

# 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools'

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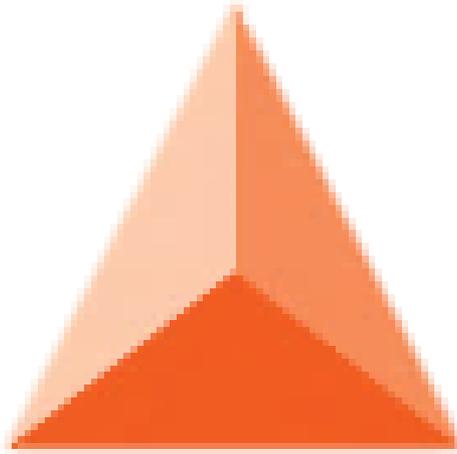
National Content Manager, Education Endowment Foundation

**Northern Celebration of Education**



What we do ...

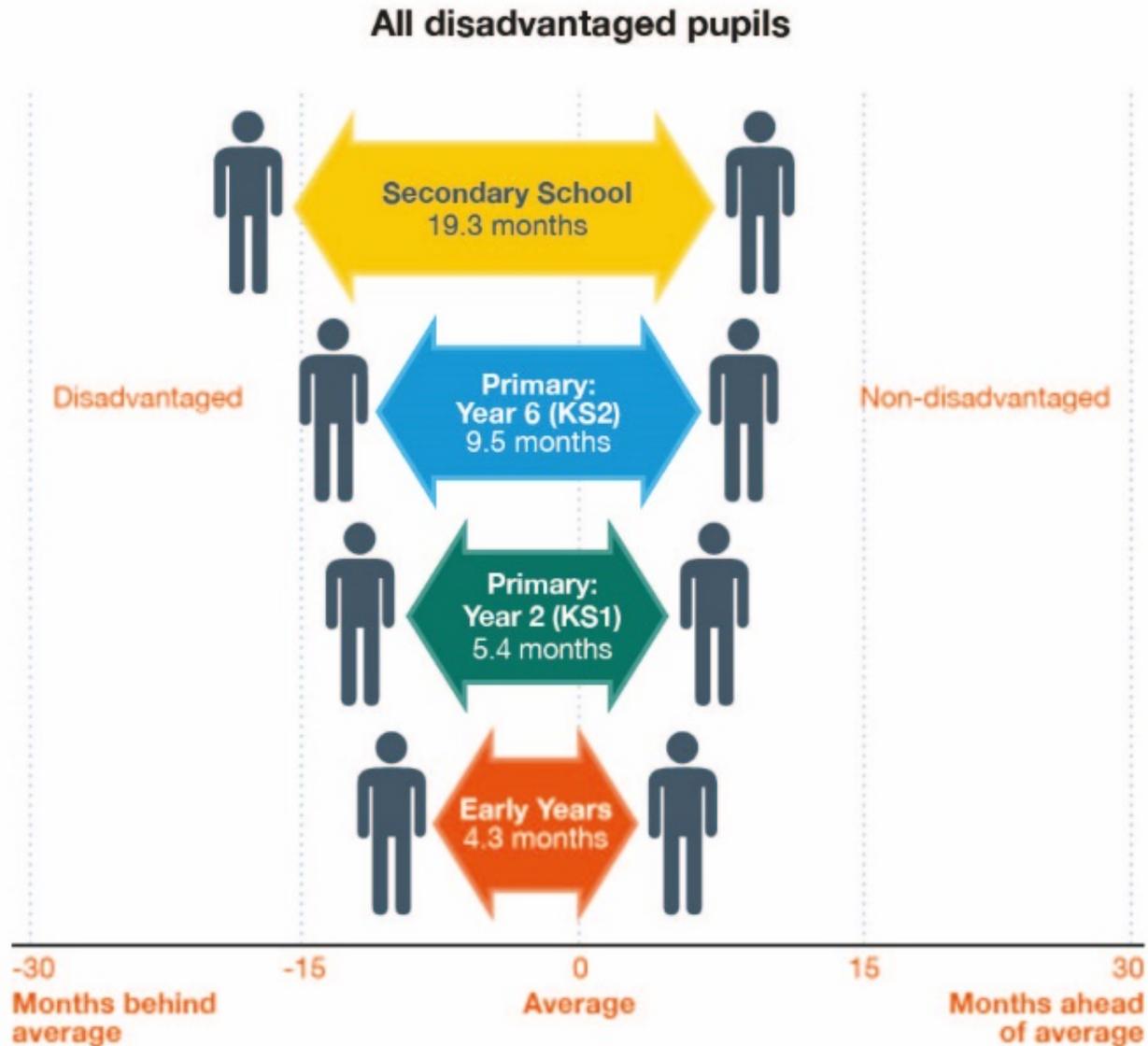
**Evidence  
synthesis**



**Evidence  
Generation**

**Evidence  
Mobilisation**

# Why we do it...



EEF Annual  
Report 2018

# How we do it ...



Synthesis



Generation

Mobilisation



# IMPROVING LITERACY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Guidance Report

Preparing for Literacy

Published: 14th June, 2017

Primary & Secondary 



Improving Literacy in Key

Stage Two

Published: 8th April, 2017  
Improving Literacy in Key Stage Two

Primary & Secondary  Download PDF



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1

**Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum**



- Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.
- Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.
- All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.
- School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.

