

# Book Reading

University of Massachusetts Boston

ECHD 640-440

Lisa Van Thiel

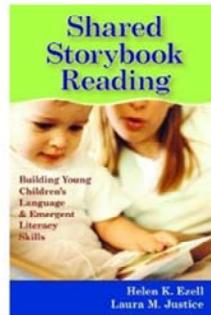


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Story book reading is not used to teach children how to read but how books themselves work and how print is organized. Within the context of story book reading, adults assist children in developing language and literacy competencies. Lev Vygotsky's theory of social interaction applies to language literacy development--especially within the context of story book reading. Vygotsky believed that development occurs through socially mediated interactions in which an experienced peer or adult guides the child to explore a new concept slightly above the child's current level of development. Shared reading provides children with this opportunity when adults emphasize skills that children have not yet developed, rather than focusing on concepts that are already understood. This is best done in the context of relationships with an adult that is responsive and sensitive to the child's involvement in story book reading. Adults should observe and respond to children's interests, comfort, and pace while reading. An adult's ability to recognize words and concepts that may be new, will help in supporting children in developing understanding by scaffolding their conversations with children around the book's text.

## Shared Reading

- “Emphasizes the active involvement and engagement of both the child and the adult in a shared interaction focusing on a book’s words, pictures, and the story.”



Ezell and Justice (2005)  
Shared Storybook Reading

In this module participants will:

- Identify the role of storybook reading in building oral language, vocabulary and concept development
- Create opportunities during shared reading to expose children to the sounds and print structure of written language
- Identify key language and literacy opportunities embedded in shared reading
- Utilize shared reading strategies to explicitly teach children new vocabulary, concepts, and understanding of text
- Select appropriate books for shared reading
- Identify key vocabulary, concepts, and questions to be explored before, during and after shared reading

## Core Competencies

- Child Development
- Partnering with Families
- Learning Environments and Implementing Curriculum
- Observations, Assessment and Documentation



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In this module participants will develop competencies across areas in Child Development, Partnering with Families, Learning Environment, Implementing Curriculum and Observation, Assessment and Documentation. By the end of this module, practitioners should be able to apply their knowledge to the following competencies areas:

**Competency Area 1: Child Development:** D. Language Development, indicator 8, Initial level: Understands their role in communicating with children and youth including active listening and reading non-verbal cues; recognizes the importance for each child and youth to engage in appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication with others including other children, youth, and adults.

**Competency Area 3: Partnering with Families and Communities:** E. Improving partnerships with schools and communities: Mid-level: Understands age/grade specific learning and developmental goals and outcomes; creates out-of-school time curriculum/activities that support school day learning.

**Competency Area 5. A. Learning Environments and Implementing Curriculum:**  
A. Creating learning Environments, Indicator 3: Identifies and provides a broad array of materials that are developmentally appropriate and represent children, youth, and families in the program and community.

B. Curriculum, Indicator 5, Mid-level: Develops, implements, and evaluates curriculum and instruction appropriate for the age and developmental level of the children and youth in the program. Indicator 6, Mid-level: Creates balanced and comprehensive curriculum approaches that are developmentally appropriate and promote the inclusion of all children and youth. Indicator 9, Mid-level: Uses knowledge of children and youth's language and literacy to design learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate.

**Competency Area 6. Observation, Assessment, and Documentation:** A. Observing and recording, Indicator 1. Observes and documents children and youth's development in terms of skills, abilities, strengths, needs, interests, learning styles, participation in the program, out personal bias or judgment.



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## What Research Tells Us



- Grover Whitehurst et. al (1988) have shown increases in children's oral language skills when adults use dialogic reading techniques (open-ended questions, repetition, and modeling) to gradually shift the adult's role in story telling to the child.
- Kaderavek and Sulzby (2000) state that storybooks provide children with models for decontextualized language.
- Girolanmetto and Weitzman (2002) suggest that shared reading exposes children to conversations that are more challenging and linguistically complex than those that occur in play or other activities in preschool.

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## What Research Tells Us



- Van Kleeck, Gillam, Hamilton, and Mc Grath, 1997 state that children's early experiences with decontextualized discourse during shared reading prepared children for later experiences with cognitive-challenging abstract concepts.
- Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002 found that storybook reading exposes children to vocabulary not used in everyday conversations and that children's familiarity with word and grammar permits them to discuss concepts better within decontextualized context.
- Ezell and Justice, 2000 found that when adult readers use verbal and nonverbal references to print during shared reading, children verbalize more about print than when readers do not use print referencing.

Van Kleeck, Gillam, Hamilton, and Mc Grath (1997) state that children's early experiences with decontextualized discourse during shared reading prepare children for later experiences with cognitive-challenging abstract concepts.

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## Quality and Quantity of Books Reading Matters

- Ethnicity
- Mother's education
- Language spoken at home

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The quality and quantity of storybook reading routines in which a child participates prior to entering school may vary do to his or her experiences at home or in school. Studies have found that the interactions among the following variables (ethnicity, mother's education, and languages spoken at home) impact both the quality and quantity of books read at home. When a child had one or more of the these factors, the number of opportunities for book reading at home declined. That is not to say, however, that a child coming from a home with one or more of these factors is not regularly engaging in storybook reading with an adult in his/her home. This is something teachers can ask individual families. Regardless of quality or quantity of books read at home, teachers can support all families in continuing to read to their child by enhancing home/school connection and sharing books with families.

Early childhood educators can, however, control the quality and quantity of books read in early childhood programs. Children attending early childhood programs for less than two and half hours per day should be read at least one book daily. Children attending a program longer than 5.5 hours or more daily should engage in reading two story books a day. Wells (1995) states that the frequency in which children between 1-3 years of age listen to stories was later positively associated with teachers' ratings of children's oral language at the age of 5. Early childhood professionals can maximize differences in literacy achievement simply by reading each day. There are not many areas in which we know we can make such a difference simply by providing an opportunity. Read to children everyday.

