

Professional Development Programme on  
Promoting Reading across the  
Curriculum (RaC) in the Primary  
English Classroom

Dr Simon Chan

The University of Hong Kong

[ssychan@hku.hk](mailto:ssychan@hku.hk)

# Rundown of the workshop

Part 1— Reflection on experience in implementing RaC

Part 2 – Introduction to RaC

Part 3 – Cross-subject collaboration

Part 4 – (Demonstrations on) effective RaC strategies to develop students' reading skills for more in-depth processing of the texts

Part 5 - Hands-on activity

Q&A

# Reflection on RaC implementation

Please discuss the following in pairs or trios.

1. What is RaC to you? Why are you interested in it (so that you come to this workshop)?
2. Have you tried doing RaC in your classes? Any successful / not so successful experience to share?
3. What do you want to know (further) about RaC? What are your expected outcomes of this workshop?

# Part 2 : Introduction to RaC

# Two core themes of the workshop

- Reading across the Curriculum (RaC)—What is it and why is it relevant/important to us as Primary English language teachers?
- RaC with the use of texts from different sources:
  - English textbook texts (Exemplar 1)
  - authentic texts (Exemplar 2)
  - real books (Hands-on task)

# RaC and its relevance to ELT

Reading across the Curriculum (RaC)—What is it and why is it relevant to us as English Teachers?

Dual goals:

- To broaden students' knowledge base, help them **connect their learning experiences** and provide opportunities for **integrating and applying knowledge and skills developed in different KLAs/subjects** (ELE KLA CG, CDC, 2017, p.9); and
- To provide opportunities for students to **develop a wide range of reading skills**, extend learning of the content and connect their learning experiences across KLAs (ELE KLA CG, CDC, 2017, p. 47).

c.f. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

# RaC and its relevance to ELT

In implementing RaC, teachers of the English Language Education KLA are encouraged to:

- **identify reading materials** in both print and non-print forms with suitable entry points (e.g. themes, text types, language features and vocabulary) for connecting students' learning experiences in different KLAs;
- **help students develop the reading skills and strategies** necessary for understanding and analysing language use in English texts written for general or academic purposes (e.g. text structures, rhetorical functions and vocabulary);

(ELE KLA CG, CDC, 2017, p.61)

