

Effective Use of Multimodal Texts to Develop Students' English Language Skills and Cater for their Diverse Learning Interests and Needs at Primary Level

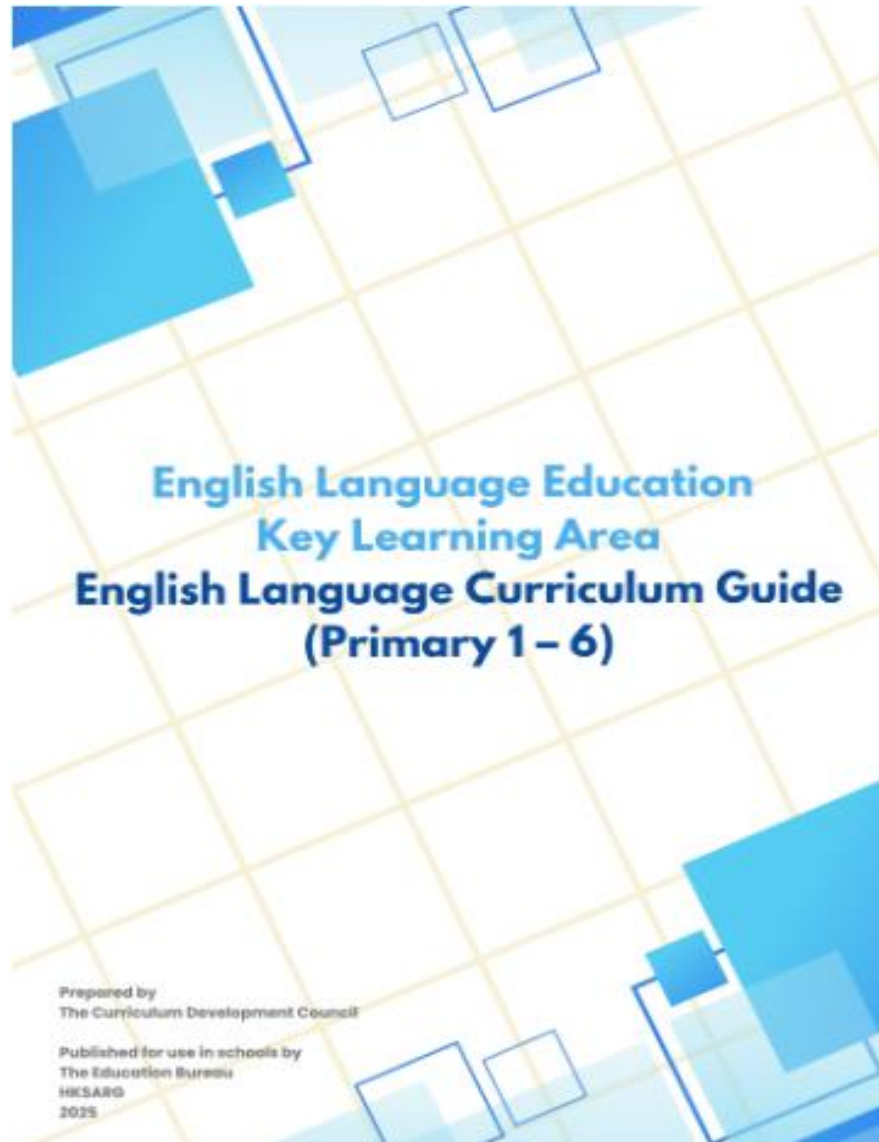
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Objectives

1. To introduce various kinds of multimodal texts as e-resources suited for use in the primary English classroom;
2. To enhance teachers' repertoire of pedagogical knowledge in deploying multimodal texts to engage students in interesting learning activities, enrich their vocabulary, and develop their English language skills;
3. To provide suggestions on effective pedagogical use of various multimodal texts to enhance students' thinking skills and creativity;
4. To provide hands-on activities for participants to explore the use of some suggested multimodal texts for designing learning and teaching activities/tasks to enhance students' English language skills, thinking skills and/or creativity.