There are, however, many ways early childhood professionals can improve the quality of their story book reading and improve upon the impact on student outcomes.

## Adult behavior during shared reading includes:

- Child-oriented behaviors
- Interaction-promoting behaviors
- Language-modeling behaviors

Image by [Mary Meter](#)



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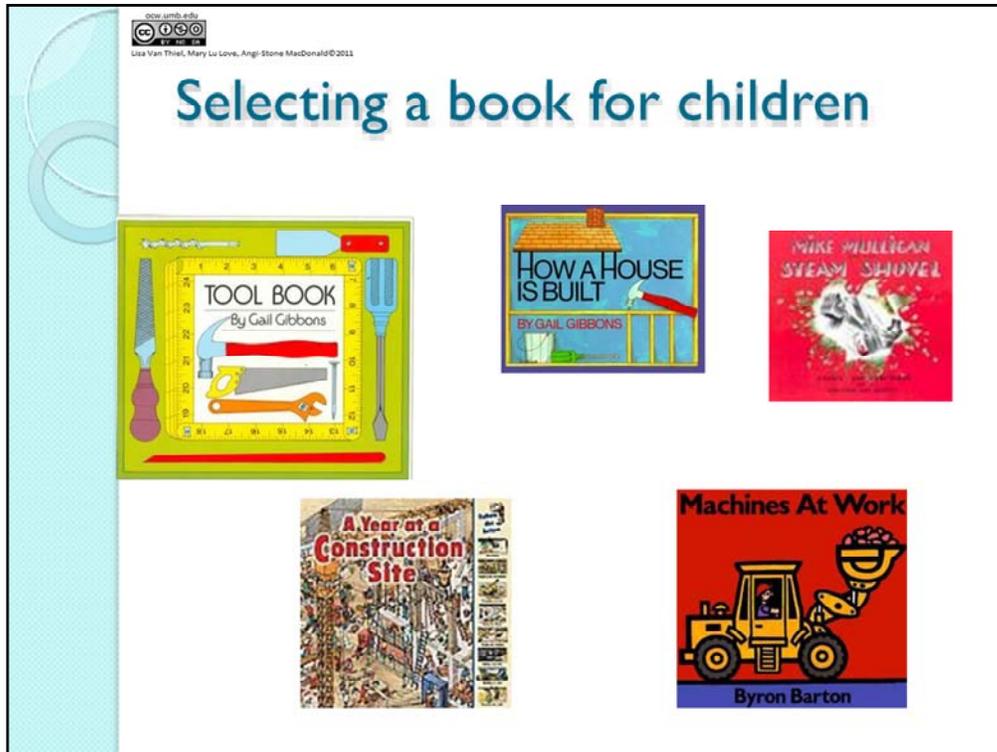
Girolanmetto and Weitzman (2006) state that high levels of responsiveness in book reading with young children is characterized by three types of adult behaviors:

1. Child-oriented behaviors follow the child's lead, pace, and topic. The responsive adult focuses on the child's object of attention and creates periods of shared referencing. Commenting on child's object of attention and pausing to allow the child to initiate a conversation, were both found to be behaviors exhibited by responsive adults during book reading.

2. Interaction-promoting behaviors are used by adults to engage a child in conversations. Closed questions such as, "What color is this?" did not solicit children's engagement, but using wh- questions (what, who, where, when, and which) promoted children's conversations and encouraged children to hypothesize, reason, and predict what would happen in the story.

3. Language-modeling behaviors are used by responsive adults to extend children's language and literacy involvement to provide models of more advanced forms and features of both oral and written language. Adults using modeling either label or extend. With labeling, the adult provides the name of an object, labels a concept, or helps a child make connections to print like "that's H like in your name Hannah." When an adult labels, a child is not obligated to respond. The goal of labeling is exposure while extending builds upon a child's vocabulary. The child makes a statement: for example, while reading the book *Harry the Dirty Dog* by Gene Zion, a child might point to the scrubbing brush and say "Mom has one of those, she washes the floor with it." The adult reading the book might say, "your mom has a scrubbing brush like that and she washes the floor with it but in this story the brush is used to wash Harry. Why do you think he is hiding it?"

Many studies that have shown that teachers' techniques to elicit children's active involvement in book sharing activities in preschool using open-ended questions, following the lead of children on topics, and giving children positive feedback on their comments and observations during the story, build early language and literacy skills.



When books are read aloud to children, adults should be selective in choosing ones that offer children access to conceptually challenging content and vocabulary. Shared reading provides children with an opportunity to develop language and comprehension skills with the support of adults or higher level peers who assist children in constructing meaning from text.

Books read aloud give children experiences with decontextualized language, requiring children to make sense of ideas that are about something beyond the here and now. It is through shared reading that children listen to and talk with adults about the ideas presented in the story. Talking around books that focus on rare vocabulary, in addition to getting children to think about what is going on in the story and identifying the important ideas, has been found to be beneficial to young children. Dickinson and Smith (1994) found that talk that was “analytic in nature” was beneficial to children. Dickinson and Smith’s research found the following features to be effective when reading to children:

1. Discussing the major story ideas
2. Dealing with ideas as they are encountered in the story’s text rather than waiting until the end of the book; and
3. Involving children in a discussion around the book and providing opportunities to reflect on the story after completing the book.

Pretend you are planning a unit on tools and construction. Review the books on the slide: *Tool Book* by Gail Gibbons, *Machines At Work* by Bryon Barton, *How a House is Built* by Gail Gibbons, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* by Virginia Lee Burton, and *A Year at the a Construction Site* by Nicolas Harris. After reading all of the books, select one or two that is appropriate for the age group in which you currently work. Identify content and vocabulary that is slightly above the children’s current level and, in addition, decontextualize the language used in the story. Then discuss how you might deal with ideas presented in the text while reading the story to support children in understanding the vocabulary and concepts encountered within the books.