2

**Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject**



- Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.
- Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.
- Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.
- Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning.

3

**Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts**



- Training focused on teaching reading is likely to help secondary school teachers teach their subject more effectively.
- To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.
- Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning, can improve students' comprehension.
- Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.

4

**Break down complex writing tasks**



- Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.
- Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and can support students by modelling each step.
- Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.
- Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write.

5

**Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject**



- Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.
- Reading helps students gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students' understanding of ideas.
- Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.
- Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students' writing, particularly when focused on meaning.

6

**Provide opportunities for structured talk**



- Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.
- High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.
- 'Accountable talk' is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.
- Teachers can support students by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection.

7

**Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students**



- Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.
- Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.
- Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.
- Creating a co-ordinated system of support is a significant challenge requiring both specialist input and whole school leadership.



# Literacy vignette

**How effective is our existing literacy practice?**

## **8.40 – 9.00: Form time ‘Silent Reading’**

*Students begin form time by taking their reading books from their bags. Most students read teen fiction, though some borrow a non-fiction book from their form’s book box. For fifteen minutes, students read in silence. When the bell rings, books are stowed into bags and they head off to their lessons.*



# Literacy vignette

Whilst raising the profile of reading is no doubt a good thing, we should ask:

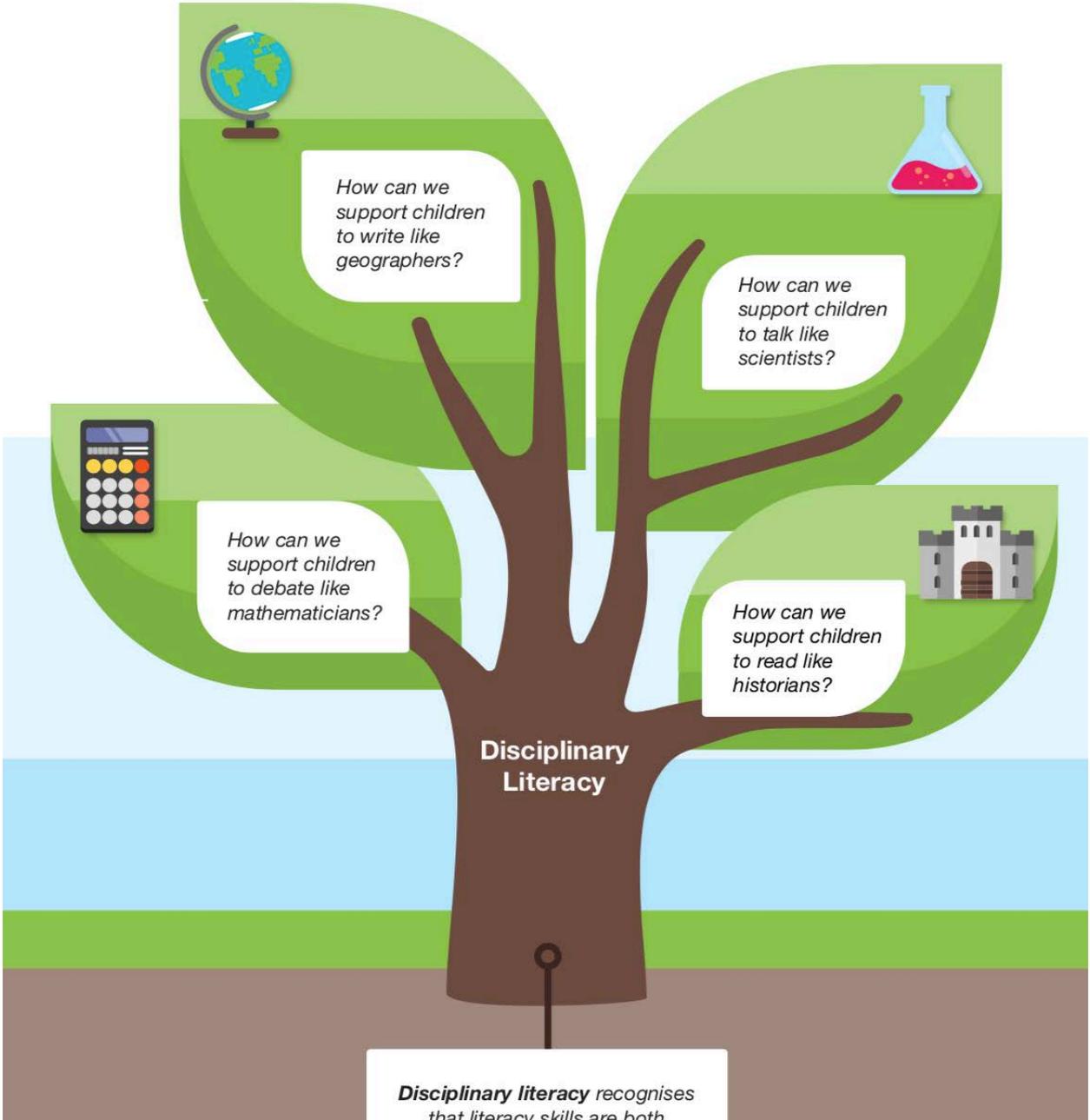
- Does silent reading change students' attitudes to literacy or improve their outcomes?
- How transferable are reading skills? For example, is reading fiction likely to help students understand texts in science?
- What contribution can non-English teachers make to students' literacy?