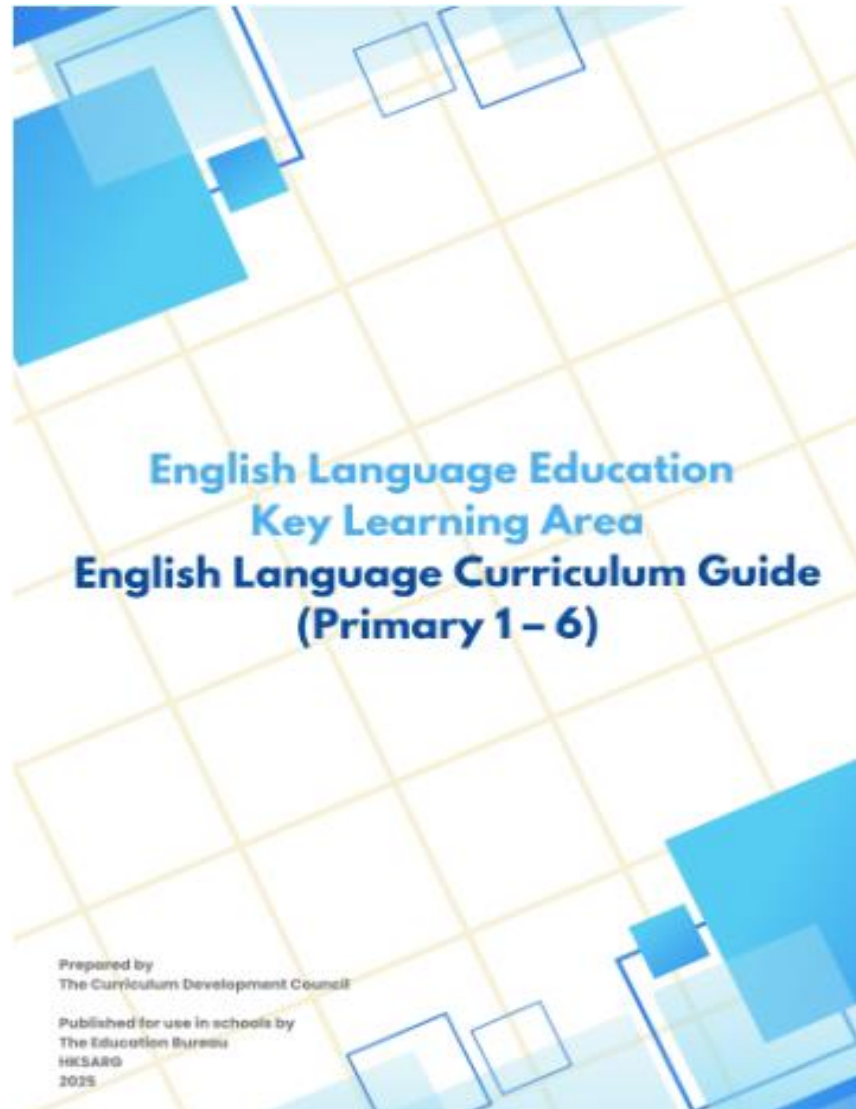
Pointers from the English Language Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-6) (2025)



4.3.2 Learning and Teaching of Language Skills and Multimodal Literacy

To enable students to communicate effectively in English, they should be given the opportunity and support to develop the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in meaningful contexts and in an integrative manner. With the advancement of information technology, **multimodal texts are prevalent and literacy is extended to cover also multimodal literacy (i.e. the ability to use more than one mode of communication, media or technological tools for effective communication and information management)**. New literacy skills are given increasing attention in the learning and teaching of English worldwide. To address such changes, there is a need to provide more opportunities for students to view and create multimodal texts in today's English Language classroom. Students may create their e-books using e-learning tools, enlivening their work by adding digital images, videos, sounds and music, and other multimodal tools.

Pointers from the English Language Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-6) (2025)



6.1.4 Other Learning and Teaching Resources

Teachers can make use of a wide range of learning and teaching resources **other than textbooks** to arouse students' interest, broaden their learning experiences, enhance learning effectiveness and meet students' different learning needs and styles. **Language arts materials** (e.g. stories, poems, songs, rhymes, cartoons), information books, children's magazines, children's encyclopaedias, picture dictionaries, language games, multimedia resources and information technology (IT) tools available online or offline, and authentic materials are all useful **resources to support learning at the primary level**. Teachers can also make use of community resources to provide life-wide learning opportunities for students.

Pointers from the English Language Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-6) (2025)

Traditionally, “literacy” refers to the ability to read and write effectively to achieve desired goals or outcomes and develop one’s knowledge and potential. With the rapid development of IT and social media, “literacy” has taken on a new meaning as texts are no longer a linear form of presentation limited to words but are composed of various modes of communication (e.g. images, animations, sounds, graphics). Students, therefore, need to be equipped with new literacy skills to process and create multimodal texts in which messages are conveyed in different modes (e.g. **linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, spatial**), and the skills to search for and manage information.