## Effective shared readings

- Physical Arrangement
- Social Involvement
- Material Selected
- Reading Style
- Conversation

Image by CLPE



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Helen Ezell and Laura Justice state that there are 5 essential elements to consider when creating an enriching and interesting opportunity for shared reading with children in which they can acquire language and emergent literacy skills.

Physical arrangement: Children and adults should be seated so that both can view the book and handle its pages. Both the adult and children should feel as they are active participants in reading the book. When reading to one to three children, a child may sit next to the teacher or in his lap. When the group is larger than three a small semicircle around the teacher is better. Avoid having children sit on either side of teachers, and make sure all children can see from where they are sitting or lying comfortably. Show how you will be displaying the book prior to reading and ask the children to adjust their seating before you begin to read. The book area or library in the classroom should be well organized with accessible books shelves. Additionally, books from a variety of genres and levels should be available and in good or excellent shape—those that are worn, torn, or falling apart should be removed. Genres may include counting books, alphabet books, non-fiction and fiction books, predictable books, narrative texts, poetry, fables, fairy tale, and class-made books.

## Social Involvement

- Physical proximity
- Positive affect
- Regard for student perspectives
- Acknowledgement and feedback for children's utterances and questions

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Every time a book is read to a child or a group of children, there is an opportunity for social involvement. Affect (smiles, laughter, winks, and pats of endearment) are observable behaviors found in classrooms with positive emotional climates. Positive and rewarding interaction during shared reading experiences provide children with multiple opportunities to take conversational turns. This not only builds language skills, but fosters a positive relationship between the students and the teacher. When children are allowed to share their ideas, thoughts, and feelings, they feel valued by adults and peers.

Children's attempts to answer questions or make comments should be acknowledged and praised to build confidence and ability to speak. All responses, right or wrong, should be acknowledged and appreciated. Incorrect responses should not be dismissed but rather used as an opportunity to scaffold learning for the individual or the group.

## When selecting books consider the following:

1. Is the book of high interest to the child/children?
2. Does the book selected address a topic of high interest?
3. Do you think it encourages engagement of all or some children in the classroom?
4. Does the book provide colorful and appealing illustrations?
5. Do you think children will enjoy looking at the book multiple times and reading it on their own?
6. Is the narrative limited to a few lines of text per page?
7. If a book is too long it may not hold children's interest.

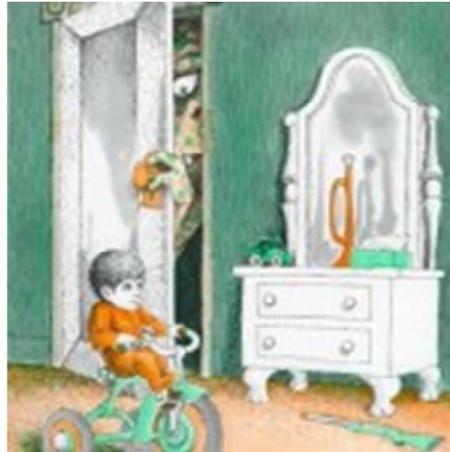


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Think about a favorite book that you have selected to read with children and consider the following:

1. Is the book of high interest to the child/children?
2. Does the book selected address a topic of high interest?
3. Do you think it will encourage engagement of all or some children in the classroom?
4. Does the book provide colorful and appealing illustrations?
5. Do you think children will enjoy looking at the book multiple times and reading it on their own?
6. Is the narrative limited to a few lines of text per page?
7. If a book is too long it may not hold children's interest.

## Reading Style



**“There’s a Nightmare in My Closet”**  
by Mercer Mayer



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An early educator’s reading style can impact children’s interest in stories and bring books to life. Reading a book with expression means that you vary the pitch and vocal characteristics of your voice while reading to add interest to characters in the story. Another technique is to vary the volume of your voice; for example: when reading “he was very quiet”, you may lower the volume of your voice but then when the text reads, “he was extremely loud and boisterous”, you raise the volume of your voice. Finally, you can change the pace of the reading to create suspense or a sense of urgency; for example: when reading the first page of Mercer Meyer’s book ***There’s a Nightmare in My Closet***, one might slow down the pace to engage the reader in the story, “There used to be a nightmare in my closet.”

Teachers should always read books on their own before reading them to children. When perusing the book, take note of the text and consider how you might use your pitch, voice, volume or reading pace to enhance the story.

## Conversation

“ Effective shared reading sessions promote conversations rather than strict adherence to the book’s text.”

Ezell and Justice (2005)

Image by [Terence Gilheany](#)





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“Effective shared reading sessions promote conversations rather than strict adherence to the book’s text” (Ezell and Justice 2005). In shared reading, children are invited to comment as well as ask and answer questions. It is through the conversation about the text that adults guide children and effectively enhance language and emergent literacy abilities in children. This is often difficult for adults that have been taught that the children’s role is to simply listen. Shared reading is used to promote children’s active participation rather than their passive role in listening to the story and waiting for the teacher to ask a question.

Shared reading promotes opportunities for children to use speech, print, or illustrations to tell or reconstruct a story. Preschool children’s primary means for learning is through conversations. Reese and Cox (1999) found that there were three naturally occurring reading styles that emerge when adults read to children, which they define as follows:

**Performance oriented:** conversations focus on lower level aspects of the story such as identifying the characters’ names and setting as well as higher level aspects of the story such as the reason behind an action or event or problem solving. These conversations take place before and/or after story reading occurs.

**Describer:** contains conversations considered to be of lower demand such as describing the events of the story or the illustrations. However, these conversations are generally interspersed throughout the story.

