

Enabling Schools Toolkit Reading Cycles Manual Summary



Why is reading important for Foundation Phase learners?

Reading is a foundational skill for learning.

Being able to read is crucial to a learner's ability to learn, understand, and communicate with other people.

Reading is a gateway for advancing social justice.

Children who don't read by age 10 usually fail to thrive later in school and don't acquire the human capital they need to power their careers once they leave school.

Reading is not just a functional capability.

Enabling learners to enjoy reading at early grades impacts positively on their academic achievement and personal development.



Who are involved in the Reading Cycles?

Principals, teachers and Community Reading Champions (CRCs) of ten rural primary schools in Mahikeng of the North-West Province have joined hands to enrich Foundation Phase learners' engagement and enjoyment in reading.

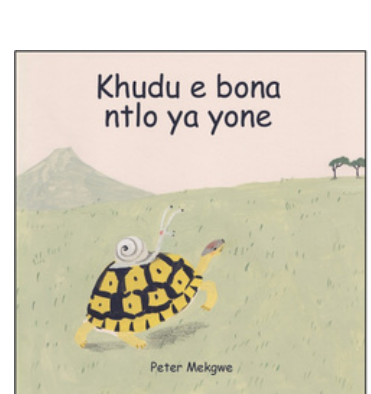
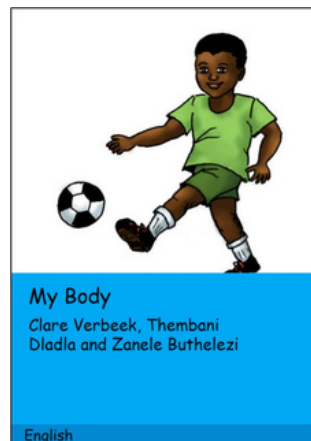
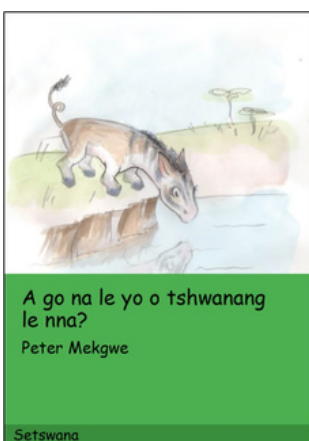
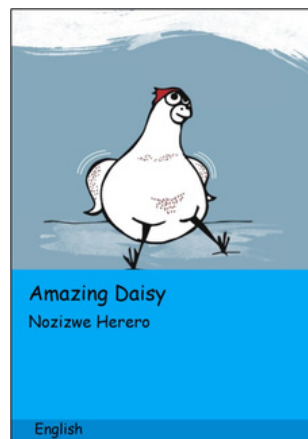
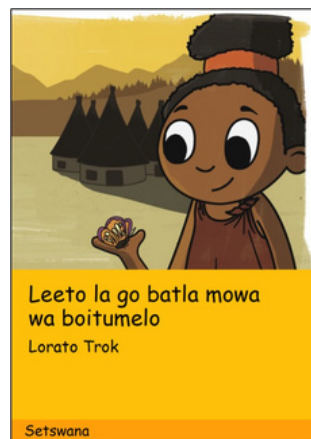
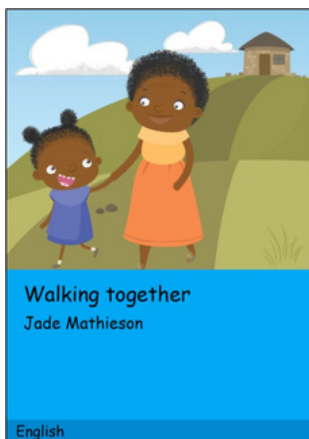
Teachers and CRCs will lead Reading Cycle activities in the classroom, with guidance, support and challenge from school principals.



What storybooks are provided:

- 1 We have carefully selected six core books and six supplementary books for the six Reading Cycles.
- 2 All stories are closely aligned with the Life Skills topics outlined in the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Grades R-3 in South Africa.
- 3 All stories are relevant to a South African child's life experiences.

We have carefully selected 12 storybooks from the platforms of Book Dash and African Storybook. Our reasons for sourcing stories from these platforms are as follows: (1) they offer storybooks in all of South Africa's official languages; (2) the content of these stories is contextually and culturally relevant to South Africa and to the lives of South African children; (3) they are premised on promoting reading for enjoyment; and (4) the stories are freely available.



What do Reading Cycles look like?

Research tells us that young learners are more likely to learn well, be happy, and be healthy if they study in well-led and well-managed schools that develop their skills and nurture their interest to read for pleasure. The Reading Cycles are a core focus of the Enabling Schools Toolkit which aim to create a joyful and creative reading environment in classrooms for Foundation Phase learners in rural primary schools in South Africa.



Each Reading Cycle spans over a three-week period involving reading, arts-based and writing activities that usually require ten 30-minute Drop All and Read (DAR) sessions to complete.

