Book talk in Reading lessons

Teachers carefully select question stems and sentence structures to support the pupils to learn how to extract meaning from what they have read.

Disci then helps the children think and discuss their thoughts about what they have read.

Here is an example of focused book talk planning.

Teachers scaffold by choice of question stem and vocabulary choices for the language structures.

What does ___ do to help?	___ helps by …
Which words make the story have a joyful mood?	The word ___ makes it joyful as…
Which section was the most exciting? Why?	Paragraph ___ was the most exciting because…
What impression of ___ do you get from this paragraph?	I get the impression that ___ is ___ as…

Think like a reader.

Progression in VIPERS skills

Vocabulary		
Vocabulary is key to reading comprehension. Children must know the meaning of words to understand what they are reading. As children read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their every day vocabulary. Children use strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words, such as using words in context or being able to explore the meaning of words in a dictionary and thesaurus.		
	Year 3 and 4	**Year 5 and 6**
Word meaning	- Discuss new and unusual vocabulary and clarify the meaning. - Use a dictionary to check the meaning and a thesaurus to find synonyms. - Find the meaning of new words using the context of the sentence.	- Explore the meaning of words in context, using a dictionary to check understanding. - Investigate alternative word choices that could be used. - Read around the word and explore meaning in the broader context of a section or paragraph.
Exploring vocabulary	- Identify how language choices help build meaning. - Discuss words that have been used to capture the reader's interest or imagination, and the effect they have on the reader.	- Discuss and evaluate how the author's choice of language impacts the reader. - Find examples of figurative language and how this impacts the reader and contributes to meaning or mood.
To do this, I must already know and understand…	- Alphabetical order (for dictionary and thesaurus use) - That a dictionary defines words whereas a thesaurus provides synonyms. - That different texts have different vocabulary choices e.g. specialised vocabulary will depend on the genre or topic. - That features such as the glossary can help me to find the meaning of unfamiliar, subject specific words.	- That words provide hints or clues about actions or events, including figurative language. - That authors carefully use powerful words to create a different atmosphere or mood.
VIPERS Question Stems	- What do the words ….. and ….. suggest about the character, setting and mood? - Which word tells you that ….. ? - Which keyword tells you about the character/setting/mood? - Find one word in the text which means ….. - Find the word which is closest in meaning to ….. . - Find a word or phrase which shows/suggests that …..	

	Inference	
Inference is a key reading comprehension skill. It requires children to be detectives and read between the lines in the text, as sometimes, an author will not tell us directly that a character is feeling sad, but they will give us clues in the way they write about how a character looks, moves, speaks, etc. Children use these clues as evidence to explain their ideas about a text.		
	Year 3 and 4	**Year 5 and 6**
Exploring Characters	• Use a character's actions to help identify their motives or intentions.	• Discuss and describe a character's feelings, thoughts, motives and how they change and develop by using subtle clues, giving more than one piece of evidence to support each point made.
Exploring the Text	• Use what they have read to help them understand why certain actions and events have occurred (e.g. I know that George tricked his friends because they were being unkind to him and leaving him out of games).	• Explain actions, moods and events that have occurred using clues from the text (e.g. a fight has broken out because of hostility that characters have shown towards each other). • Recognise figurative language as evidence to further support ideas about the text.
Using Evidence from the Text	• Back up ideas by using specific evidence from the text and know that more than one piece of evidence can be used to support ideas.	• Explain how evidence from the text clearly supports these ideas. • Support an opinion by drawing on more than one piece of evidence from across a longer text
To do this, I must already know and understand…	• That words and phrases convey meaning and these provide hints or clues about actions or events. • That authors often show us through behaviours and actions, rather than explicitly tell us, how a character is feeling.	• That words provide hints or clues about actions or events, including figurative language. • That authors carefully use powerful words to create a different atmosphere or mood.
VIPERS Question Stems	• Find and copy a group of words which show that ….. . • How do these words make the reader feel? How does this paragraph suggest this? • How do the descriptions of ….. show that they are…… ? • How can you tell that…… ? • What impression of ….. do you get from these paragraphs? • What voice might these characters use? • What was ….. thinking when …. ? • Who is telling the story?	

Prediction	

Prediction is a valuable strategy to improve reading comprehension. It encourages children to think ahead and ask questions. Prediction also allows children to understand texts by making connections to what they are reading, making links to their own experiences and existing knowledge.