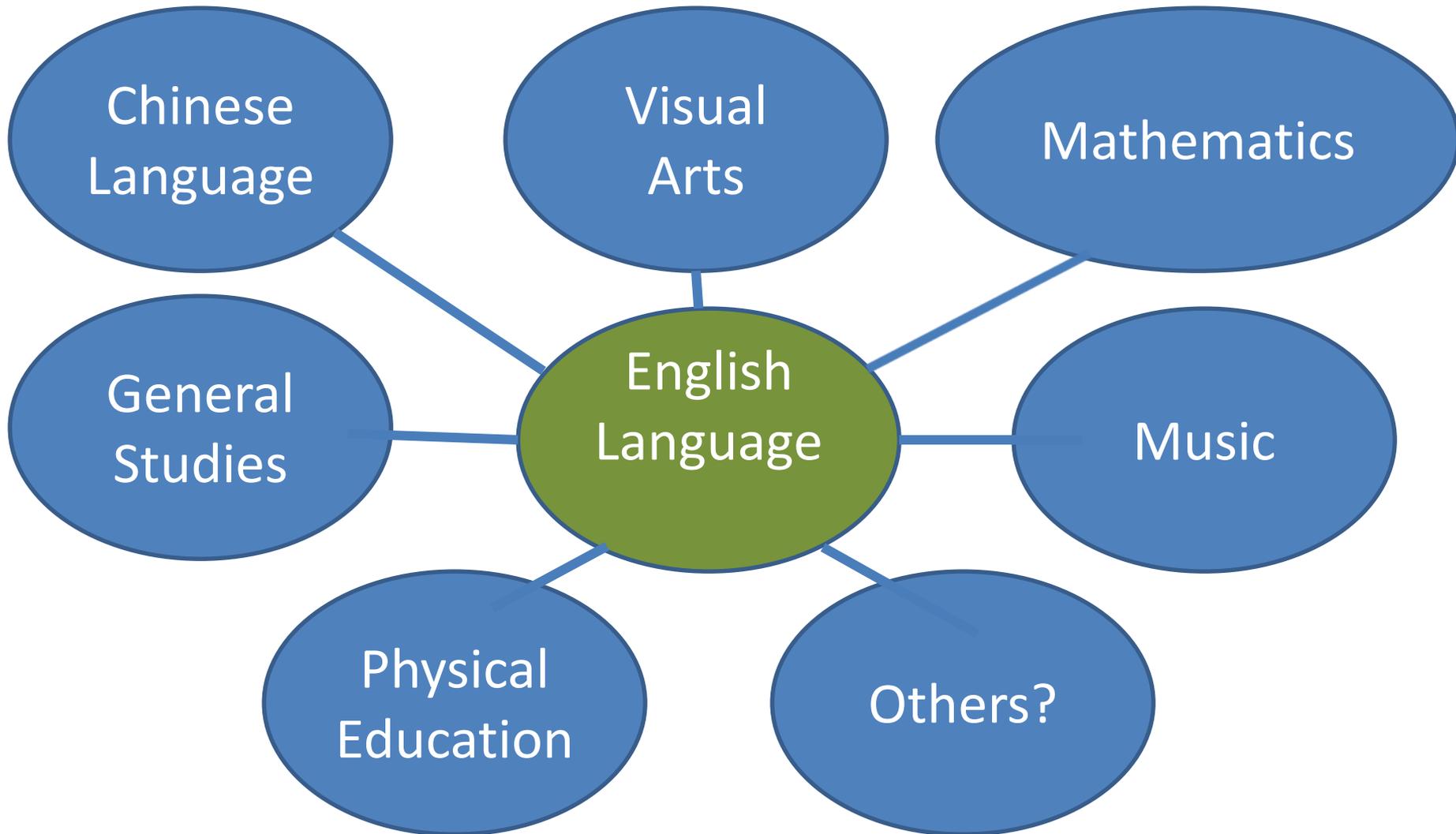
# RaC and its relevance to ELT

- **design reading activities** that reinforce students' ability to integrate the knowledge, skills and learning experiences gained in different KLAs; and
- **collaborate with teachers of other KLAs** to develop learning activities that provide students with opportunities to consolidate the knowledge and skills acquired across KLAs, and develop the essential attributes that go beyond individual subjects or KLAs such as humanistic qualities and entrepreneurial spirit.

(ELE KLA CG, CDC, 2017, p.61)

# Part 3 : Cross-subject Collaboration

Are there any common concepts or skills shared among these subjects?



Some common concepts or skills between English Language and other subjects for RaC activities:

- **Healthy Eating** in English Language and **Growth and Health** in GS; and
- **Making Things** in English Language and **Art Making** in VA.

# Possible modes of cross-subject collaboration with teachers of other KLAs:

- **Curriculum mapping**, designing and carrying out the cross-curricular learning activities or project work together;
- **Teaching the same theme/topic** at around the same time;
- Seeking **advice on the choice and appropriateness of reading materials** and the schedule of teaching a certain topic; and
- Possible **collaboration with the school librarian**, e.g. book purchase and book display.

# Example 1 of RaC across subjects

Let's examine an example of connecting students' learning experiences in English Language and General Studies:

- Topic: Healthy Eating
- Input:
  - Knowledge and skills learnt from English Language - a leaflet in a textbook;
  - Knowledge and skills learnt from GS – healthy diet, food labels;
  - Relevant readers as recommended for extensive reading scheme; and
  - Tables on nutrient facts on food packaging.

# Example 2 of RaC across subjects

- Topic: Making things
- Input:
  - Knowledge and skills learnt from English Language – A newsletter in a textbook;
  - Knowledge and skills learnt from VA – creating a piece of art work; and
  - Relevant readers as recommended for students' extensive reading.

