Ask pupils for suggestions for suitable labels, for example sandpit, tree. Ask volunteers to attach the labels to the correct place on the chart.

Linking to Writing

1. Talk about the different areas in your school. List these on the board — for example, our classroom, the library, playground, computer room, art room. Show pupils **Copymaster 2**. Ask them to think about their favourite places in the school. Choose one place to write on the sheet after 'The best place in my school is ____.' Ask pupils to illustrate their favourite place in the box, then describe their choice — write about what it looks like and what they do there. Remind pupils to use complete sentences. When pupils have finished collect the copymasters and arrange them in chapters, grouping similar places together. Read the chapters to the class.

2. This activity could be extended further by making a big book called *Our School*. Group pupils according to the chapter in which their copymaster appeared. Help each group to collate their information and write it on flip chart under a suitable heading, for example *Our Playground*. Encourage pupils to provide illustrations to accompany their information. Make a cover for the big book and display it in the library for other classes to read.



Writing

Name _____

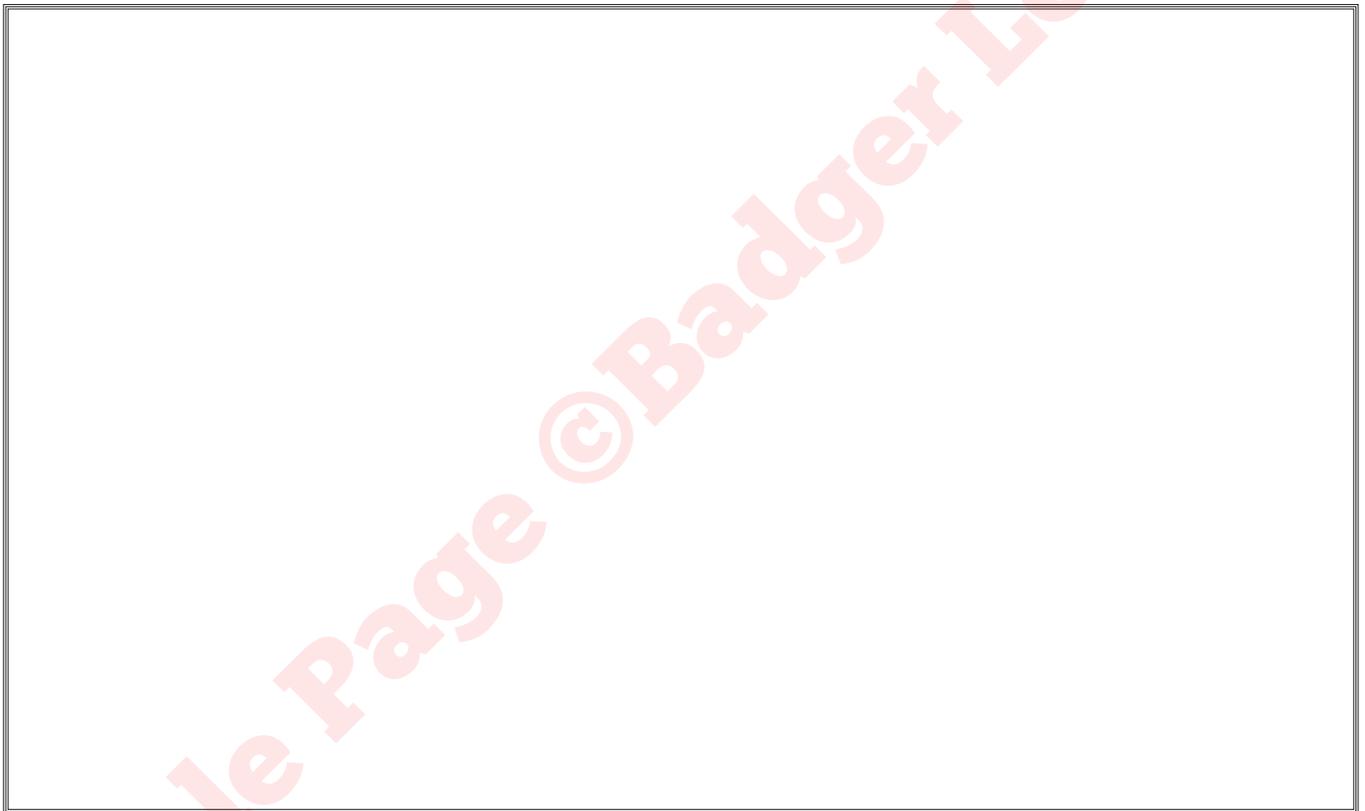
Date _____



The Best Place in School

The best place in my school is _____

_____. Draw it here.



Write about how it looks and what you do there.
