

8. Who is Shannon Smith?
9. Does she agree or disagree that the problem is getting worse?

■ Writing activity.

What do you think? Draft an email to the Sunday Mail stating your opinion. Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Students should write one or two paragraphs.

■ EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 3 WORKSHEET.

■ The questions below should be added to the level 2 questions. Learners at this level should be able to differentiate fact from opinion.

1. Are there any opinions expressed in this text? If so what are they?
2. Is this text current, reliable? Explain. (You might like to look at the writing activity before answering)

■ Writing activity.

The writing activities at this level should be expanding the learners' writing skills, eg. writing in paragraphs, report and essay writing skills – planning their writing, introduction, and summation etc.

■ Task:

Research Myopia and write a report on your findings. Include information on the following: What is Myopia? What causes it? How is it treated? Can it be prevented, how? Remember to reference your work.

- NOTE:**
- Higher level learners or those who do not need specific spelling instruction may prefer to go straight to work on the article and question sheet after the initial discussion.
 - The text may need to be re written, simplified or may be limited to two or three paragraphs from the article for lower level learners.
 - Locate the article on the web. There are often additional useful activities learners can complete either on line or on paper such as emailing/writing their opinion to the newspaper.

■ Numeracy activities:

Some articles are better suited than others for numeracy activities. In this article, some work on percentages, ratio or even graphs could be included if it is relevant and at a suitable level for your learner.

Eg. Survey your class to find out how many people wear glasses for short sightedness.

- How many people did you survey?
- How many people wear glasses?
- How many people don't wear glasses?
- What percentage of the class is that?
- Draw a simple graph to represent that.
- If there are 20 people in the class and 85 per cent wear glasses, how many people is that?

■ End the activity.

Save some time at the end of the lesson to discuss answers to questions, provide feedback, encouragement to students and plan individual learning activities based on worksheet results.

The worksheets above are guides only and can be adapted to suit any level of learner ability. Each level becomes slightly more difficult as students progress.

Most newspaper articles are now available online and often include activities such as emailing opinions to the newspaper, or links to other areas such as Facebook, Digg it etc which can be used as extension or alternative activities depending on learners needs.

A note of thanks. I would like to thank Donna Morris who first introduced me to this method of

resource building while I undertook my practical experience and provided me with the opportunity of observing best practice teaching.

Thanks also to the Sunday Mail for allowing us to reprint the article; "Kid's eye opener" written by Carly Hennessey, picture: Brad Marsellos.

Finally, some fun!

Crosswords, wordfinds and hangman, among other games, can be designed using words found in the article. Below are a couple of websites offering free downloadable activities.

<http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/create.html>

<http://www.eclipsecrossword.com/download.html>

Spelling activities - <http://www.teachthis.com.au>



TUTOR TIPS

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Using newspaper articles to develop multi level, multi core-skill resources

Deb Symes

thesundaymail.com.au NEWS

Kids' eye opener

Indoor lifestyle causing myopia

Carly Hennessey

HOMEWORK, miniature video games and computers are ruining children's eyes, with kids as young as six sporting glasses.

Optometrists warn that kids need to "run outdoors" and look long distance to halt an epidemic of myopia – or short-sightedness – overtaking our school-aged children.

Experts want to avoid the Hong Kong or Singapore example where 85 per cent of young people wear glasses because of a cramped urban environment in which hours of close work in front of a computer is the norm.

Brisbane optometrist Kate Johnson said the problem was becoming significant.

"And it's happening more in children with no family history of myopia," Ms Johnson said.

"They spend so much more time in close work with computers and reading doing the damage."

People with shortsightedness see close-up items in focus, but distant objects are fuzzy.

Ms Johnson, who runs Gerry & Johnson Optometrists in the City, said going outdoors would balance out the ill-effects of too much inside time.

QUT myopia researcher Associate Professor Katrina Schmid said the latest research indicated Australian children were faring better than their Asian counterparts, most likely because we enjoyed an outdoors lifestyle.

But she said children living in inner-city Sydney were more likely to be shortsighted than their Queensland cousins.

"It's not simply looking into the distance that prevents myopia, but actually being outside in sunlight," Prof Schmid said.

"Sunlight causes the release of retinal transmitters in high amounts, for example dopamine, and this prevents the eye elongation that long periods spent performing intense 'near-work' causes."

Jennifer Sommerfeld's two children both wear glasses for shortsightedness.

A routine check four years ago at the optometrist for Jayden, 11, and Madeleine, 9, picked up the problem.

The youngsters spend plenty of time outdoors at their acreage north of Brisbane and like all school-aged children love to read and play on the computer.

"Motorbike riding is what I do," Jayden said.

"I love to ride over the jumps," Mrs Sommerfeld was surprised the children needed glasses because there was no family history.

They really balance out all the school work they do with heaps of activity," she said.

Queensland president of the Optometrists Association Australia Shannon Smith agreed more children were wearing glasses earlier.

"The general public is more aware of it and they are getting their eyes tested earlier... and things are being picked up earlier," Ms Smith said.

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What do you think? Send an email to yournews@thesundaymail.com.au or write to us at GPO Box 130, Brisbane, 4001.

BIGGER PICTURE: Jayden Sommerfeld, 11, and sister Madeleine, 9, both wear glasses to combat short-sightedness. Picture: Brad Marsellos

Adult literacy learners are more likely to succeed if they work with learning materials that are relevant and have a purpose in meeting their needs. It is important that the learner engages in his or her learning through discussion and participation with the class or singularly with the tutor.