## Points to note:

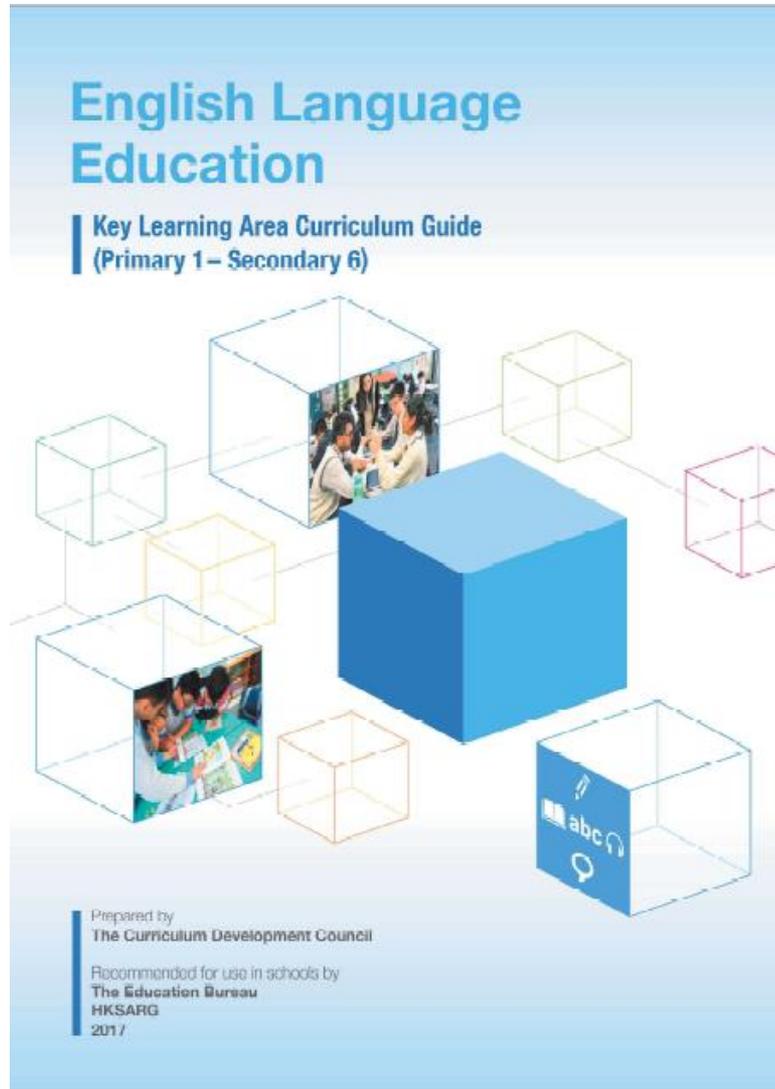
- It is important to
  - expose students to **a variety of text types** (e.g. on p. A14, 2017 ELE KLACG)  
[https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/Curriculum%20Document/ELE%20KLACG\\_2017.pdf](https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/Curriculum%20Document/ELE%20KLACG_2017.pdf)
  - develop **students' awareness of text types**, their purposes and characteristics, text features (format & layout) and organisation of information (rhetorical structures)

...hence a **genre-based pedagogic approach** as in Exemplars 1&2 below

- Sources of reading materials (print/ non-print), e.g.
  - Theme-based Reading - Suggested Book Lists for  
<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/4-key-tasks/reading-to-learn/contribution-of-book-titles/index.html>
  - Book Lists for RaC <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/references-resources/RaC/RaCBooklists.html>

Part 4 : (Demonstrations on) effective strategies to develop students' reading skills for more in-depth processing of the texts

# What are those reading skills?



The lists of language skills and language development strategies for KS1-4 are provided in Appendix 5.

# Genre-based pedagogy

## Exemplar 1: RaC with the use of English textbook texts

Sample Teaching Unit on **R(W)aC** based on an  
English textbook text

- Level: **Primary 6**
- Theme / Topic: **Wonders of Nature**
- Lessons allocated: **8-10 lessons**
- Genre: **Interview and brochure**

# Strategic and complementary use of textbook texts for RaC

## Goal:

- Setting and achieving aims of the **GE Programme** and **Reading Workshops** for the school-based English Language curriculum to ensure **the development of students' literacy, positive values and critical thinking skills.**

## Means:

- By setting reading tasks based on the appropriate **skills for KS1/KS2 as listed in the curriculum guide** for the target learners, thereby developing their literacy and thinking skills through accomplishing those tasks.

# Strategic and complementary use of textbook texts for RaC

Step 1 (Pre-reading):

“Firing up” the chosen textbook text for the target students, i.e. **arousing their interest in the topic and familiarising them with the genre (features)** of the text, activating their schemata for the while-reading stage.

