

# Formatting texts

## 3A – Get texts ready for teaching eg heading, formatting, cohesion devices

As well as considering how we support pupils' reading in the classroom, we must consider the texts that they are reading. With the use of curriculum booklets, teachers and subject leaders have autonomy over how texts are designed and presented. The following 10 principles should help to make sure that texts chosen support reading comprehension.

### How to prepare a text for successful reading comprehension

#### 1. Clear title

The title is an important feature of the text. It can help pupils to activate their prior knowledge about a topic and help them to make predictions about the content. Both these processes are important in supporting a pupil to build a mental representation of the text. The title should also aim to provide a high-level summary or focus for the text.

#### 2. Summary

Providing a short summary of the main ideas in the text at the top of the page has several distinct benefits. The first is quite practical – for those pupils who miss a lesson or need to review what they have read, a short summary or overview can help them to understand key ideas. A pre-read of the main ideas also supports the development of a mental model by identifying the key points for pupils, which they can then latch onto more easily later on.

#### 3. Sub-headings

Like titles, sub-headings are important organisational devices that help pupils navigate texts and break down large amounts of information into more accessible chunks. Sub-headings act like a summary of the paragraph or section content. They are an important part of what it means to read successfully, aiding pupils with refining their mental model by clarifying uncertainties or raising new questions. They also help ensure pupils are actively reading.

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## 4. Line numbers

Line numbers facilitate the efficient and effective teaching of reading. They help pupils locate where they are during reading, particularly after you pause to ask questions or provide elaborations.

When asking questions, indicate where pupils will find the information. For example, *'Nabeela, why was Germany struggling in the 1920s? You may want to focus on lines 3-6.'* Similarly, line numbers ensure a smooth transition back to whole class reading. A simple, *'Everyone, line 20. Let's go'* makes for minimal hassle upon transition.

## 5. Key terms highlighted

Highlighting key terms helps to draw attention to the main ideas in the text. A key term might refer to a specific person, place or concept and can probably best be defined as the essential knowledge in the text. These are not the same as the core vocabulary used at the end of the text, which is more about more general academic words and phrases that are important to understanding the text. Key terms should be defined by the teacher.

### How to add line numbers

- In Microsoft Word, select the text you want to number
- Select the 'continuous' option from the 'layout' menu
- Use the 'suppress' option to remove line numbers from titles and diagrams



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## 6. Bullet points for factual details

Bullet points enable key factual details to be easily summarised. This is usually where there are multiple factors or reasons behind the development of an idea or event.

Pupils need to be supported when they read bullet points to help them understand how they condense information or use ungrammatical constructions to summarise ideas. It may be necessary to help pupils generate the necessary inferences to aid their comprehension.

## 7. Chunked paragraphs

Reading is an active process where pupils must continually make sense of new information to build and refine their mental representation of the text. Paragraphs that are overly long and dense with information make it more difficult for pupils to comprehend meaning.

Chunked paragraphs help support reading comprehension by breaking down complex material into bite-size pieces. This is particularly the case for weaker readers, whose motivation for reading can be fragile and requires more careful nurturing.

## 8. Accompanying graphics

Graphics, such as diagrams, images, tables and charts, can be powerful ways of supporting reading comprehension by reinforcing key information and presenting it in a more visual format. The use of graphics should be judicious and link closely to the written text.

Images that are more decorative are often more distracting and can impede comprehension. Aim to keep any visual representations to a minimum and place them as near to the information that it is supporting in the text as possible.

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## 9. Secondary texts signposted

There are occasions where one text will refer directly to another text, such as in history texts where the writer might want to link to an alternative source for the same information or in English where the text might want to reference a critical view from elsewhere.

It is important to signpost any secondary texts as clearly as possible, either through boxing off the new text or laying it out differently. Pupils need to be supported in how to use secondary material to improve their comprehension of the primary text.

## 10. Core academic vocabulary

Most texts that pupils read will contain some new and unfamiliar words. They are likely to contain some words they are not familiar with or know but don't understand the meaning. Some of these words will be more integral for successful comprehension than others.

Words that are fundamental to understanding the text should probably be taught directly, either before or during the reading, dependent on the word. Other words that will help build pupils' vocabulary and help them understand the text in more detail can be supplied in a short list at the end of the text. Definitions should be pupil-friendly and around four to five words per text is about the right amount of support.



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## Reading booklet exemplar

### How did Germany's economy recover in the 1920s?

#### Overview

- Germany faced significant economic problems in 1924.
- These problems were partially solved by the creation of a new currency (the Reichsmark) and loans from America.

#### German problems

1 By 1924 Germany faced a huge number of problems as a result of the war and the early conditions  
2 of the Weimar Republic:

- The economy was ruined, Germany was in huge debt and its currency was worthless.
- Due to its acceptance of war guilt and the weakness of the Weimar government, Germany was seen as a weak country internationally,
- As a result of the economic and political problems German culture had taken a back seat and Germany had not been creating new art, literature or film.
- Germany had seen a rise in power of extreme parties since World War One with the rise of communism and Nazism being seen as a big problem.