**Comprehender:** Includes conversation during the reading of the text but focuses on high demand by engaging children in reasoning, predicting, and inferring story events as they are encountered during the reading. The conversation is flexible and may be conducted in various ways. Conversations may be directed by either the adult or the child but there is a balance.

Conversations around books may focus on children’s comments, events, characters,

## Why intervention is needed

- For every 50 children having trouble learning to read in kindergarten, 44 of them will still be having trouble in third grade.



Image by [John Donaghy](#)



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There is a large body of research that suggests reading to young children impacts school readiness and vocabulary.

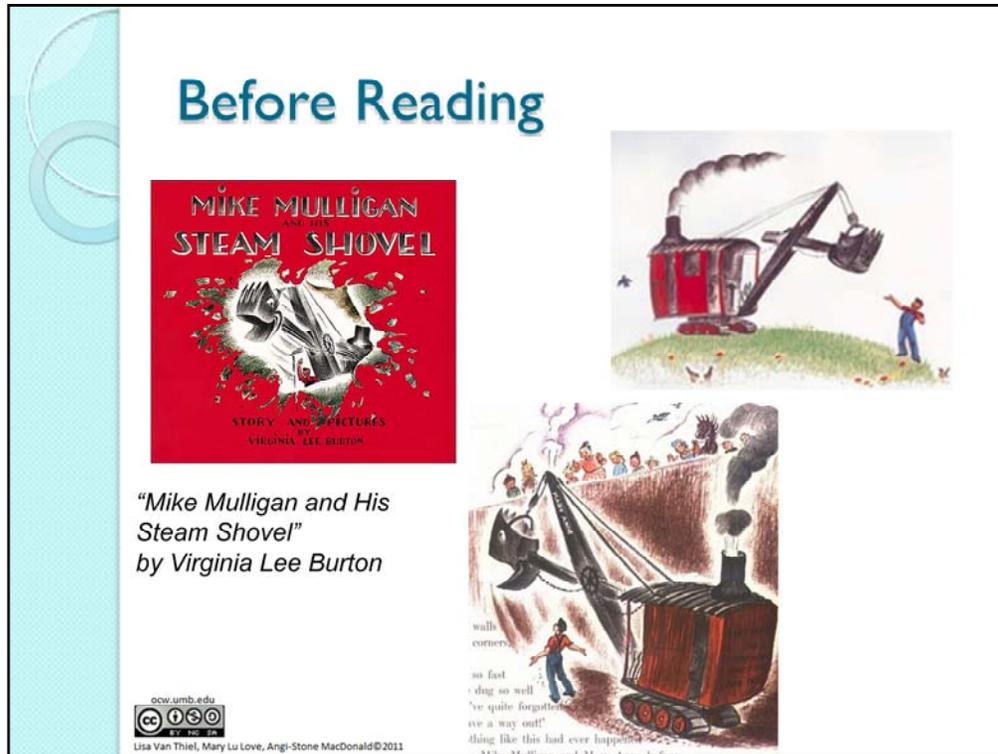
Hart and Risley (1995) showed that low income homes on average expose young children to far fewer words and far simpler sentence structures than middle class homes.

We also know that language is needed to question, explain, and problem solve; all which are essential for the formation of higher level mental functions related to reading with comprehension.

Growing vocabulary is done incrementally and requires multiple exposures and multiple interactions with words. THRIVE for FIVE

To develop children's language, we need to have frequent experiences that engage them in producing and comprehending sentences. Sharing books interactively is one way for us to decontextualize language. However, other powerful occurrences that happen every day in your classroom may also act as sources. Interactions that involve children using abstract language can occur throughout the day including sharing time, meal time conversations, and dramatic play.

Children in poverty often have fewer resources, fewer language supports, and reduced human and social capital. We can mediate it by increasing children's background knowledge and comprehensive language supports (vocabulary, phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics and family support).



Before beginning to read:  
 Draw attention to details of the cover: How many words are in the title: *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel*? 6. This book is authored and illustrated by the same person: Virginia Lee Burton.  
 Draw attention to introduction pages and illustrations: “What do you think this story might be about?” Show Mike Mulligan and his



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## Getting and Sustaining Attention

- Holding the book so all children can see the illustration
- Reading with expression (use your voice and vary the pitch and pace of reading)
- Pointing to and labeling items in the illustration and occasionally commenting on details that may highlight inferences such as Mike Mulligan's facial expressions.
- Asking children to point out details in illustrations
- Answering and responding to children's questions or comments

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- When reading to children, you can engage their attention and sustain it by:
- Holding the book so all children can see the illustration
  - Reading with expression (use your voice and vary the pitch and pace of reading)
  - Pointing to and labeling items in the illustration and occasionally commenting on details that may highlight inferences such as Mike Mulligan's facial expressions.
  - Asking children to point out details in illustrations
  - Answering and responding to children's questions or comments

## First Readings

### Enjoying the story:

- Overall sense of the book
- Information about meanings of words
- Interpretation of key events
- Informal assessment children's prior knowledge



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The purpose (key concepts) for a first reading focuses on providing children with

- An overall sense of the book
- Information about meanings of words
- Interpretation of key events
- Informal assessment of children's prior knowledge

Shared reading is directly linked to the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experience.

ELA 2 - Participate actively in discussions and listen to ideas of others, ask and answer relevant questions

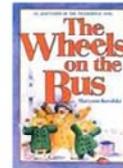
ELA 6 - Listen to a wide variety of age-appropriate literacy read alouds.

ELA 10 - Engage actively in read aloud activities by asking questions, offering ideas, predicting or retelling important ideas, predicting or retelling important parts of a story or information in the book.