# A Tour to...

- What do you enjoy doing most when you're visiting a new place in or outside Hong Kong?

**Let's start with a special version of the text.**

A special version of the text

Have a quick look at this text for 5 seconds. What kind of text is it? What make(s) you think so?

Can you guess what is being discussed in the text? What is its purpose?

**Pre-reading**

**Reading skills targeted:**

- recognise the presentation of ideas through headings, paragraphing, spacing, italics, bold print and punctuation
- understand intention, attitudes and feelings conveyed in a text by recognising features such as the choice and use of language and images

# Strategic and complementary use of textbook texts for RaC

## Step 2 (While-reading):

Setting reading tasks using textbook information texts with reference to the 2017 ELE KLACG and the English Language Curriculum Guide (P1-P6) (CDC, 2004) and guiding students to accomplish such tasks through purposeful questioning and feedback in order to **connect the students' learning experiences across subjects and therefore develop their attitudes and higher order thinking skills.**

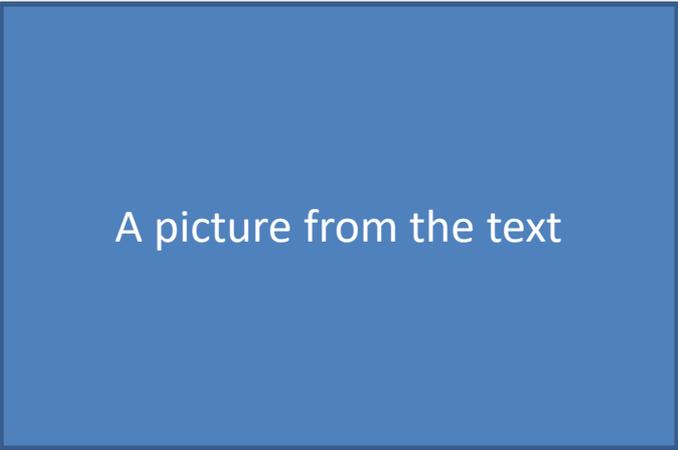
The text

**While-reading**

Let's look at the details of the picture from the text. Get ONE word from the text to answer each of my questions below:

A picture from the text

- These pandas look s.
- People cause a big problem to their e/h.
- They d/d their home.



A picture from the text

Look at the above picture and answer questions 1-6.

1. What is this picture called? Who drew it?
2. Why did he/she draw it?
3. How do know it is a good and popular painting?
4. What are the people doing?
5. How do the pandas feel? Why?
6. What will happen to the pandas?

What reading skills can we target through the previous six items? How can we guide the students to reach the correct answers?

(Refer to the reading skills for KS2 in ELE KLACG)

- Scan a text to locate specific information by using strategies such as looking at headings and repeated phrases;
- Identify details that support the gist or main ideas;
- Understand the connection between ideas; and
- Work out the meaning of an unknown word or expression by using visual clues, context and knowledge of the world.

7. How are eco-tours different from other tours?  
What can people learn from those tours?

### Reading skills targeted:

- Identify details that support the gist or main ideas;
- Understand the connection between ideas; and
- Understand intention, attitudes and feelings conveyed in a text by recognising features such as the choice and use of language.

8. With what you've learnt from GS, do you know why cruise ships pollute the sea and cars pollute the air? What can we do to reduce sea and air pollution when we travel?

Connecting learning experiences between GS and English

9. How is content organised in this text? Why?

Reading skill targeted:

- Recognise the format, visual elements and language features of a wide variety of text types.

## RaC across subjects

Step 3 (Post-reading/Cross-curricular):

Engaging the students with a **writing task** in which they **apply their understanding of the content** of the textbook text(s) and **recycle the grammar and vocabulary items learnt**.