BTue:1 <b>Music</b> ED	P22
BTue:2 <b>Information Com</b> SEM	R08
BTue:3 <b>English</b> CEW	W04
BTue:4 <b>Art</b> CBG	B04
BTue:5 <b>Technology</b> DRL	C05

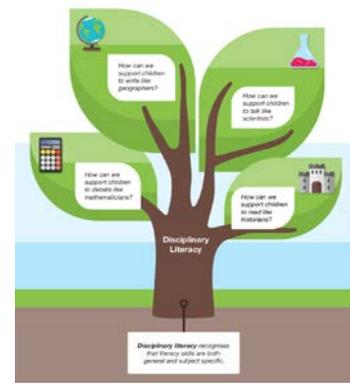




**Disciplinary literacy** recognises that literacy skills are both



# Disciplinary Literacy



- What is unique about your subject discipline in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening? What is common with other subject disciplines?
- How do members of this subject discipline use language on a daily basis?
- Are there any typical literacy misconceptions held by students, for example, how to write an effective science report?
- Are there words and phrases used typically, or uniquely, in the subject discipline?



**PROBLEM**



# Chemical change: Supercooled water

In order to freeze, most liquids require impurities or the addition of a single crystal for the molecules which make up the liquid to start to form a solid around. These are known as condensation nuclei, and if they are missing (the liquid is really pure) then the liquid will not freeze. In theory, ultra-pure water can be cooled to  $-48\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  before it will spontaneously turn into a solid; however this is very difficult to achieve.

**New syllabus resource for OCR Chemistry**



# From Oxford AQA Physical Education Textbook

## Joint actions and movements

Different joints allow different types of movement, for example:

- The hinge joints at the knee and elbow can only move in one direction, enabling flexion and extension.
- The hinge point at the ankle enables plantar flexion and dorsiflexion.
- The ball and socket points at the hip and shoulder enable rotation, adduction, abduction, as well as flexion and extension.



# Some solutions for challenging academic reading:

- Exploring common word roots
- Undertaking 'word building' activities
- Encouraging independent word-learning strategies
- Using graphic organisers
- Undertaking regular low-stakes assessment
- Consistently signposting synonyms
- Combining vocabulary development with spelling instruction