## Second Readings

### Engaging the child in the story

- Work with children to reconstruct the story
- Revisit vocabulary words
- Point to pictures, use voices or gestures to engage students
- Connect story to the children's personal lives



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The focus of the second reading is to engage the child in the story. The teacher's role is to assist the child in reconstructing the story, create opportunities for the child to revisit vocabulary words, and use picture, voice, and gestures to engage the child in understanding the meaning of the story. At this time, children should be encouraged to make connections between the story and their personal lives.

Asking open-ended questions

What would you do if...? (connecting)

What do you think will happen next? (predicting)

What favorite part will you remember tonight to share with your family? (retelling)

What new words did you hear or learn? (vocabulary)

Focus on of the children's understanding of the story's **sequence and meaning**

## Third and Fourth Reading

- Take turns in a conversation about the story
- Encourage children to become the story tellers over time.
- Engage children in repeating, restating, and expanding language around a story

Grover Whitehurst has conducted extensive research on how frequency of reading experiences, as well as children's active participation in them, affects gains in language development. The way we read is just as important as how often we read to young children. Dialogic reading is a systematic way to engage children in conversations about a storybook to build their language and vocabulary. The adult works with only a few children at a time so that each child can see the pictures in the book. Research found that children who regularly engaged in dialogic reading with family and at school have:

- Improved expressive language
- Increased vocabulary
- Improved identification of sounds and letters
- Demonstrated emergent writing skills, such as left to right, upper and lower case discrimination, and writing names as well as distinguishing words, pictures, and numbers

The role of the adult is to prompt the child with questions, expand the child's responses, and praise the child's effort to retell and name objects or actions.

During the third and fourth reading of the book, children should be encouraged to take turns talking about the story. Teachers should encourage children to become the story tellers and support them in expanding the language around the story.

## Third and Fourth Readings

### Guided Reconstruction of story

- Chime in
- Repeat key phrases
- Respond to “What happens next?”
- Define key vocabulary
- Look for specifics:
  - Rhyming words
  - Words that start with specific letters
- Make connections between parts of story

During the third reading, it is safe to assume that children are familiar with the story and teachers can guide them in reconstructing the it. While doing so, teachers can support children in participating in reading the books by asking them to chime in or repeat repetitive phrases. Children should be encouraged to make a prediction about what happens next and discuss these predictions with the teacher and peers. Teachers can use this time to assess children’s understanding of key vocabulary words stressed in prior readings of the story as well as other related activities. Children should be able to explain the meanings of key vocabulary words by the third or fourth reading of a book. Teachers can extend learning by asking children to look for specific rhyming words or letters to build additional language and literacy skills. Comprehension and making connections between characters and events often occurs during the third reading of a book. In a minute, we will discuss some strategies for engaging children in actively talking about the story.

## Third and Fourth Readings

### Engage children in retelling stories

- Role play
- Flannel board
- Movement
- Using new vocabulary words



Image by [familymwr](#)

Third and fourth readings of favorite books can also be used to actively engage children in retelling the story. Children may use role play to act out the story or retell with flannel board pieces. Regardless, favorite books should be read over and over to young children. When children are engaged in a book, think about ways to extend their interactions with it; for example: while reading ***Caps for Sale***, by Esphyr Slobodina, children can become the monkey responding to the peddler by imitating the movements of the peddler.



Why should I apply shared reading to my practice?

What could be the benefit of reading the same story several times?



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At this point you might be asking yourself, “Why should I apply shared reading to my practice? What could be the benefit of reading the same story several times?”

Preschool children, ages 3 to 5, develop early reading and language skills when teachers use shared reading strategies. Interactive reading provides children with the opportunity to talk with teachers about the pictures and story. Teachers assist children in developing language skills by engaging them before, during, and/or after reading the text through explicit interactive techniques, such as asking them to point to the story title, predict what might happen next, and retelling the story events. Dialogic reading strategies can be used to assess and support oral language and vocabulary development. Multiple readings of the same story helps the child to become the storyteller as they gain better understanding of the story by gradually responding to higher level questions. Multiple reads of the same story move children beyond just naming objects in pictures to thinking more about what is happening in the pictures and how it relates to their own experiences.

Reading with children is not just about the words on the page or how quiet the children are, it is about much more. Please pause the module and listen to a 8 minute interview with Chris Lonigan [http://dww.ed.gov/Preschool-Language-and-Literacy/Use-Interactive-and-Dialogic-Reading/learn/?T\\_ID=15&P\\_ID=31](http://dww.ed.gov/Preschool-Language-and-Literacy/Use-Interactive-and-Dialogic-Reading/learn/?T_ID=15&P_ID=31)

## CROWD

- **C**omplete
- **R**etell
- **O**pen-ended
- **W**h-prompts
- **D**istancing

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Please visit the What Works Site for an interview with Chris Lonigan as he explains Dialogic reading then return to the module to review how CROWD can support you in implementing dialogic reading. CROWD = complete, retell, open-ended, wh-prompts, and distancing provides you with key words to guide your reading with children.

**Complete:** Ask the child to complete a word or phrase. In addition, ask them to repeat refrains and to fill in words related to pictures or print embedded in story. For example, the book *Over in the Meadow* illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats, the teacher reads, “Over in the Meadow in a hole in the tree lived an old mother bluebirds and little birdies \_\_\_Pause and waits\_\_\_” Children would then respond, “Three.” Children may also be asked to fill in vocabulary words. These strategies encourage children to listen to and use language to be engaged in the story. Predictable books are great for asking children to chime in.

**Retell:** The purpose of asking children to retell the story is that it supports the child in understanding the story. Retell questions provide teachers with an opportunity to assess children’s understanding of the story. As children retell the story in their own words, teachers can support children in making connections with text and concepts discussed in the book. As children retell, the teacher can reinforce exposure to new vocabulary words. Questions a teacher might ask to encourage children to retell the story may be: “What’s happening in this story?” “Tell me about the characters in this book?” “Do you remember what happens in this book?”