The national Drop All and Read (DAR) campaign was initiated by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, to help children and adults to discover the joys of reading and promote the value of reading in schools and their communities.

DAR is part of the daily timetable in schools, dedicating 30 minutes every day to reading.

Each “Reading Cycle” involves **one storybook** and entails **three phases**:

- 1 **Reading and discussing a storybook:** Creating foundations for enjoyment of reading.
- 2 **Engaging in arts-based activities:** Broadening creativity and understanding.
- 3 **Creating a storybook:** Connecting with children’s own worlds.

Each class will have completed a storybook of their own at the end of each Reading Cycle and will conclude each Reading Cycle with a book sharing celebration session.

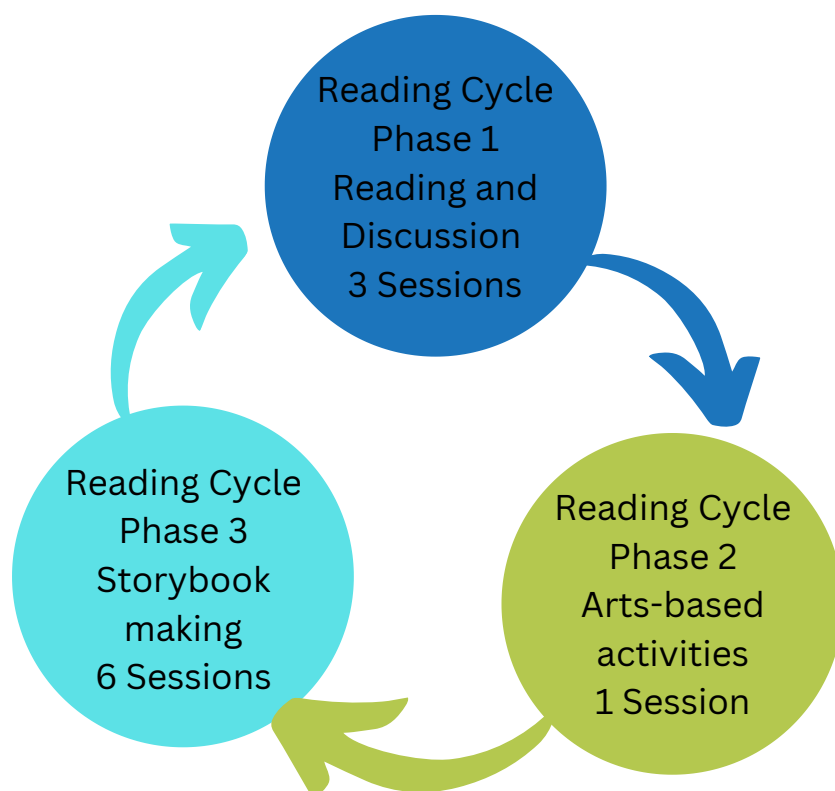
How do the Reading Cycles work?

The Reading Cycles consist of **three phases**.

Phase One focuses on introducing a new storybook to the learners, encouraging them to read for pleasure and enjoyment in class, and engaging them in discussions about the CAPS Life Skills topics that are related to the book. This phase usually uses three 30-minute DAR sessions.

In **Phase Two**, learners engage in arts-based activities to further express their understanding of the Life Skills topics related to the storybook. Phase two usually uses one 30-minute DAR session.

In **Phase Three**, learners in each class are supported by their teacher and CRC to create one storybook together. The creation of this storybook is inspired by the already discussed Life Skills topics in this Reading Cycle and is embedded learners' life experiences. This phase usually takes six 30-minute DAR sessions.



Phase 1 - Reading and discussion

Study areas linked to CAPS for Grades R-3 (Foundation Phase): Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Well-Being

Session 1: The class teacher and the CRC introduce the new storybook to the learners.

Session 2: The book is re-read to the learners.

Session 3: Learners engage in a class discussion about selected Life Skills topics that are relevant to the story.

Phase 3 - Storybook-making

Study areas linked to CAPS for Grades R-3 (Foundation Phase): (1) Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Well-Being and (2) Creative Arts.

Session 1: The class teacher and the CRC facilitate learners in choosing a topic for their own storybook.

Session 2-4: The class teacher and the CRC guide learners to write the content of the storybook, ensuring that the story has characters, a setting, a problem, a solution to the problem, and a happy ending.

Session 5: Learners engage in drawing to provide illustrations for their book.

Session 6: The final book is presented to the learners and a class celebration takes place.

Phase 2 - Arts-based activities

Study areas linked to CAPS for Grades R-3 (Foundation Phase): (1) Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Well-Being and (2) Creative Arts.

Session 1: Learners are engaged in an arts-based activity relating to the Life Skills topics discussed in Phase 1. Activities include: (1) Performing arts such as dramatization, singing, dancing and making music and (2) visual arts through two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D) creations such as drawing, building and constructing using clay and recyclable materials, making instruments, and creating signboards.

Examples of learner-generated books