# Some solutions:

## Etymology and morphology

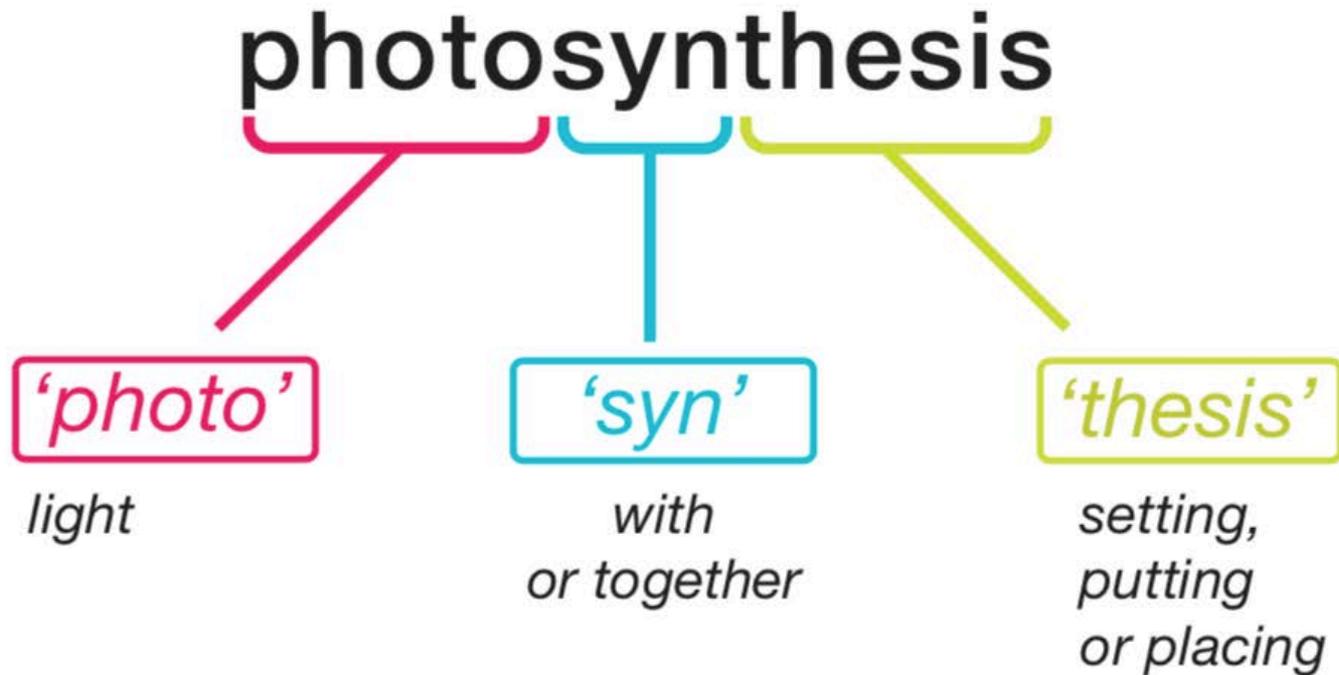


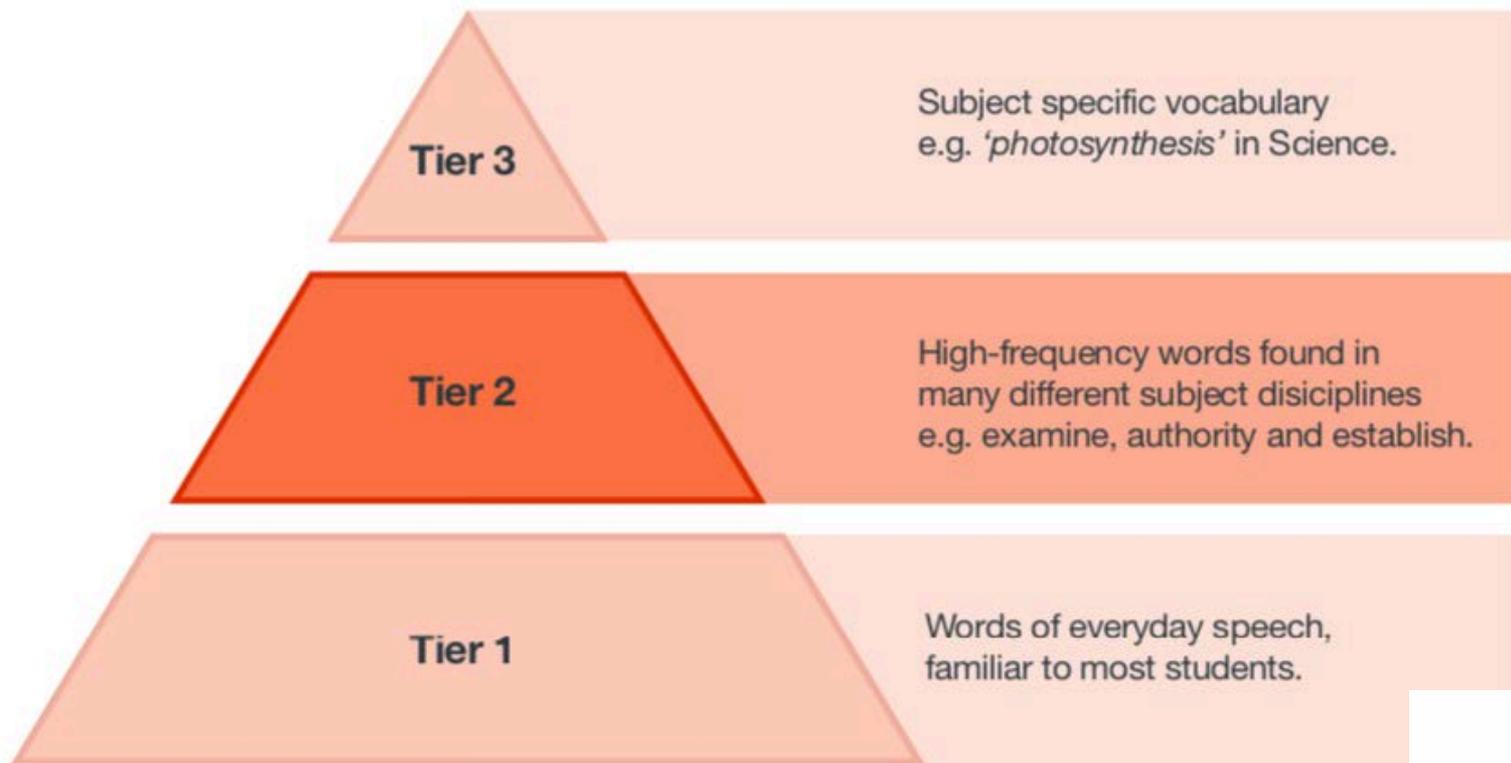
Figure 2: The morphology of *photosynthesis*



# Some solutions:

## Awareness of tiers of vocabulary

**Figure 3: Tiers of vocabulary**



# Some solutions: 'Reciprocal reading'



**Figure 4: The reciprocal reading approach**



**PROBLEM**



# History GCSE

## Write an account of the importance of... (16 marks)

(including 4 marks for correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar)

This final question is in response to a change and could give a balanced statement could

Example:

'The main purpose of the Norman King

How far does

Explain your

You should refer

This question is about a changing list

kind of statement given in the exam paper will vary according to whether the environment is a stately home, a church or a site.

