



TEACHER NOTES SEN

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH **WORKSHEETS 8A TO 8H**

Introduction

In keeping with the ethos of the GAA, this manual is designed to promote participation for all. This manual looks not only to promote participation but to ensure that all pupils can experience a level of success. As there are diverse learning characteristics among pupils with special educational needs, our focus in this section will be on the core cognitive skills required for us to learn and on the general literacy skills required to access the curriculum. While some of these core skills may be an area of specific strength for a number of pupils with special educational needs, for others it may be their specific area of weakness. So it is important to remember that while it is imperative to address certain areas of weakness it is equally important to further develop the pupil's strengths.

The Section will cover the following areas:

Core Skills

- Visual discrimination
- Visual perceptual and spatial awareness
- Visual sequential memory
- Short-term working memory
- Auditory discrimination and sequential memory

Literacy Skills

- Phonological awareness
- High frequency words
- Sight vocabulary
- Alphabetical awareness
- Sentence formation
- Reading
- Spelling
- Reading comprehension
- Creative writing



Worksheet 8A and 8B: Differentiation

The practice of differentiation is central to ensuring a level of success or achievement for all our pupils. Differentiation is a method of tailoring materials, presentation or expectations to match the varying ability levels of all the pupils within today's diverse classroom.

Worksheets 8A and 8B are taken from the English and History sections and differentiated to meet the lower ability levels within the classroom.

- The font is changed, text enlarged and spacing widened.
- The language used is changed where required to match the ability level and to aid comprehension.
- A simplified explanation of difficult words is provided.
- The questions are scaffolded to ensure a level of achievement, through the highlighting of key words, the use of close activities, and providing part of the answer in the question.
- Finally the activities as much as possible focus on developing core skills while promoting pupils' success at their own level.

It is important to remember that the practice of differentiation not only applies to our pupils with learning difficulties but also to our gifted children for whom activities are simply not challenging enough. To meet the needs of these children we suggest using worksheets from the Céim Ar Aghaidh senior cycle pack.



Worksheet 8C: Tracking

The ability to track letter and number patterns, sequences or even words is central to the literacy process, particularly as the academic component of class work increases and children's materials and curriculum becomes more sophisticated.

- This activity develops visual discrimination and sequencing which is a core skill for all learning.
- It supports children in such activities as reading, spelling (where it helps pupils recognise patterns) and scanning text or figures to find key words and answers.
- It also develops the key skill of working memory, as the children must remember the word or pattern and then find it.

Suggested Activities:

The pupil is required to:

1. Carefully read the words in the text box (possibly with help of teacher if required).
2. Then starting at 1 track and highlight the real word in each set of jumbled letters.

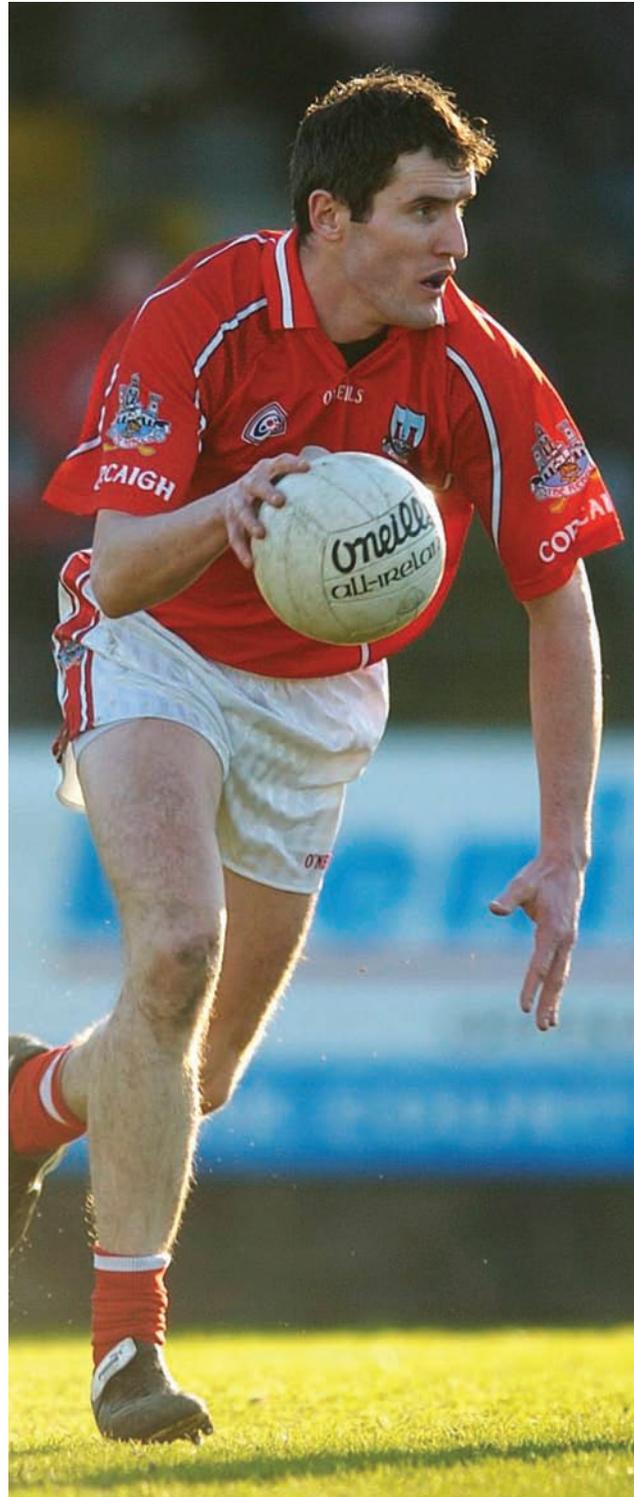
(To differentiate you can indicate the exact word you are looking for in 1-10.)