**Open-end Questions-** Ask children to describe what is happening in the picture and then ask them to describe what they might do in a similar situation. As Chris Lonigan explains in

## PEER Sequence

- **P**rompt the child
- **E**valuate what the child says
- **E**xpand on what the child says
- **R**epeat

PEER helps children learn vocabulary, talk about the story in their own words, recall story plot, and make connections. Peer stands for prompt, evaluate, expand, and repeat. When reading to young children it is important to be aware of their levels of understanding. That is why teachers should prompt children to share their understanding of the story events, character's emotions, or objects discussed in the text. Adults should then evaluate children's responses and expand upon them to provide more information, then repeat the information provided.

PEER requires teachers to develop wh- questions: what, who, where, when, why, or which. Questions should encourage children to hypothesize, reason, and make predictions about the story.

Both CROWD and PEER can be helpful to teachers in planning a shared reading activity.

## Text Talk

“ Researchers suggest that the most valuable aspect of the read aloud activity is that it gives children experience with decontextualized language, requiring them to make sense of ideas that are about now.”

Isabel Beck and Margaret Mc Keown  
(2001)



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Isabel Beck and Margaret Mc Keown in their 2001 article entitled *Text Talk*, captured the benefits of read aloud experiences for young children when they observed teachers reading to children and found that teachers most often use the following strategies:

1. Clarifying content or unfamiliar vocabulary
2. Asking questions to involve children in the story about what had been read

These questions were most often phrased in a manner that produced a brief answer about a detail; for example, while reading *Harry the Dirty Dog* (Zion, 1984), a teacher might ask, “Why did Harry hide the brush?” Children might then respond, “because he did not like baths”. The problem with such questions is that they restrict children’s responses to facts or details and limit children’s understanding of a story.

Beck and McKeown’s research lead them to believe that children relied on pictures to understand the meaning of a story and that by doing so, children were often misinformed about the text or story line. Additionally, their research found that children’s questions and responses to stories read focused on children’s background knowledge rather than the text read in the story. Children readily drew upon their personal experiences but had a more difficult time understanding and responding to what was inferred in the text. Beck and McKeown suggest that teachers carefully consider children’s responses to be sure that children are making appropriate connections to the story line. Adults can support children in making connections by asking additional questions to support children in making connections with the text.

Components of Text Talk	Text Talk Approach
Selection of texts	Stories that have an event structure and some complexities of events. Stories have the potential for children to build meaning.
Initial questions	Intermingled through the story are open questions that require children to describe and explain text ideas, rather than recall and retrieve words from text.
Follow-up questions	Questions scaffold students' thinking by using initial response to form questions that encourage elaboration and development of initial ideas.
Pictures	Pictures are presented after children have heard and responded to a section of text.
Background knowledge	Background knowledge invitations are thoughtfully to support meaning building.
Vocabulary	Some sophisticated words are selected for direct attention after reading and discussion of the story is completed.

McKeown and Beck (2001)

Beck and McKeown's observations of read alouds prompted them to develop Text Talk an approach to read alouds designed to enhance children's ability to construct meaning from decontextualized language. The goal of this approach is to promote comprehension and further language development. Text Talk interactions are based on open-ended questions that the teacher poses during reading that ask children to consider and talk about the ideas in the story while connecting them as the story is read.

This approach to read alouds requires teacher to consider the following:

**Selection of texts-** McKeown and Beck selected books that did not fully rely on pictures for communicating the story. In addition, they looked for books with an event structure so that children would focus on listening and comprehending the text read.

**Initial Questions-** are then developed to initiate a discussion at important points in the story.

**Follow up Questions-** are a series of questions that support the child in elaborating and making meaning of the story. Follow up questions are in response to children's initial responses. Children are encouraged to continue to respond to follow up questions until they understand the concepts and the story line. The purpose of these questions is to ensure that children understand the meaning of the story.

**Pictures-** at certain points in the story, teachers are asked to hold back showing the picture until children have listened to discussed text. Beck and McKeown believe that this focuses the children on listening to the text to find out what is happening in the story. Therefore, the text is read and discussed before the picture is shown on these pages. The teacher asks the students, "What's happening?" then discusses and shows picture after completing discussion.

**Background Knowledge-** In Text Talk, the teacher develops ways to acknowledge children's comments while pointing out the distinction between their own experiences and that which is taking place in the story.

**Vocabulary** – The teacher reads the text emphasizing the vocabulary words completing the sentence and page spread, then defines the word and uses it in a sentence and encourages



## Take Away Messages from McKeown and Beck's work:

- Awareness of distinction between constructing meaning of ideas in text and retrieving information.
- Understand that young children have difficulty gaining meaning from decontextualized language
- Use questions to engage children in talking about stories and making connections
- Assist children in making meaningful connection between background knowledge and stories.
- Be aware of how pictures can draw attention away from the processing language
- Take advantage of sophisticated words found in story books and use them as a source for vocabulary instruction.



The following concepts can guide the development of more effective read alouds, according to Mc Keown and Beck. They include:

- Awareness of the distinction between constructing meanings of ideas in a text and simply retrieving information
- Understanding the difficulty of the task young children face in gaining meaning from decontextualized language
- Designing questions that encourage children to talk about and connect ideas and develop follow up questions that scaffold building meaning from those ideas
- Helping children to meaningfully incorporate their background knowledge and reduce surface associations to personal experiences
- Awareness of how pictures can draw attention away from the processing of linguistic content in a text. Appropriately time attention to text when reading
- Taking advantage of sophisticated words found in young children's books and using them as a source for explicit vocabulary instruction