### Tips:

High mark questions such as this one usually take longer to plan and answer. Before jumping straight in, plan your response carefully before you start writing it, so you can arrange your arguments and examples in a logical manner.

Develop your explanation of change or causation by thoroughly explaining the relationship between factors. Support your answer with detailed factual knowledge and understanding of the historic site, and Norman England in general, to form a sustained judgment.

When you have finished, read your answer thoroughly to check for any **spelling, punctuation or grammatical** mistakes.



# Some Solutions:

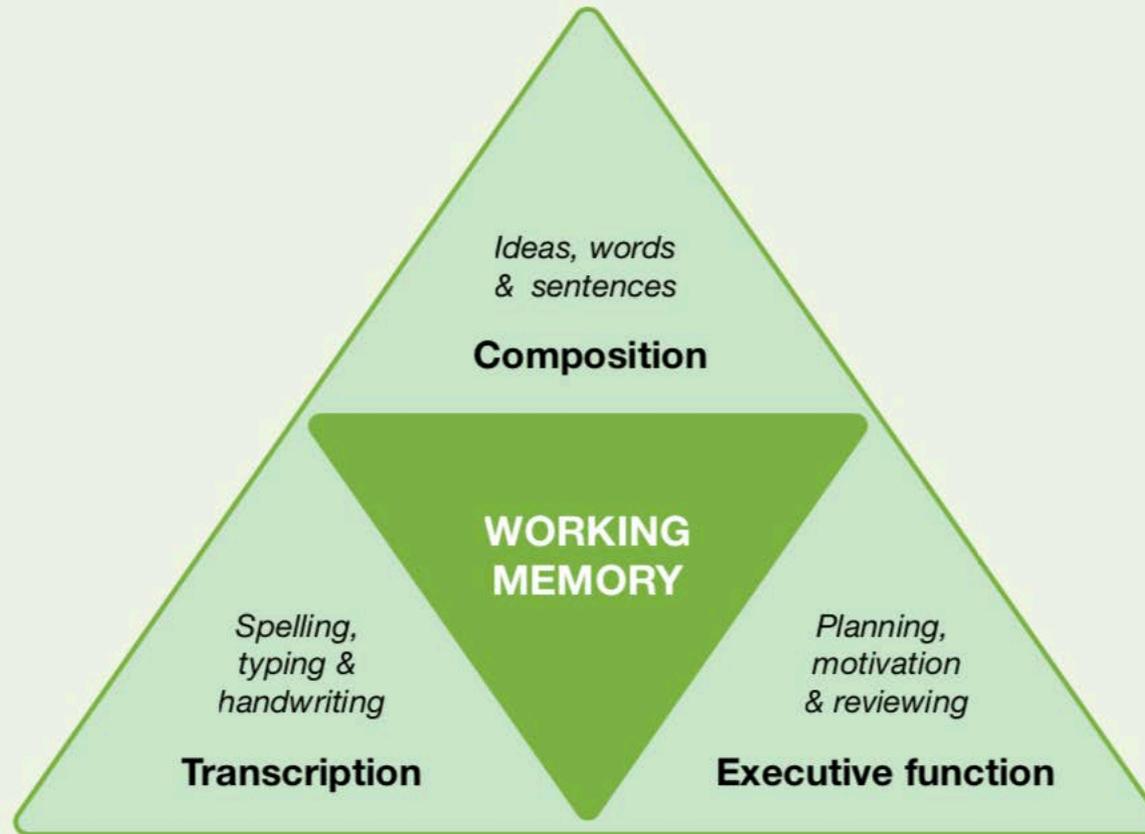
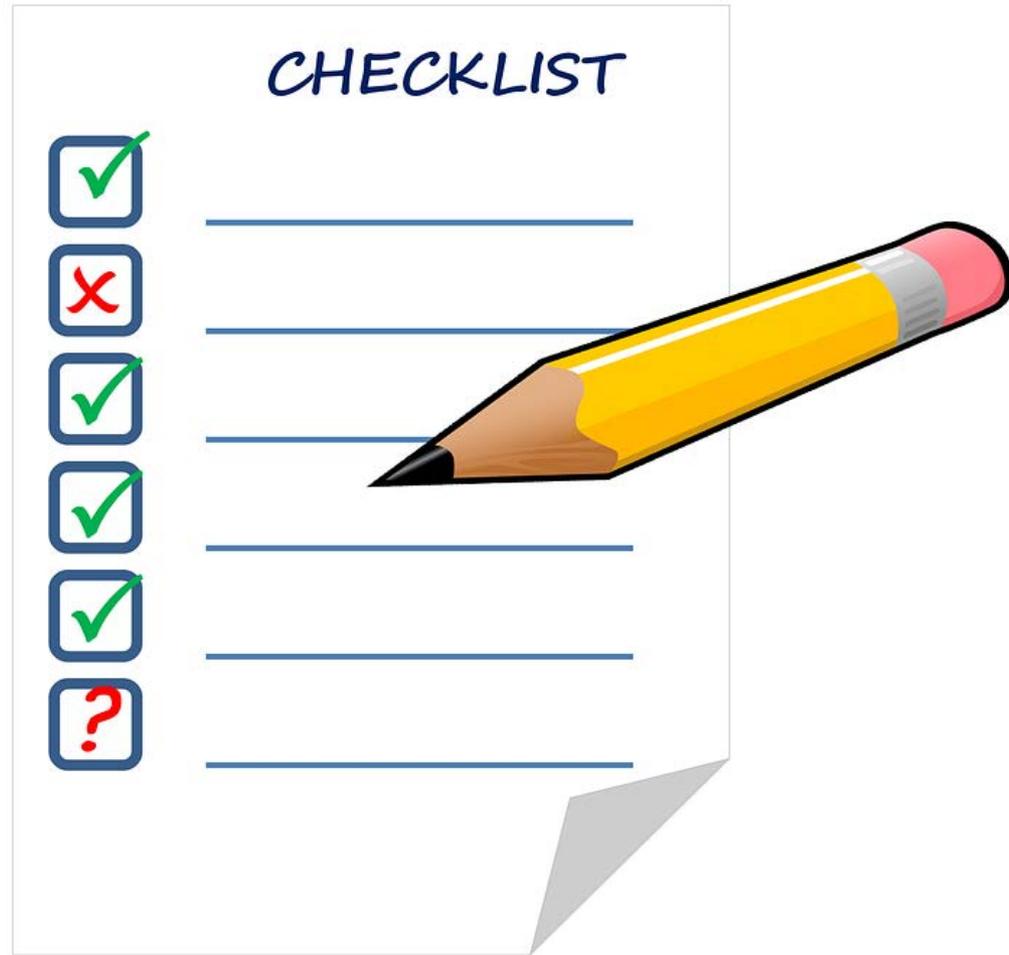