Extensions Exercises:

- You could take a particular word group, for example – right words.
- Individually have the pupils prepare their own word-search.
- When completed have the pupils swap and complete them.
- Finally they could then put the words in alphabetical order or work against the clock.

This could be merged into a group activity, arrange the class into small groups. Provide them with a sheet with an empty grid (10 by 10 columns) and have each group prepare and plan their own word-search. Each member has a different job. The words in the word-search can be themed (for example, sports words or counties) Finally this could be compiled into a word-search book and bound.

It is important to remember with the word tracking activity that all literary activities require the pupil to be able to track and scan full words from pieces of text.



- Here the pupils must track the words of the verse in order from within the text of jumbled words.
- Highlight or colour each word as found and mark above; possibly read or spell out the word to help the pupils.
(To differentiate the more able could conduct the activity against the clock.)



Worksheet 8D: Visual, Perceptual And Spatial Awareness

This activity focuses on the development of visual perceptual and spatial awareness skills which are vital in the writing process and general visual and fine motor skills.

- It helps to enhance and develop writing and general visual and motor skills.
- It develops visual sequential and working memory.
- Further to this, the activity promotes critical thinking.



Suggested Activities:

- For this activity the pupil is required to carefully copy the pattern which is provided using the margins provided as a guide moving on to work free hand on a detached pattern.
- For this activity the pupil is required to copy the outline of the GAA emblem using the dots provided as a guide. Finally shade in the image of the All-Ireland medal using the grid provided as a guide.

Extension Exercises:

Using the blank grid sheet:

- Have the pupils produce their own patterns, sequences, symmetrical image. Limit the complexity of the patterns or images.
- When this is complete have each pupil swap it with a partner and the pupils then complete their respective images.



- Finally, when all are complete each pupil gets their own sheet back and evaluates how the other pupil has done.

Further to this you can use beads and string, building blocks etc. to make a pattern which must be remembered and repeated.

Worksheet 8E: Code Sheet (Visual Sequential Memory)

This code exercise is designed to develop the pupil's visual sequential memory, while enhancing the pupil's ability to scan which is a key skill in comprehending text and answering questions.

- This activity enhances the pupil's working and short-term memory which are key components in a pupil's ability to learn.
- It enhances critical thinking skills.
- It develops the pupil's ability to copy text and figures from the blackboard.

Suggested Activities:

Each letter of the alphabet is assigned a number, and these numbers are then used to produce a code.

1. The pupils must match the number to the letter it represents.
2. From 1-10 put in the letter to reveal the player and county names. This requires the pupil to internalise the letter the number represents and then return to the code and work with that information.
3. When the code is unlocked piece by piece, you match each famous player to their respective counties.

The second part of this activity requires the pupil to complete a cross-reference puzzle.