(p.10)

What is multimodality

Multimodality refers to the practice of **meaning-making** through the combined use of **multiple modes, including linguistic, auditory, visual, gestural and spatial resources**. A multimodal text integrates two or more of these modes within a single communicative event, allowing meaning to be constructed not only through written or spoken language but also through images, sounds, movement and layout.

To enable students to **understand and create multimodal texts**, learners need explicit support in recognising how different modes work together to construct meaning, and in selecting and combining different resources purposefully to communicate ideas effectively in varied contexts.

Referencing source: Kjaer Jensen, S. (2025). *Future Directions in Intermediality and Multimodality: Dialogues Inspired by the Work of Lars Elleström* (S. Kjaer Jensen & M. Davidsson, Eds.). Routledge.

Different modes of representation

<u>Modes of representation</u>	<u>Examples of elements</u>
Linguistic	Vocabulary choice, grammatical structures, written narration, choice of idioms, spoken dialogue, coherence of paragraphs, sentence complexity, etc.
Audio	Music tempo, background sounds, volume modulation, speech articulation, pitch variation, stress, tone, rhythm of delivery, silence used for emphasis, etc.
Visual	Images (still and moving), graphic design, color palettes, typography (font styles and sizes), graphical representation (e.g., charts and tables), animated sequences, diagrams, etc.
Gestural	Facial expressions, hand movements, posture, proximity to others, speed of physical action, eye contact, body language, etc.
Spatial	Physical distance between text elements, page layout, directionality (e.g., left-to-right flow), arrangement of objects in a scene, organization of text sections, etc.

Some
examples of
useful EDB
resources

Traditional Chinese Festivals



Some examples of useful EDB resources

English Animation Series “An Inspiring Journey through Chinese Fables and Tales”



English Animation Series “An Inspiring Journey through Chinese Fables and Tales”

Season 1



Season 2



Some examples of useful EDB resources

Sayings of wisdom



Sayings of Wisdom

Home Selected SOW Student Activities/Competitions SOWIT Videos Wallpapers/Posters Instant Messaging Stickers Games Learning and Teaching Materials

Wallpapers/Posters

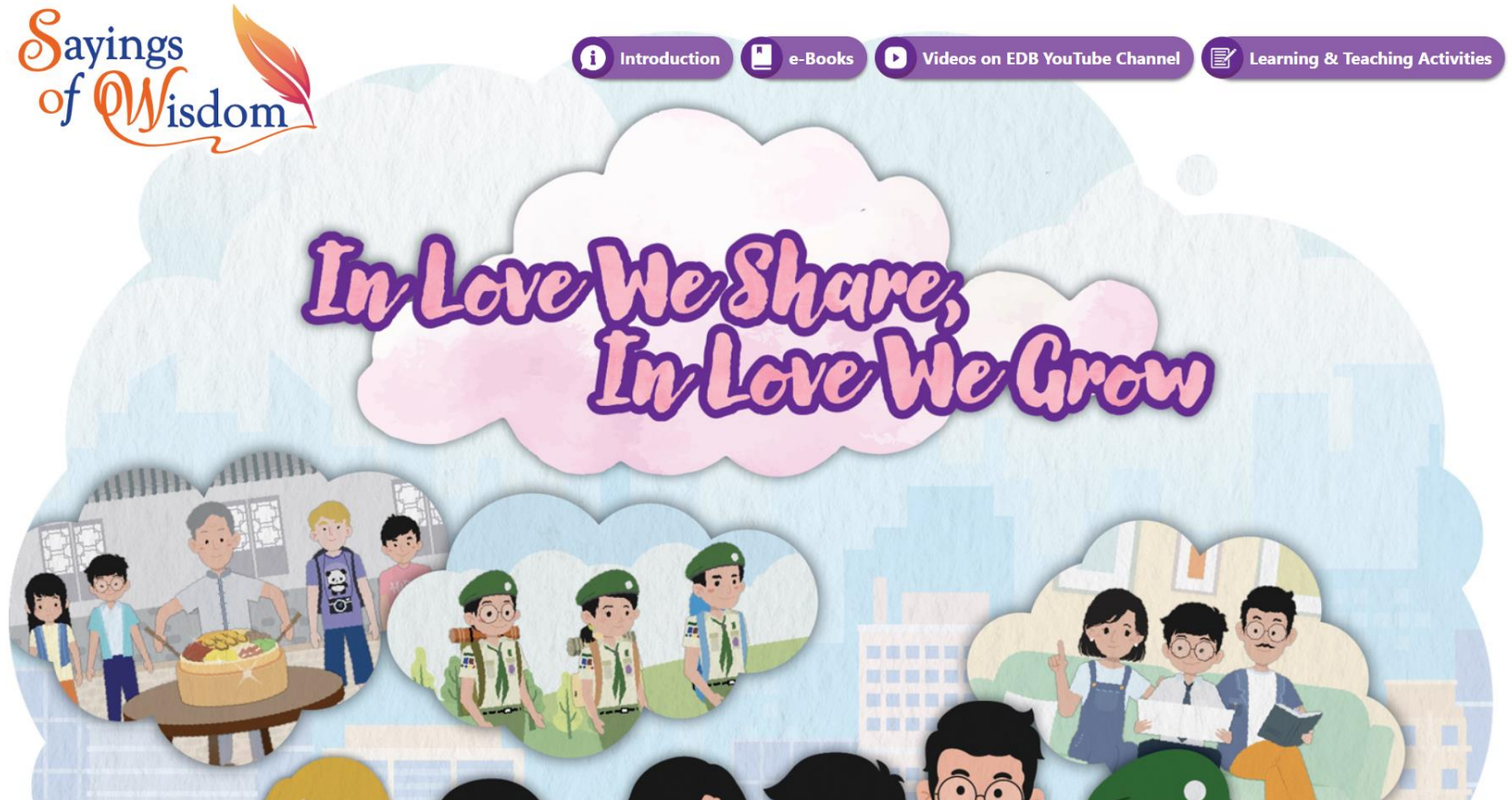
The posters displayed are:

- Get inspired and learn English with sayings of wisdom.** (Illustration of two children sitting on a large red flower)
- "One good turn deserves another."** and **"Count your blessings."** (Illustration of a person's head in a thought bubble)
- "Nothing is impossible to a willing heart."** — John Heywood — (Illustration of children playing with balloons)
- "A stitch in time saves nine."**, **"Prevention is better than cure."**, **"Where there's a will, there's a way."**, and **"Gratitude is the sign of noble souls."** (Illustration of two children reading a book)

Posters Animated Posters Wallpapers

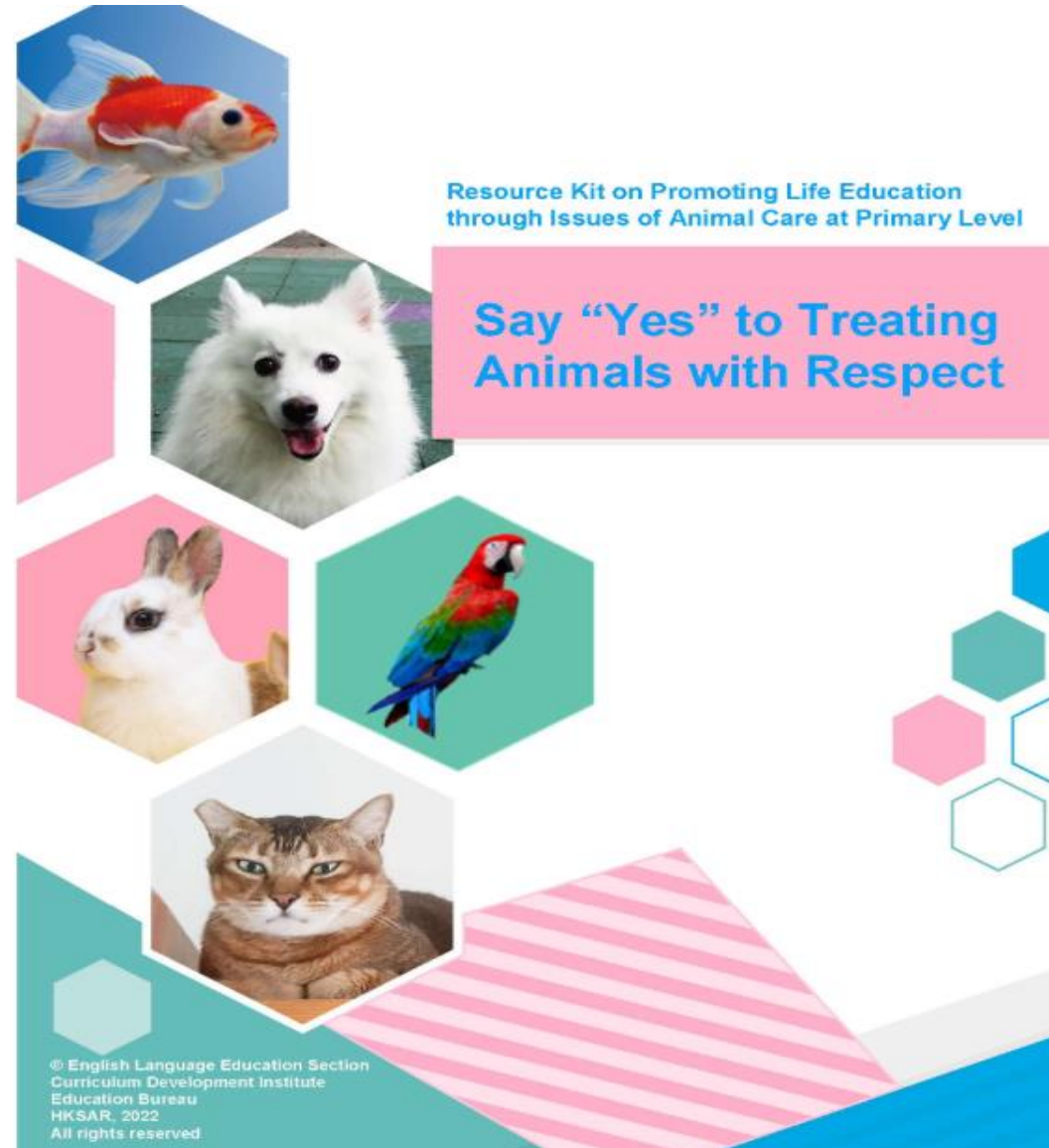
Some examples of useful EDB resources

Sayings of wisdom



Some examples of useful EDB resources

Resource Kit on Promoting Life Education through Issues of Animal Care at Primary Level Say “Yes” to Treating Animals with Respect



Some examples of useful EDB resources

Videos on 'Fantastic People'



Videos on “Fantastic People”



Videos on “Fantastic People” are multimedia materials produced to supplement the modules and themes “We love Hong Kong” and “Special people” in the English Language curriculum at Key Stage 2. Three celebrities, namely Professor Sung Jao Yiu Joseph, Dr Allan Zeman and Ms Yu Chui Yee Alison, are introduced to students through the interviews in the videos. The videos, each lasting 6-7 minutes, enable students to learn from the celebrities’ sharing and gain insights into their achievements and success stories. The **“Fantastic People Videos Activity Booklet”**, with pre-viewing, viewing and post-viewing activities, is developed to facilitate and complement the use of the videos.

The *English Language Education*
Key Learning Area English
Language Curriculum Guide
(Primary 1 – 6) (CDC, 2025). HKSAR.

Which of these text types are multimodal?

