



# TEACHER NOTES

# SEN



MODULE

8

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. Céim Ar Aghaidh 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 pupils 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 addressing areas of weakness is essential, 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
- 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 pupils. Differentiation is a method of tailoring course materials, course presentation or the expectations on pupils to match the varying ability levels within today's diverse classroom.

**Worksheets 8A and 8B** are taken from the English section and differentiated to meet the various 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.
- The questions are scaffold to ensure a level of achievement, through the highlighting of key words and the use of close activities.
- 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 middle cycle pack.



## Worksheet 8C: Block Aid & Word Sums

Block Aid is a well recognised tool in developing the ability of pupils with special educational needs to read and spell words which fail to follow any recognisable phonological pattern (e.g. high frequency words – Dolch List).

- The spelling of such words requires the child to internalise a visual image, process it and work with it.
- This activity focuses on forming a strong visual image of the word, while also developing phonemic awareness, which is the awareness of individual letter sounds.

### Suggested Activities:

For this activity the pupil is required to:

1. Match the words in the text box to the correct shaped block aid box.
2. Mark off each word in the text box as you fit it into the correct block aid box.

### Word sums

Word sums help to develop the pupil's understanding of blends and families of word endings. This exercise promotes a simple spelling technique. It uses words the pupil knows already and involves simple changes to the blend at the beginning or end of the word to create a new word.

### Suggested activity

For this activity the pupil is required to:

1. Complete the word sum taking away the existing blend or word ending and adding a new blend to produce a new word.
2. Then put the new word into a sentence.

### Extension Exercise

To extend this activity you should take the Dolch List's 100 most common words, divide the class into pairs and give 10 to 15 words to each pair. Then, have the pairs produce block aid shapes.

Further to this, using the groups of word families, have the pupils create their own word sums. This could then be merged into a group activity using the white board and extended to include some more complex phonemic manipulation by writing basic phonetically-spelt words on the board (e.g. ball). Then ask a pupil to change one letter to produce hall, and gradually increase the complexity of the activity.





## Worksheet 8D: Visual Discrimination, 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. Further to this, the activity promotes critical thinking with the added visual discrimination activity. This is a core skill for all aspects of learning.

- 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:

- A. For this activity the pupil is required to:
1. Circle the image which is the odd one out.
- B. For this activity the pupil is required to:
1. Carefully copy the pattern which is provided, using the margins provided as a guide.
  2. The pupil can then move on to work free hand on a detached pattern, being careful to maintain the form and size of the pattern provided.

### Extension Exercise

For visual discrimination, there are many work books available in your Special Education Resource Library and simple 'odd one out' activity books which are readily available. Using pairing cards or beads you can expand this activity to develop visual, sequential, and matching activities. Further to this, you can use beads and string, building blocks etc. to make a pattern which must be remembered and repeated.



## Worksheet 8E: Coding and Tracking (Visual Sequential Memory)

This 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 and to scan text.

### Suggested Activities:

A. Each letter is assigned a number/or a symbol, and these numbers/symbols are then used to produce a code.

1. The pupils must match the number to the letter it represents and piece by piece unravel the code.
2. This requires the pupil to internalise what the letter or the number represents and then return to the code and work with that information.

B. For this activity the pupil is required to:

1. Read the word aloud.
2. Then track and highlight the blend or consonant diagram which starts the word in the jumbled up letters which follow.
3. Finally, track and highlight the letters which make up "All Ireland Final" in order from the jumbled up letters. The pupils can be timed at this.

This is a tracking activity, which concentrates again on the development of working memory, while enhancing the pupil's ability to scan text for key words. This is a skill which needs to be developed in those pupils who find copying from the board a struggle.

### Extension Exercises:

Have pairs of pupils produce their own code and then work each other's codes out. To expand this to a group activity you could produce a code on the board and ask questions through the code and have the pupils respond in code. As they progress you could introduce an 'against the clock' element.



## Worksheet 8F: Sentence Formation and Creative Writing

This activity looks at sentence formation, focusing on the use of link words to combine short sentences and produce complex sentences. It then moves on to the formation of a story or report, examining the key components of a story (e.g. establishing when and where something happened). There is also some pictorial reference to help. This will serve to scaffold the creative writing process which is often an area of weakness for pupils with SEN.

### Suggested Activities:

- A. For this activity the pupil is required to:
1. Carefully read the example provided and possibly provide a few more.
  2. Use the link words in the text box to join the two sentences.
- B. For this activity the pupil is required to:
1. Write a short story or report, making sure to answer all the questions outlined.
  2. The high frequency words provided in the text box should help and also the pictures will scaffold the activity and remove the fear of a blank page.



### Extension Exercises:

Give the group maybe 10 simple sentences and the four link words provided in this worksheet and see how many combined and complex sentences they can produce. For the purposes of creative writing, have the group take pictures and record a live report of a school game. Then have them return and use the references provided on this worksheet to produce a story or report. To extend this further you could allow the group to report on a game from different perspectives (e.g. the referee, the goalkeeper or the manager).

## Worksheet 8G: High Frequency Words

High frequency and sight vocabulary words which appear in the Dolch List are those which are most frequently used in speech and text. They are therefore vitally important to the development of proficient literacy skills. However, they don't always follow the regular phonological rules and may be harder to spell. Often the reinforcement and over learning of these words is the only way to ensure that basic literacy skills are developed. Here we look at spelling, reading and comprehension of these words, with the pupils having to put the words in the appropriate sentence and then to match them to words with the opposite meaning.

### Suggested Activities:

- A. For this activity the pupil is required to:
1. Read carefully each high frequency word contained in the text box.
  2. Use the words provided to complete the sentences below, ticking off each word as it is used.
  3. Then read through the completed sentences to ensure they are correct.
- B. For this activity the pupil is required to:
1. Read carefully each high frequency word contained in the text box.
  2. Then match the high frequency word to its opposite in the balls and hurls.

### Extension Exercises:

- Conduct more complex close activities using high frequency words (Dolch List).
- Play bingo using the Dolch List words, the pupils (with the aid of the teacher) could create the bingo cards.



## Worksheet 8H: Visual and Auditory Memory

Visual memory and auditory memory are core skills required for all learning. They are key skills for both numeracy and literacy and for learning in general. Listening and carrying out instructions, remembering sounds, images and sequences are key requirements for all aspects of education and general life skills. This can be an area of weakness for pupils with varying special educational needs, from specific learning difficulties to attention deficit.

### Suggested Activities:

A. For this activity the pupil is required to:

1. Fold the sheet carefully without reading the instructions; then turn it with the picture facing up.
2. The teacher then instructs the group to cover the picture and place their hands in the air and to listen carefully as she calls out the instructions.
3. When the teacher has finished giving the instructions for Part 1, on her mark the pupils remove the sheet and carry out the instructions.
4. The sheet is then covered again and the instructions are called out for Part 2.

B. For this activity the pupil is required to:

1. Carefully examine the picture taking in as much detail as possible. Allow the pupils a minute or two.
2. The pupils turn the page and answer as many of the questions as possible from memory.
3. Finally, allow the group to colour the remainder of the picture.



### Extension Exercises:

- Again within the Resource Library for SEN there are similar exercises in work books such as 'Look Listen Think' which develop auditory and visual memory.
- You could have a similar group activity with a large picture on the board.
- This could then be extended further to focus on visual and auditory sequential memory. Showing the group a list of items in a particular order, then mix up the items and have the group re-order them in the original sequence. Increase the number of items as skills develop or switch to auditory items, giving the class a list of numbers (i.e. a phone number).