1. Again here each number represents a letter of the alphabet.
2. 13 of the 26 corresponding letters are provided.
3. The pupil adds the letters provided to the grid and as a number of letters appear more than once the pupils then try to work out some of the words the number sequences form.
4. As the pupils work out the words more letters are found until each number's corresponding letter has been found and the grid is complete.

(For the weaker student you could provide a few more letters, and possibly break down the activity and instructions into simple easy to follow terms.)

Extension Exercises:

Using the code provided at the top of this page:

- Have the pupils produce their own coded messages.
- It can be a secret message or clues about a well known GAA star. Simply have the pupils produce a clue of their own relating to a famous GAA player and see if their partner can unlock the clue and guess the player.

(For the more able student have them produce their own code using symbols to represent the letters of the alphabet. They could make coded clues and create a treasure hunt for a class group activity.)



Worksheet 8F: Creative Writing

Here we look at creative writing in simple sentence form. It is a form of scaffolding the process of creative writing.

Suggested Activities:

For this activity the pupil is required to creatively think of a way to form a sentence with the two words provided.

The word box at the top of this worksheet is designed to provide a pool of high frequency words to help complete the task and eliminate the worry of misspelling.

This activity is then extended to look at the use of synonyms or adjectives to develop a clearer picture for the reader and to help develop the pupil's descriptive vocabulary

For this activity the pupil is required to expand the sentence provided, using adjectives or descriptive words, and explain the need to give a clearer picture to the reader, and give examples of adjectives or descriptive words.



Extension Exercises:

To reinforce this activity:

- Have the pupils put as many as ten chosen words into a short story,
- Or give them pictures or images rather than words to put into a creative writing piece.
- Provide them with a picture and image, and have them describe it as clearly as possible to their partner. Have the partner draw the image and then compare.
- Looking at the use of synonym, have the group write down a comprehensive list of descriptive words.
- Finally, on the board compile a complete list, put these on a sheet with some pictorial references for the weaker children, laminate them and give one to each pupil.

Worksheet 8G: Sentence Formation

This exercise focuses on sentence structure and enhances the pupil's ability to formulate a sentence correctly.

Suggested Activities:

- Ask the pupils to read carefully and be aware of the importance of each individual word to the overall effectiveness of the sentence.
- This is important as many pupils with special educational needs, particularly pupils with specific learning difficulties, often omit link or key words in their writing.
- It also looks at the importance of the order of words.

Extension Exercises:

- When the sentences are un-jumbled, look at punctuation (i.e. inserting full stops, question marks etc.).
- Give the pupils regular sentences and have them jumble the words up and then swap with a friend.
- Finally, you could try putting an extra word into a regular sentence and have the pupils find it.



Worksheet 8H: Comprehension

The ability to comprehend or extract meaning from information provided becomes ever more important as pupils progress up through the school cycle. There is often a significant discrepancy between their reading age/level and that of their comprehension age. Here we will use conversational text/dialogue and informational text to develop oral and reading comprehension.

Suggested Activities:

For this activity the pupil is required to predict from the dialogue provided the question asked or the answer given. Basically, fill in the gaps in the conversation between two GAA fans. There are also opportunities for the pupils to be creative in their responses.

(For your weaker pupils possible have the group act out the conversation and have them imagine themselves in that situation.)

For the next activity we examine the area of reading comprehension. The use of informational text limits the text involved and ensures access across all ability ranges. Again the questions are scaffold and tailored to ensure success (e.g. the use of true or false).

For this activity the pupil is:

1. Required to study the statistics carefully, familiarising themselves with the players and their scores.
2. Then answer the true/false questions.

(To differentiate this activity for your more able/gifted pupils you could, ask them to compare stats, find the differences, even examine the number of games the different players were involved in. Compile score stats for local, or school based teams.)

Extension Exercises:

Following on from these activities the pupils could:

- Prepare a conversational piece to present to the class which has dialogue missing. The rest of class must fill in the missing dialogue.
- Using a picture of a scene with a lot of visual information contained in it, compile a number of true or false questions (e.g. the man is waiting for a bus.) Pupils must use the information in the scene to determine if the statement is true or false.
- Conduct other informational text exercises, such as answering questions on television listings, statistics provided in match programmes, or on league tables or fixture lists.
- Also it would be beneficial at this stage for mixed ability groups to come up with some helpful tips or strategies to help when answering questions or comprehending text.
- A top-five tips list could be compiled and distributed to each child or displayed on a chart.