	Year 3 and 4	Year 5 and 6
Say what will happen	• To justify ideas and suggest what might happen, using relevant knowledge and quotes from the text. • Make note of suggestions and compare them with the text as they read on.	• To use details stated and implied information to say what might happen. • Confirm and modify ideas as they read on.
Justify ideas using text	• Use evidence from the text to justify and explain ideas	
To do this, I must already know and understand…	• That stories contain a climax and a resolution. • That I can use my knowledge, experience or evidence from other stories to make predictions. • That I must justify my predictions e.g. I think this because…	• That 'implied' means a hint or a suggestion in the text. • That I can use a wide range of evidence to justify my predictions. • That I can support my ideas with more than one piece of evidence. • That many stories share the same plot development.
VIPERS Question Stems	• What is happening now? What happened before this? • Do you think the choice of setting will influence how the plot develops? How? • Do you think ….. will happen? Yes, no or maybe? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.	

Explanation and Opinions	
Explanation is the process of making something clearer or easier to understand. This may be through telling, showing or giving a reason for a point of view. Opinion is the personal point of view of an individual and these differ from person to person. Children use evidence from the texts and their own personal experiences, to inform their explanations or opinions.	
Year 3 and 4	**Year 5 and 6**

	Year 3 and 4	Year 5 and 6
Strategies	- Discuss the features of a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books. - Identify how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning. - Discuss the author's use of words and phrases and how they capture the reader's interest and imagination.	- Provide justification for views. - Recommend books for peers. - Begin to challenge other people's points of view. - Begin to distinguish between fact and opinion. How do they know this? - Discuss how presentation and structure contribute to meaning. - Give reasons and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader. - Explain and discuss understanding of what has been read through presentations and debates.
To do this, I must already know and understand…	- That texts are arranged in order to aid meaning: title, contents page, index, glossary, subheading, captions, diagrams. - That the mood is the feeling created by the author. - That stories often have messages. - That a point of view is an author's or character's belief.	- How to support answers with evidence from the text, my own opinions and/or experiences. - That I must listen to and consider different points of view and weigh up arguments. - How to justify predictions with more than one piece of evidence e.g. I think this because of… and… - That a fact is a true statement whereas an opinion is a belief which may or may not be true.
VIPERS Question Stems	- Why is the text arranged in this way? - What structures has the author used? - What is the purpose of this text feature? - Is the use of ….. effective? - The mood of the character changes throughout the text. Find and copy ….. phrases that show this. - What is the author's point of view? - What effect does ….. have on the audience? - How does the author engage the reader here? - Which words and phrases did ….. effectively? - Which section was the most/least exciting/interesting part? - How are these sections linked?	

Retrieval		
Retrieval is one of the first reading skills children develop. It involves responding to questions and identifying and recording important information from a text. Retrieval is considered the most significant reading skill in aiding a child's understanding of a text and needs to be taught and practised regularly.		
	Year 3 and 4	**Year 5 and 6**
Finding and using Information	• Become confident with the skill of 'skim and scan' to retrieve details. • Use relevant quotes from the text to support answers to questions. • Retrieve and record information from a fiction text and non-fiction text.	• Read, retrieve and present information from a broader range of texts including myths, legends, stories from other cultures, modern fiction, plays, poetry, archaic and non-fiction texts. • Ask my own questions and follow a line of enquiry.
To do this, I must already know and understand…	• That information can be retrieved from a glossary or index. • How to look back and scan the text for keywords or phrases, these are often in the question.	• How to skim and scan • That there are many genres, each with their own unique features. • How to use question stems to ask and answer my own questions. • That non-fiction texts are organised in different ways e.g. Fact boxes, captions, diagrams, flow charts.
VIPERS Question Stems	• How would you describe this story/text? What genre is it? How do you know? • How did ….. ? • How often ….. ? • Who had ….. ? Who is ….. ? Who did ….. ? • What happened to ….. ? • What does ….. do? • How ….. is ….. ? • What can you learn from ….. from/in this section? • Give one example of ….. . • This story is told from whose perspective?	

Summarising and Sequencing		
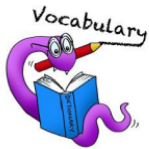
These are the key skills of selecting only the key information from what has been read and to placing it in a logical, structured order. A summary is a condensed account of what has been read, without needless details. whilst ensuring the overall meaning is not lost. Sequencing is the ability to place this information in the correct order that it happened.

