



Evidence-based resources for home-supported learning

Reciprocal reading for secondary students in an online environment

As many teachers and students move to online environments there are opportunities to enlist existing strategies that are well suited to virtual platforms.

Approach summary

Reciprocal reading is the process of predicting, questioning, summarising and clarifying. This strategy is well suited to encouraging dialogue in an online environment.

Teachers can set up reciprocal reading activities to encourage: team work; understanding of concepts; articulation of ideas; improved vocabulary; and improved reading.

During the home-supported learning period, it may have the additional benefit of encouraging social connectedness between students.

Practically, teachers could structure an organised discussion around a text, such as a news article and then ask students in groups of approximately four to adopt roles including:

- **The director** – develops questions to prompt thoughts, opinions and feeling of the group.
- **The helper** – locates passages that are harder to understand, which students then re-read and discuss.
- **The reporter** – reports on new vocabulary and definitions.
- **The summariser** – summarises what was read and conveys main points succinctly.

Tips

- Make the most of the technological features you have access to such as online breakout rooms, but be mindful of how you are able to support and supervise students.
- Ensure that students have appropriate scaffolds and understand the task and reciprocal reading roles before they are asked to begin.
- Ensure students have the technical understanding of the platform you are using for reciprocal reading which may require explicit teaching.
- Set up protocols around online environments for students.

What should I consider?

- If using breakout rooms, can I control the organisation of those rooms and move between them freely?
- Do students in breakout rooms know how to call the teacher into their breakout?
- Can I model the process first with the entire group before splitting into smaller groups?
- Is the text relevant and at the right reading level for the students?
- If students need definitions, do they know where to go?
- How can I group students strategically so the task provides learning opportunities for all?
- Do I know which students will require additional support to complete the task?

This resource has been developed from the Education Endowment Foundation's Guidance Report [*Improving literacy in secondary schools*](#).