#### New Currency

3 Germany was struggling economically due to the impact of the Ruhr invasion, *reparations*, and  
4 hyperinflation. The value of the mark had flown out of control and become worthless. In November  
5 1923 Stresemann dealt with the growing financial problems by creating a new state-owned bank,  
6 the **Rentenbank**. The Rentenbank issued a new currency called the **Rentenmark**.  
7 Unlike the previous currency the supply of these notes was strictly limited and tied value of the German  
8 industrial plants and agriculture land. These resources had been *mortgaged* to the value of 3.2 billion marks  
9 and therefore 3.2 billion Rentenmarks were produced. This new currency had real value and reversed  
10 the problem of hyperinflation. 1 Rentenmark was equal to 1,000,000,000,000 marks or \$4.20.

11 In August 1924, a newly independent national bank, the **Reichsbank**, was given control of the  
12 currency and changed its name to the **Reichsmark**. This newly named currency was now backed by  
13 Germany's gold reserves and became trusted at home and abroad. This gold backed currency was a  
14 much stronger basis for the recovery of German businesses and allowed Germany to re-join the  
15 world economy.

#### Ties with America

16 Due to Germany's non-payment of the reparations outlined in the Treaty of Versailles (see page 9)  
17 Charles G. Dawes an American banker had been asked by the Allies to find a solution. In April 1924  
18 Stresemann agreed to the **Dawes Plan**. The plan stated that:

- Reparations were temporarily reduced to £50 million per year
- US banks agreed to give loans to German industry. The Plan gave Germany an initial loan of 800 million marks. The US banks loaned \$25 billion between 1924 and 1930.

19 The terms of the Dawes Plan helped to reassure the Allies that the German economy would become  
20 strong enough to make reparations payments. As a result of Stresemann's end to *passive* resistance  
21 and signing of the Dawes Plan, the French agreed to leave the Ruhr area. This, in turn, had a hugely  
22 beneficial impact on the German economy, especially for the middle and working-classes.

1. Clear title

2. Summary

3. Sub-heading

4. Line numbers

5. Key terms highlighted

6. Bullet points for factual details

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## 7. Chunked paragraphs

23 Industrial output in the years 1923-28 doubled and passed the levels of before the First World War.  
24 Employment, trade, and taxation income all rose steadily as a result of the plan.

25 However, some say that the Dawes Plan was a negative for the German people. The extreme  
26 political parties, the communists, and the Nazis, could not give support to the plan as it still involved  
27 Germany paying reparations. These parties believed that any form of reparation was an admission of  
28 guilt and an acceptance of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. There was also a potential problem  
29 with the Dawes Plan. The economic recovery was now tied to the American economy and  
30 dependent on its loans. If problems occurred in America it would  
31 have a significant impact on Germany.

32 Five years after the signing of the Dawes Plan, Germany agreed  
33 another treaty with the Americans. A plan to deal with the issue  
34 of reparations was again put forward to the German people. A  
35 committee in August 1929, led by Owen Young, brought the  
36 proposal to Stresemann who agreed to its terms. The new **Young**  
37 **Plan** helped the German economy with reparations significantly:

- Total reparations were reduced from £6.6 billion to £2 billion
- Germany also given a further 59 years to pay reparations
- The French agreed to leave the Rhineland in 1930

38 This new plan was hugely popular amongst the majority of  
39 German people. A *referendum* held in 1929 resulted in 85% of the voter turnout supporting the new  
40 plan, roughly 35 million people. This new plan lowered reparations payments which allowed the  
41 government to lower the taxes on ordinary Germans. These lower taxes allowed the government to  
42 spend more on public services. The Young Plan led to more jobs in industry which increased the  
43 spending power of the people which in turn boosted jobs again. German confidence in the Weimar  
44 Republic increased to a high point for the period.

45 However, some, especially Hitler and the Nazis, believed that the Young Plan was not wholly  
46 beneficial to the German people. Hitler said that extending the length of payments was 'passing on  
47 the penalty to the unborn'. Some people were also against extending payments until 1988 and there  
48 was still opposition to the payment of £50 million per year.

## 8. Accompanying graphics



## 9. Secondary texts signposted

### Interpretation: Beverley Jones

*'The success of the coalitions between 1924 and 1929 was too heavily based on the popularity of Stresemann, and any economic collapse would bring about an immediate collapse to this delicate situation. In addition, Stresemann's various diplomatic agreements suggested to the German public that he was accepting the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles, and thus limiting his chances of changing them in the future. Finally, the overreliance on American loans suggested potential problems should they need to be recalled at any stage.'*

### Core vocabulary

*Hyperinflation* = rapid and excessive increase in overall prices.  
*Mortgage* = loan for purchasing real estate, repaid with interest.  
*Passive* = inactive or unresponsive, lacking active participation.  
*Referendum* = public vote on a specific issue or law.  
*Reparation* = compensation for past wrongdoing or damage.

## 10. Core academic vocabulary in alphabetical order