# RaC and Reading to write

An extension of the reading task:

Goal:

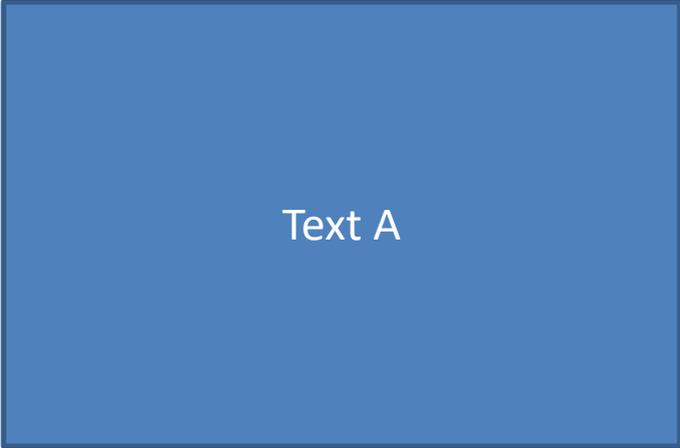
- Set and achieve aims of the **writing component** of the GE Programme for the school-based English Language curriculum to ensure the development of students' literacy skills, critical thinking and creativity.

Means:

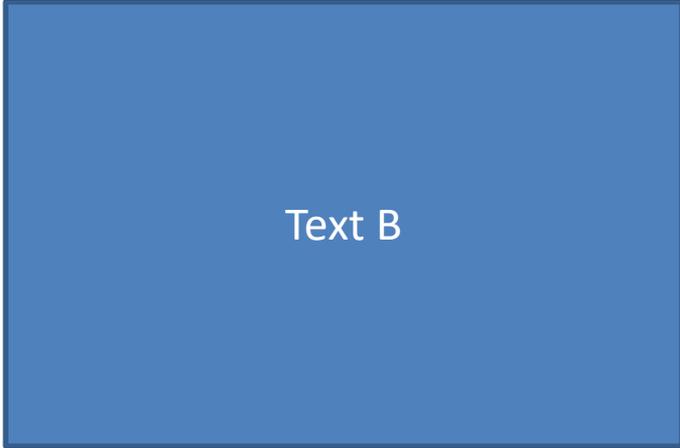
- **Strategic and complementary use of authentic information texts** with reference to students' learning needs and interests; and
- **Integrate content and language from various sources** of input, use graphic organisers to gather, brainstorm and organise information.

Task: You joined the eco-tour last summer. Write an article for your school newspaper promoting it to your schoolmates. Please read the interview with him and his centre's brochure for information about the tour.

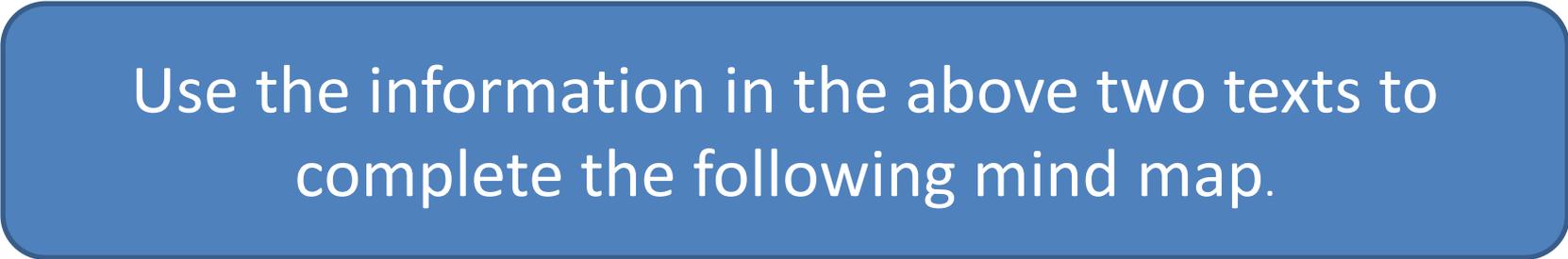
# RWaC: Reading to write across the curriculum