Finding meaningful, relevant resources for adult literacy learners can be extremely difficult, time consuming, and costly. This is particularly true when working with a number of learners across a variety of literacy levels in the one class. However, resources for all students at all literacy and

numeracy levels can be created from newspaper, magazine articles or brochures.

These articles provide the opportunity to engage all learners through one activity while maintaining consideration for individual needs. Using one article allows for group work or individual work in the classroom. Additionally, activities based on these articles will develop skills in:

- Reading
- Writing
- Oral communication
- Learning strategies, including metacognition
- Numeracy.

Another plus, is that newspapers, magazines and brochures are always at hand, are inexpensive or free and many are available in electronic versions.

While it may be impossible to find one article that is of interest to everyone, it is usually possible to find something of relevance to many. Once a basic formula or template for developing activities has been established for each ability level, it is then relatively easy to produce activities at short notice, even if for example learners are choosing their own reading material.

Reprinted in this Tutor Tip, with kind permission from the Sunday Mail, is "Kid's eye opener", which was thought to be relevant in today's electronic age, with so many of our learners using computers in the classroom and their children spending increasing amounts of time engaged with different technologies.

Suggestions for questions across three levels have been included according to the 39150-81QLD Courses in Vocational Literacy, Numeracy curriculum. These questions are a guide only and should be adapted to suit each learner's ability, where possible.

■ What we know.

Adults come to our classes with a broad range of abilities, needs and experiences, and their knowledge, opinions and thoughts should be valued.

■ What we need to know.

Get to know your learners and their strengths. Invite discussion to establish prior knowledge on the topic at hand and generate spelling and other activities.

Discussion prior to reading an article develops a number of oral communication /social skills required both in the classroom and in society, including but not limited to the consideration of the opinions of others, body language and even basic turn taking skills.

■ Preparing the questions and what to expect from learners.

- Grammar and spelling activities in the worksheet should build on or reinforce any learning activities done in the discussion stage.
- Answers must, where appropriate, be given in complete sentences.
- Where a meaning of a word is required – learners must give the same meaning as in the story.
- Worksheets gradually increase in difficulty across the levels.

■ Getting started.

- Show only the picture associated with the article about to be read and ask learners to discuss what they see. Then ask for ideas on what the story might be about.
- Ask learners to write their answers down and attach to worksheet.
- Next, show the headline, ask if learners are still happy with their initial idea, or want to make any changes or additions?
- Determine the correct topic.
- Elicit the learners' prior knowledge on the topic.
- Discuss words that might be found in the article. e.g. myopia, optometrist. Again, draw on the learners' knowledge.
- Write difficult or unfamiliar words on the board.
- Discuss strategies for reading unfamiliar words.
- Include dictionary activities to locate the meaning of new words – particularly useful when a word has more than one meaning. My students often race each other so they can be the first to find the word's meaning.
- Ask learners to scan the text, locate and highlight the words written on the board.
- If suitable for your learner or group ask for volunteers to read the article aloud while others follow - this activity presents a further opportunity to develop strategies for reading unfamiliar words eg. miscue analysis. **(Miscue Analysis Revisited - Ann Kelly & Deb Symes – will be published in the June edition of Write On)**



■ EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 1 WORKSHEET.

1. Put these words in alphabetical order: **Note:** Only need to look at the first letter here.

video outdoors computers young family people

2. Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the above words.
3. Choose two words from the box above and use them in sentences to show their meaning.
4. Word endings: 'ing'
Find 6 words in the story ending with 'ing' Example: ruining
5. Write the root or base word for each one. Example: ruining - ruin

Note: Questions 4 and 5 can be designed around any spelling rule you may be currently working on.

■ Questions to demonstrate locating information.

Cloze exercises, using words directly from the text (Shown in italics.) assist with learning to use key words to locate a point in an article and also with writing in complete sentences.

6. What is ruining children's eyes?
_____, _____ and _____ are ruining children's eyes.
7. What do optometrists warn that kids need to do to halt an epidemic of myopia?
Optometrists warn that kids need to _____ to halt an epidemic of myopia
8. Complete the following sentence.
Brisbane optometrist Kate Johnson said the problem was becoming significant: "They _____ so much more _____ in close _____ with computers and reading _____ the _____."

Note: The last sentence contains a number of common words and could be used later as a spelling/dictation activity.

■ Questions that demonstrate metacognition and comprehension.

9. What word attack skills did you use to help you with this story?
10. What is the main idea of the story?
11. What is the purpose of the story? Why was it written? For example, to inform, entertain, explain, persuade or instruct.

Note: Learners need to understand the difference between the purpose and what the story is about.

■ Include a writing task.

- Write a brief email to a friend telling them one interesting point from the article. (Include an example of what is expected.)
- Make a list of some things you could do to avoid eye problems.

■ EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 2 WORKSHEET.

1. Use a dictionary or another strategy (reading on) to help find the meaning of each word in the box.
A. Give the meaning of each word.
B. Use each word in a sentence.

miniature motorbike ruining sporting sunlight distance myopia

Note: More than just the first letter in each word needs to be checked.

■ Questions to demonstrate metacognition and comprehension.

1. What is the purpose of this text? (Inform, persuade, entertain, instruct or explain?)
2. What are the main ideas?
3. How does this text relate to you?
4. What did you do to help you read this story?

■ Questions to demonstrate ability to locate information.

Note: These are slightly more difficult than level one and require the learner to look for key words (not necessarily in the same order as the text) to find the information.

5. What can be done to prevent an epidemic of myopia?
6. What percentage of young people in Hong Kong and Singapore wear glasses and why?
7. Who is Kate Johnson and what does she have to say about the problem? Write in your own words do not copy from text.