Figure 5: Based on 'The Simple View of Writing,' developed by Berninger et al.<sup>35</sup>

# Some Solutions:



Some Solutions:

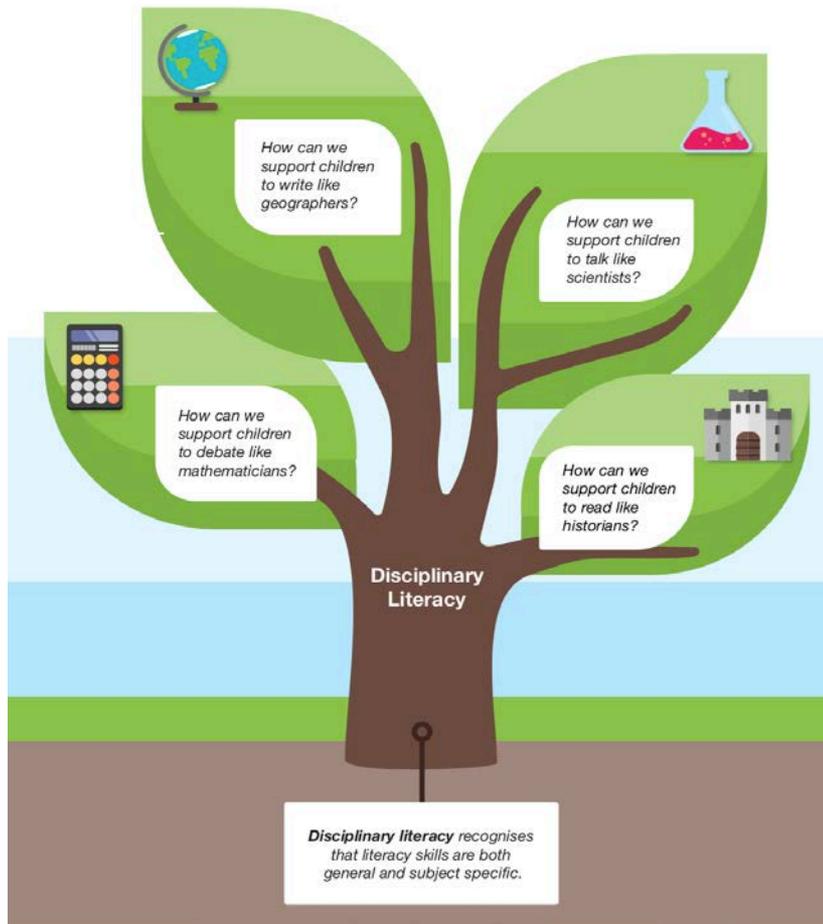
**ABCQ**



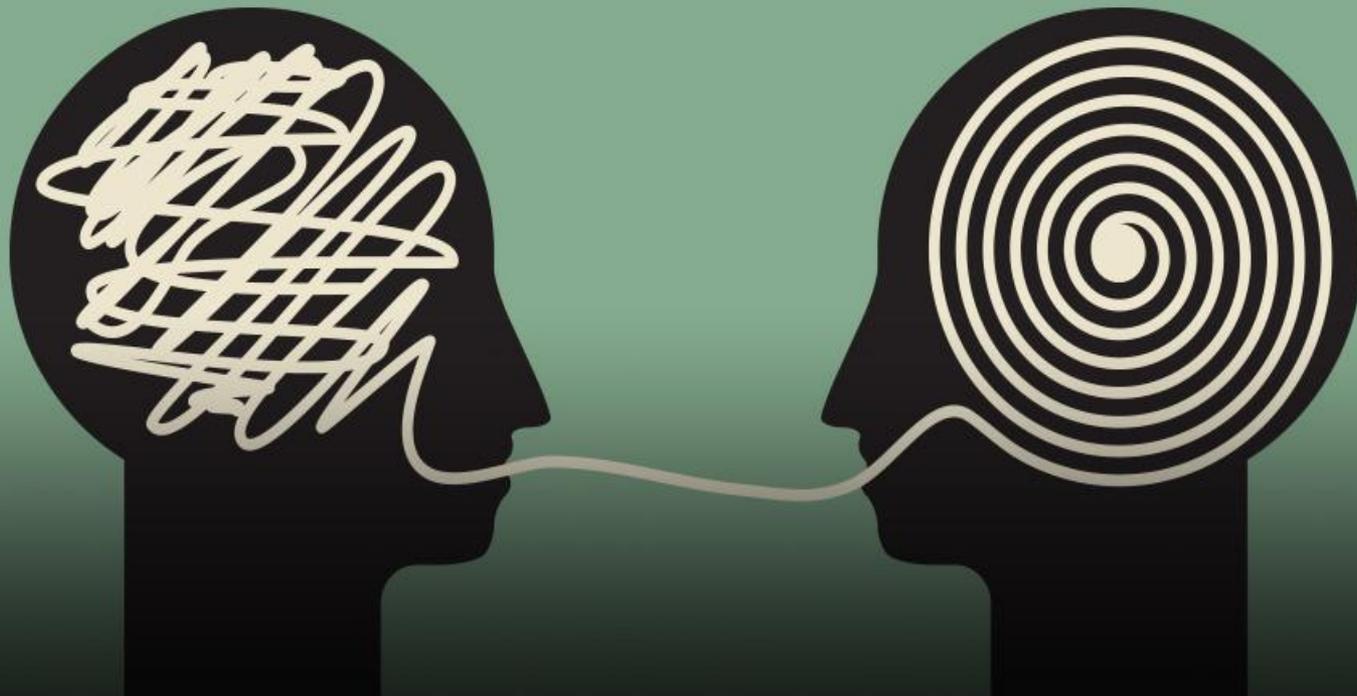
# 'Accountable Talk'