Text A

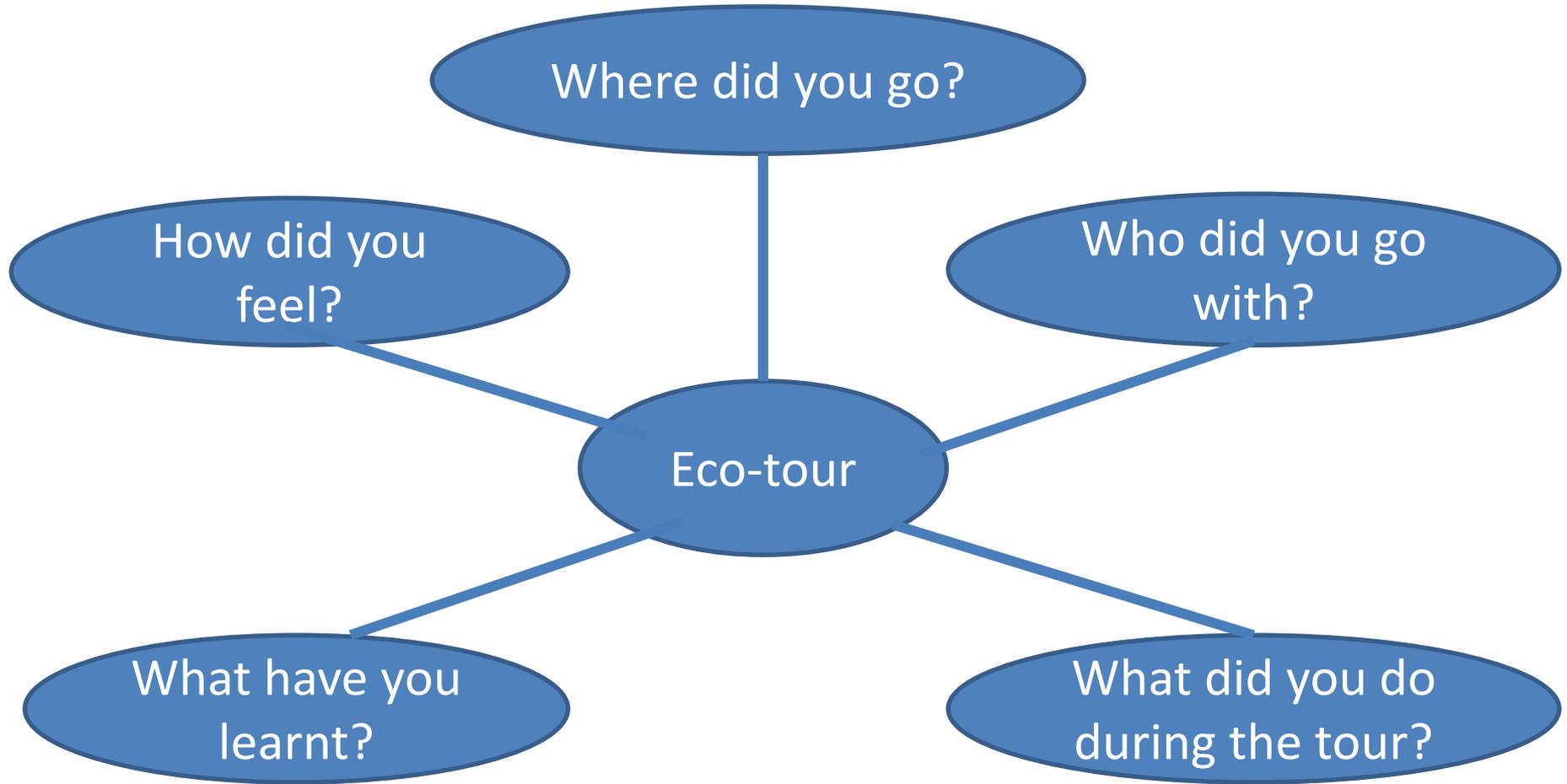


Text B



Use the information in the above two texts to complete the following mind map.

# RWaC: Reading to write across the curriculum



# RWaC: Genre-based Pedagogy

- Text type?
- Purpose(s)? Is it just to inform?
- Language features? What language items are needed to achieve the purpose(s)?
- Organisation?

# Tips for developing reading-to-write tasks:

- Teachers can use questioning, feedback and graphic organisers to help students process and write information texts.
  - Read different information texts as “input”;
  - Ask them questions to help them better understand the purpose and the features of the targeted text type; and
  - Use graphic organisers (and a writing frame if necessary) to draft/organise ideas for writing tasks.

# Tips for developing reading to write tasks

- It is important to scaffold our students on how to use appropriate formats, conventions and language features in writing information texts (e.g. sentence or paragraph writing frames).

# Food for thoughts:

- How can we plan an RaC teaching unit with textbook texts and theme-related information texts in the GE programme and Reading Workshops?
  - **Material selection**
- How can we make good use of the texts to set meaningful reading and writing tasks, i.e. using reading as input for writing?
  - **Material adaptation**
- The end products for RaC activities could be **diversified** as long as they provide opportunity for students to recycle what they have learnt across KLAs, i.e. apart from writing tasks, the products could be **oral presentations, production of multimodal texts, projects, performance tasks (e.g. dramas and role-play)** and so on.