## Opportunities for Learning Language and Emergent Literacy During Shared Reading

<p><b>Adult behavior</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult reads narrative text using oral language</li> <li>• Adult addresses:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ illustrations,</li> <li>◦ print,</li> <li>◦ sound</li> <li>◦ story content</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adult converses with child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning opportunity</li> <li>• Child hears translation of written language</li> <li>• Child practices comprehension skills and connects oral events in story to pictures</li> <li>• Child associates oral language with written language and learns how print is organized</li> <li>• Child practices comprehension skills and gain contextual understanding of the story</li> <li>• Child practices language comprehension and expression.</li> </ul>
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Ezell and Justice (2005) Shared Storybook Reading

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Shared reading provides children with access to the world. Children can be exposed to the sights, sounds, and words that may be different or go beyond their home, school, or community experiences. Reading to children provides them with exposure to new words and concepts. Adults play a critical role in ensuring that story time is an opportunity for children to learn. When adults focus on reading narrative texts and encouraging children to talk about the story, they are providing children with an opportunity to use oral language. In addition, shared reading provides teachers with the opportunity to explicitly support children in using illustration, print, sound, and story content when developing meaning of the story. Most of all, through conversations that children share, their understanding of the story emerges and they share the meaning with adults. Shared reading provides many opportunities for children to:

- Hear translation of written language
- Practice comprehension skills and connect oral events in the story to the pictures
- Associate oral language with written language and learn how print is organized
- Gain contextual understanding of the story
- Practice expression



## Resources to support implementation “

### Doing What Works: Use Interactive and Dialogic Reading

[http://dww.ed.gov/Preschool-Language-and-Literacy/Use-Interactive-and-Dialogic-Reading/see/?T\\_ID=15&P\\_ID=31](http://dww.ed.gov/Preschool-Language-and-Literacy/Use-Interactive-and-Dialogic-Reading/see/?T_ID=15&P_ID=31)



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Now that you have learned the importance of interactive multiple book readings with children, you should begin applying it to your practice. The Doing What Works Website provides many tools to support teachers in the implementation of shared reading.

Please pause this module and visit the Doing What Works Website: Use Interactive and Dialogic Reading. Here you will find more information on interactive and dialogic reading. Then return to the module.

[http://dww.ed.gov/Preschool-Language-and-Literacy/Use-Interactive-and-Dialogic-Reading/see/?T\\_ID=15&P\\_ID=31](http://dww.ed.gov/Preschool-Language-and-Literacy/Use-Interactive-and-Dialogic-Reading/see/?T_ID=15&P_ID=31)

## Suggestions for increasing shared reading in children's home

- Establish a formalized home reading program with parents
- Encourage families to obtain library cards and regularly attend story hours
- Establish a lending library that includes books and literacy activities for children and families to borrow
- Give books to children on special occasions
- Provide parents with opportunities to purchase low cost children's books



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Of course, parents are children's first teachers and all children--regardless of home language and disability--should regularly be exposed to shared reading experiences at home and in school. The National Household Education Survey of 1995 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995) states that 4 of 10 U.S. children under the age of 6 are read to every day, but 2 of 10 children are never read to. Considering the importance of shared reading, early educators can support families in reading to their children by engaging them in a variety of types of programs.

Early educators may consider offering families a structured, home-based reading program in which parents are asked to participate in a 4-6 week program that provides them with information such as 1. knowledge about children's language and literacy, 2. understanding their role in promoting development, 3. increasing their understanding of how shared reading enhances development, 4. the importance of the quality of the interaction between an adult and child during shared reading, and 5. the importance of creating a literacy-rich environment at home. If such a program is not possible, there are many other ways educators can increase a family's opportunities for shared reading in the home.

--Encourage all families to get library cards and attend story hours with their child--this helps parents and children to become familiar with the library and its personnel as well as increases a family's access to books.

--Establish a lending library in which parents and children are able to borrow books and/or literacy backpacks to use at home. Families should be encouraged to regularly borrow materials for home use.

--Provide children with books on special occasions; for example, give children books on their birthday to take home and add to their personal libraries.

--Regularly provide parents with opportunities to purchase low cost children's books by sending home catalogs to purchase books for home libraries.

## Links to Standards



Image by [Jim B L](#)

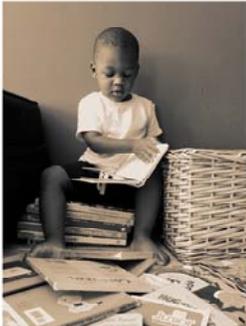


Image by [Jason L. Parks](#)



Image by [Boqdan Popovici](#)

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Reading to young children begins in infancy. The Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

Language and Communication and Concept Development Guidelines, recommend shared reading as one way to support children's development. Review the following indicators to see how shared reading experiences can be used to foster development for infants and toddlers.

LC1: The young infant responds to frequently heard sounds and words

LC6: The older infant uses consistent sounds, gestures, signs, and some words to communicate

LC15: The young infant listens to stories for short periods of time

LC17: The older infant builds and uses vocabulary through direct experiences and involvement with pictures and books

LC22: The young infant demonstrates competency in his or her home language

LC29: The younger toddler understands educators' simple requests and statements referring to the present situation

LC44: The younger toddler shows motivation to read

LC46: The younger toddler recognizes familiar environmental print

The Guidelines also recognize the link between shared reading and children's concept development as stated in Cognitive Development Guidelines

CD38: The older infant imitates the actions of the educator or other adults

CD44: The older toddler recalls past information, such as repetitive parts to familiar songs, stories and finger plays, and shares past events