# What does a sequenced literacy curriculum look like?

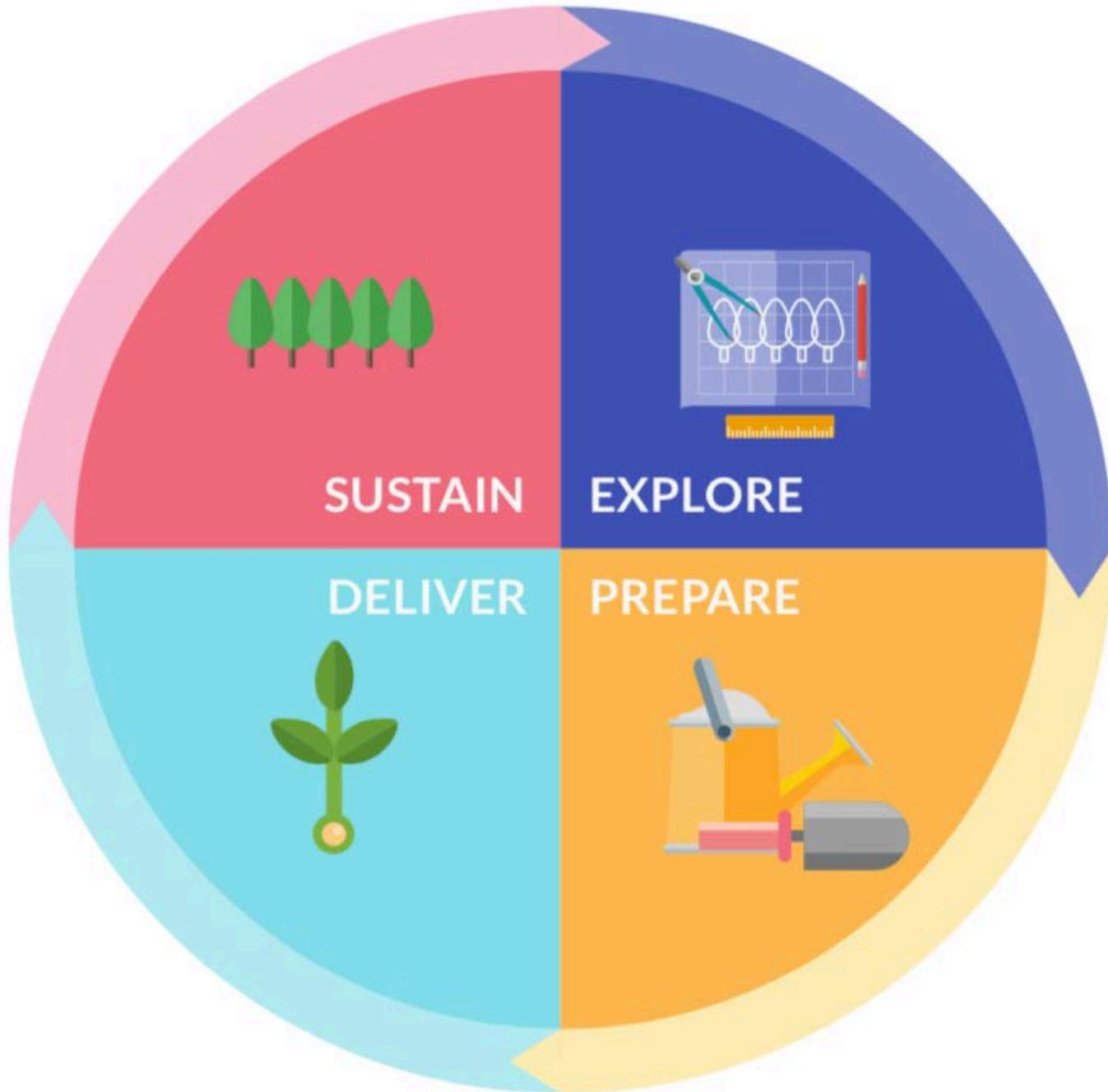


# A sequenced literacy curriculum mediates academic challenge



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# What Next?



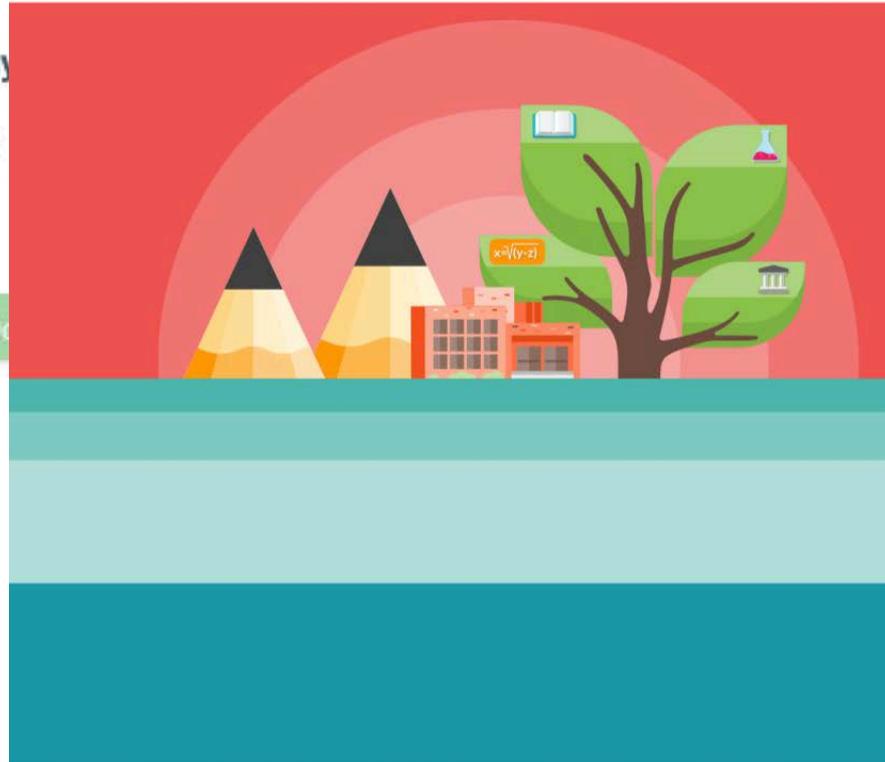
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