## Selecting textbook materials for RaC

- The topic “*wonders of nature*” is a very popular topic among primary schools / teachers.
- It offers an entry point for integrating reading activities into the school-based curriculum as well as other KLAs.
- There are a range of extra resources/ materials/aids available under this theme.

# Adapting textbook materials for RaC

- The text is chosen not just for its teaching value. It can demonstrate how some “far-from-perfect” materials can be adapted for use in the classroom using an RaC approach.
- Many of the available textbooks contain examples of narratives. Although narratives are common and can be used as a good starting point, students also need to broaden their exposure to non-fiction texts.
- By including RaC texts and activities, teachers can provide their students with a more balanced ‘language diet’.
- This also allows English teachers to start with something we are (more) familiar with/have to teach and cover, while still engaging students in reading across text types and topics.

# Exemplar 2: RaC with the use of authentic (-like) texts

Sample Teaching Unit on RaC based on an authentic (-like) text

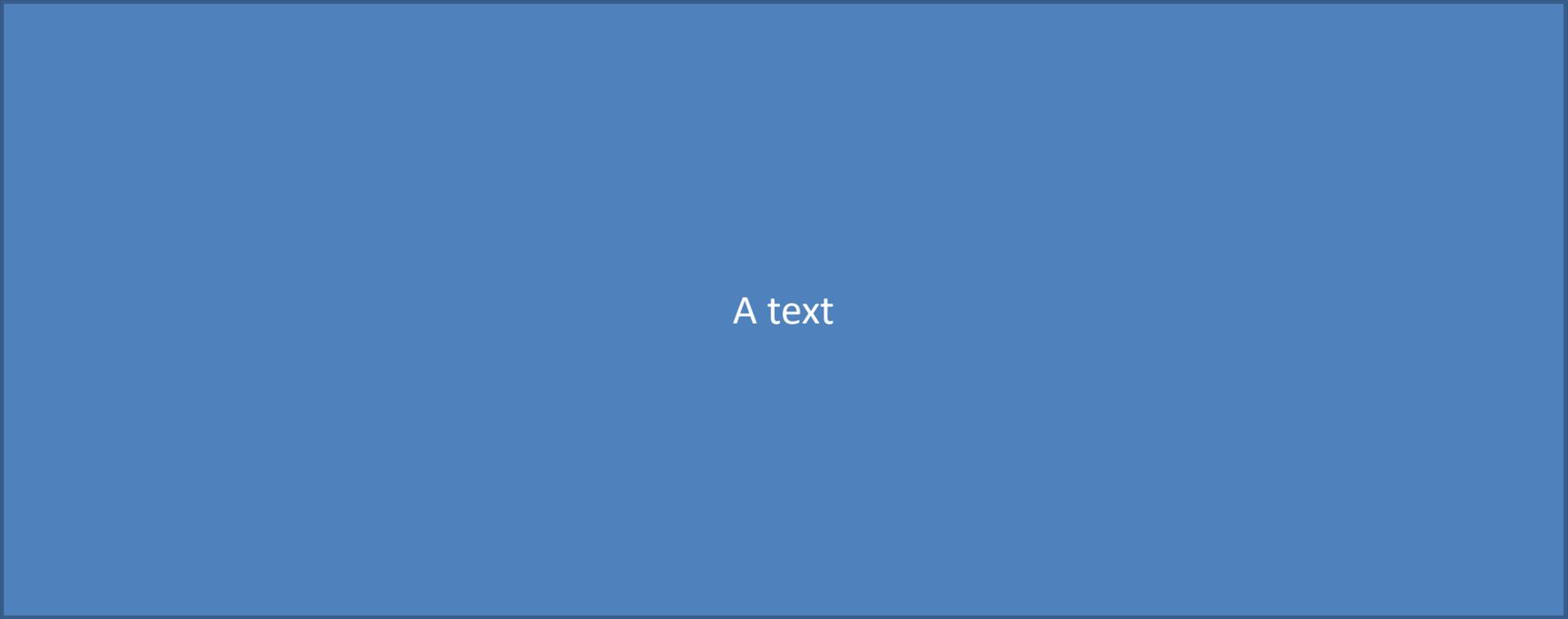
- Level: **Primary 5/6**
- Theme / Topic: Fun things to make
- Lessons allocated: **2-3 lessons**
- Text type: **Procedural texts**

# Let's do things differently this time...

- I'm not going to demonstrate the whole teaching unit to you, but would engage you in some awareness-raising activities instead, through which you'll get some ideas for planning your own RaC teaching units.