Pre-kindergartners (older 4-year-olds to younger 5-year-olds):	Kindergartners:
<p><b>Print Concepts</b></p> <p>1. With guidance and support, demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of printed and written text: books, words, letters, and the alphabet.*</p> <p>a. Handle books respectfully and appropriately, holding them right-side-up and turning pages one at a time from front to back.*</p> <p>b. (Begins in kindergarten or when the individual child is ready)</p> <p>c. (Begins in kindergarten or when the individual child is ready)</p> <p>d. Recognize and name some upper-case letters of the alphabet and the lowercase letters in one's own name.*</p>	
<p><b>Phonological Awareness</b></p> <p>2. With guidance and support, demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).*</p> <p>a. With guidance and support recognize and produce rhyming words (e.g., identify words that rhyme with /cat/ such as /hat/ and /bat/).*</p> <p>b. With guidance and support, segment words in a simple sentence by clapping and naming the number of words in the sentence.*</p> <p>c. Identify the initial sound of a spoken word and, with guidance and support, generate a several other words that have the same initial sound.*</p> <p>d. (Begins in kindergarten or when the individual child is ready)</p> <p>e. (Begins in kindergarten or when the individual child is ready)</p>	
<p>1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.</p> <p>a. Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.</p> <p>b. Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.</p> <p>c. Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.</p> <p>d. Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.</p>	
<p>2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).</p> <p>a. Recognize and produce rhyming words.</p> <p>b. Count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words.</p> <p>c. Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.</p> <p>d. Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words.* *(This does not include CVCs ending with /l/, /r/, or /s/.)</p> <p>e. Add or substitute individual sounds (phonemes) in simple, one-syllable words to make new words.</p>	

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Literacy January 2011

In the Introduction to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Literacy, January 2011, **The Massachusetts Pre-Kindergarten Standards** states, on page 11: “In this age group, foundations of reading, writing, speaking and listening and language development are formed out of children’s conversations, informal dramatics, learning songs and poems, and experiences with real objects, as well as listening to and “reading” books on a variety of subjects. The standards can be promoted through play and exploration activities, talking about the picture books, and embedded in almost all daily activities. They should not be limited to “reading time.” These English language arts standards correspond with the learning activities in the *Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences (2003)*. *The standards should be considered guideposts to facilitate young children’s understanding of the world of language and literature, writers and illustrators, books and libraries.*” Therefore, while this module focused on book reading, it should not be viewed as the only means for promoting language and literacy skills.

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills Pre-K–5” These standards are directed toward fostering students’ understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other basic conventions of the English writing system. These foundational skills are not an end in and of themselves; rather, they are necessary and important components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines. Instruction should be differentiated: good readers will need much less practice with these concepts than struggling readers will. The point is to teach students what they need to learn and not what they already know—to discern when particular children or activities warrant more or less attention.

Shared reading provides many opportunities to meet these CORE Reading Standards: Foundational Skills Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.





## Reading Standards: Foundational Skills Grade 1

Grade 1 students:
<p><i>Print Concepts</i></p> <p>1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., first word, capitalization, ending punctuation).</p>
<p><i>Phonological Awareness</i></p> <p>2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">d. Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes).</p>


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While shared reading provides young children with the opportunity to build many foundational skills in reading, it should not be the only place in the classroom where children are engaged in exploring print and developing phonological awareness. Throughout the classroom, children should be engaged in opportunities to explore print and letters sounds through songs, letter and word play, and writing activities. In Module 5 Listening and Comprehension, we reviewed the Reading Standards for Literature as well as the speaking and listening stands. Teachers planning shared reading activities should consider establishing goals across ELA CORE Standards Strands of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening and Language. While shared reading provides the opportunity to explicitly instruct children in many skills, teachers must first identify them so that they can teach with intention.

## Application and Practice

- Select one of your favorite books to read with children
- Reflect on your own practice

Image by [seetell](#)



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In this module, participants identify the role of storybook reading in building oral language, vocabulary and concept development. In addition, participants identify how exposure to the sounds and print structure of written language can be discussed during shared reading. It is now time for participants to demonstrate learning by:

- Identifying key language and literacy opportunities embedded in shared reading and applying shared reading strategies to explicit instruction of new vocabulary, concepts, and understanding of text. To do this, participants are asked to:

- Select one of your favorite books to read with children.
- Identify at least 3 learning goals using the appropriate standards for that age group.
- Identify at least 6-10 vocabulary words and develop appropriate definitions to support children in understanding their meaning.
- Use PEER and CROWD to develop questions for three readings of the book. Utilize the templates provided on the Doing What Works web site.
- Submit three lesson plans using the UMB lesson plan format illustrating how you applied what you learned in this module about dialogic reading to your practice.
- Before submitting your lesson plans, have someone videotape you reading the book or use a tape recorder to record yourself reading to children, then reflect on your own practice and submit a brief summary of your reflection along with you lesson plans.

More details are provided in the syllabus about this assignment and can be under the heading assignment.



In module 8 Facilitating Rich Conversations to Promote Language and Higher Order Thinking participants will examine teacher/child interactions and strategies use to foster conversations and feedback loops. Additional we will review current research and discuss how conversations can improve language and higher order thinking skills.

Picture

[http://www.google.com/imgres?q=children+talking+to+each+other&um=1&hl=en&tbn=isch&tbnid=UvUOeQ\\_OSRwbXM:&imgrefurl=http://ictearlyyears.e2bn.org/planning3\\_36.html&docid=2-GGw0LV2ibE0M&w=640&h=480&ei=6hZxTuqkIsL40gHPofXxCQ&zoom=1&biw=1175&bih=485&iact=rc&dur=353&page=2&tbnh=120&tbnw=155&start=12&ndsp=13&ved=1t:429,r:2,s:12&tx=25&ty=74](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=children+talking+to+each+other&um=1&hl=en&tbn=isch&tbnid=UvUOeQ_OSRwbXM:&imgrefurl=http://ictearlyyears.e2bn.org/planning3_36.html&docid=2-GGw0LV2ibE0M&w=640&h=480&ei=6hZxTuqkIsL40gHPofXxCQ&zoom=1&biw=1175&bih=485&iact=rc&dur=353&page=2&tbnh=120&tbnw=155&start=12&ndsp=13&ved=1t:429,r:2,s:12&tx=25&ty=74)