	Year 3 and 4	**Year 5 and 6**
Sequence, summarise and retell	• Give a brief verbal summary of a story. • Summarise main ideas, distinguishing between the important and less important information in a text • Outline whole paragraphs, chapters or texts.	• Sum up the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identify key details to support the main ideas. • Summarise entire texts using a limited/given amount of words or paragraphs. • Analyse, evaluate and link ideas from across a text.
Discussing the text	• Discuss and identify main ideas drawn from a key paragraph or page • Discuss and identify themes from a wide range of books	• Identify and discuss the themes or conventions from a chapter or text across a range of different genres. • Make comparisons across different books.
To do this, I must already know and understand…	• That a summary uses essential words and phrases to convey the main point or main events of a text. • How to condense information into key words or sentences. How to use time adverbials to sequence key events.	
VIPERS Question Stems	• How would you describe this story/text? What genre is it? How do you know? • How did ….. ? • How often ….. ? • Who had ….. ? Who is ….. ? Who did ….. ? • What happened to ….. ? • What does ….. do? • How ….. is ….. ? • What can you learn from ….. from/in this section? • Give one example of ….. . • This story is told from whose perspective?	

Book talk summary

-These question stems can also be used to scaffold your lessons.

	Examples of progression in question stems from KS1 – KS2 (VIPERS)		
	KS1	**KS2**	
Vocabulary	What does the word ………. mean in this sentence? Find and copy a word, which means ………. What does this word or phrase tell you about ………? Which word in this section do you think is the most important? Why? Which of the words best describes the character/setting/mood etc? Can you think of any other words the author could have used to describe this? Why do you think ………. is repeated in this section?	What do the words …… and …… suggest about the character, setting and mood? Which word tells you that….? Which keyword tells you about the character/setting/mood? Find one word in the text, which means…… Find and highlight the word that is closest in meaning to……. Find a word or phrase which shows/suggests that…….	
Infer	Why was……. feeling……..? Why did ………… happen? Why did ………. say ……….? Can you explain why……….? What do you think the author intended when they said……….? How does ………. make you feel?	Find and copy a group of words which show that… How do these words make the reader feel? How does this paragraph suggest this? How do the descriptions of …… show that they are …….. How can you tell that……? What impression of …… do you get from these paragraphs? What voice might these characters use? What was …. thinking when…..? Who is telling the story?	
Predict	Look at the book cover/blurb – what do you think this book will be about? What do you think will happen next? What makes you think this? How does the choice of character or setting affect what will happen next? What is happening? What do you think happened before? What do you think will happen after? What do you think the last paragraph suggests will happen next?	From the cover what do you think this text is going to be about? What is happening now? What happened before this? What will happen after? What does this paragraph suggest will happen next? What makes you think this? Do you think the choice of setting will influence how the plot develops? Do you think… will happen? Yes, no or maybe? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.	
Explain	Who is your favourite character? Why? Why do you think all the main characters are girls in this book? Would you like to live in this setting? Why/why not? Is there anything you would change about this story? Do you like this text? What do you like about it?	Why is the text arranged in this way? What structures has the author used? What is the purpose of this text feature? Is the use of ….. effective? The mood of the character changes throughout the text. Find and copy the phrases, which show this. What is the author's point of view? What affect does ….. have on the audience? How does the author engage the reader here? Which words and phrases did ….. effectively? Which section was the most interesting/exciting part? How are these sections linked?	
Retrieve	What kind of text is this? Who did…..? Where did…..? When did…..? What happened when…..?	Why did …….. happen? How did …….? How many…..? What happened to……?	How would you describe this story/text? What genre is it? How do you know? How did…? How often…? Who had…? Who is…? Who did….? What happened to…?	What does…. do? How ….. is ……..? What can you learn from …… from this section? Give one example of…… The story is told from whose perspective?
Sequence/ Summarise	Can you number these events 1-5 in the order that they happened? What happened after …….? What was the first thing that happened in the story? Can you summarise in a sentence the opening/middle/end of the story? In what order do these chapter headings come in the story?	Can you number these events 1-5 in the order that they happened? What happened after …….? What was the first thing that happened in the story? Can you summarise in a sentence the opening/middle/end of the story? In what order do these chapter headings come in the story?		