Let's take a reading challenge first!

I'm going to show you a text for **THREE SECONDS ONLY!** Try to read as much of it as you can and see if you can identify the topic and genre of the text.



A text

- What type of text is it?
- What is its topic?
- How did we identify the above in such a short time?

- Now read Version 2 of the text.
- Is it the same as or different from the previous one?
- If you are to suggest one of the two versions for your KS2 learners to read, which one would you pick? Why?

- Now let's watch a final version.
- Which of the three versions would you use to build an RaC activity? Why? What kind(s) of activity is it?

# Food for thoughts:

## Adopting and adapting authentic texts for RaC:

- Use multimodal texts to allow the students sense the meanings of the text from different channels;
- Integrate texts so that the texts themselves scaffold each other; and
- Build links between grammar and vocabulary patterns and the meaning functions they serve in various common RaC genres, i.e. **text grammar in genre-based pedagogy**.

# Food for thoughts:

## Adopting and adapting authentic texts for RaC:

- How about using multimodal texts from web sites and integrate those with the procedural texts written in academic style on the topic 'making things'?

# Genre-based pedagogy

What is it and how is it related to RaC?

A systematic framework for guiding reading and writing texts:  
The “Genre Egg” Model (adapted from Rose, 2012)

## Part 5 : Hands-on activity

# Application Time

Time to apply what we've learnt...

# Hands-on Task: RaC with the use of real books

1. Get into groups of 3-4.
2. Design an RaC unit based on one of the real books. distributed to your group using the suggested template. Make sure there are connections with another subject/KLA (10-15 mins).
3. Share your ideas with the fellow groups (5-10 mins).

# A few principles for you to consider ...

- that the real books are available to local schools (e.g. class readers, books at the school library or books from the Internet);
- that the themes / topics of the real books can be linked to the other subjects/KLAs; and
- that the real books can be easily adapted, and appropriate tasks and activities can be designed accordingly.

*No one knows your students  
better than you do!*

Some RaC suggestions based on a  
reader

# How to Have a Green Day

Connecting learning experiences between GE Programme & Reading Workshops (KS2 Module: Taking care of our earth)

### Highlights of the book:

- broad cross-curricular content knowledge that allows students to link their learning experiences from English to General Studies
- Students' learning the text type features of an information book and learn to become an independent reader with the help of glossary
- Possibility of promoting positive value, e.g. cherishing what we have from nature

### Suggested activities:

KS1: Poster/signage design

KS2: 'Bring Your Own Bag' Campaign (Canvas bag design)

Green tips are organised in chapters according to time and settings.

# How about building some reading items for developing reading strategies?

Read P.6-7. These are tips on:

- A. Eating breakfast
- B. Watching TV
- C. Getting dressed
- D. Saving electricity

Reading skill targeted: **Main ideas**

Read P.9. Before bottles and jars are recycled, they need to be \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. kept in boxes
- B. wrapped with old newspapers
- C. put on breakfast dishes
- D. cleaned with water

Reading skill targeted:

Specific information

# A wrap up

- Learning and teaching is a dynamic, organic process. There is no “quick-fix”, or any SINGLE best way.
- However, there are a few principles that we can apply when we select appropriate reading materials to illustrate how RaC tasks can be designed.

# What we have discussed in the workshop

- Principles of RaC—emphasising content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and identifying common communicative functions and language patterns in addition to text types.
- Selection of texts for building RaC tasks, recommendation of sources of texts, and multimodal resources, e.g. Readers for young learners with authentic information texts such as posters.
- Incorporation of RaC texts in the General English curriculum, with specific foci on the development of reading skills as well as grammatical and lexical awareness.
- Connection with primary students' learning experiences, within and outside English lessons.
- Design of language tasks (e.g. reading, reading to write) based on RaC texts.