Can you think of other examples of multimodal texts to enrich this list?

Examples of Text Types for Key Stages 1 and 2 (P1 – 6)

A text is produced for a given purpose. Hence, the text types listed below can be of different natures such as narrative, informational, procedural, expository, persuasive, depending on the purposes they serve. Teachers might like to draw students’ attention to both the conventions and features of a particular text type and the purpose the text serves in the learning and teaching process.

Text Types for KS1 (P1–3)	Additional Text Types for KS2 (P4–6)
• Advertisements • Captions • Cards • Cartoons and comics • Charts • Conversations • Coupons • Diaries • Directions • Fables and fairy tales • Forms • Illustrations • Instructions • Labels • Leaflets • Lists • Menus • Notes and messages • Notices • Personal descriptions • Personal letters • Personal recounts • Picture dictionaries • Poems • Postcards • Posters • Product information • Rhymes • Riddles • Rules • Signs • Songs • Stories • Tables • Timetables	• Accounts • Announcements • Autobiographies • Biographies • Blogs • Brochures • Catalogues • Children’s encyclopaedias • Dictionaries • Directories • Discussions • Emails • Explanations of how and why • Formal letters • Informational reports • Jokes • Journals • Maps and legends • Myths • News reports • Pamphlets • Plays • Procedures • Questionnaires • Recipes • Telephone conversations • Tongue twisters • Weather reports • Webpages

What Is a Multimodal Text?

A multimodal text **uses more than one way to tell a story or share information.**

Many multimodal texts do not only use **words** but also **pictures**, **videos**, **sounds**, or **designs** to help readers understand and enjoy them more.

Here are a few common examples:

- A **digital story**:
words + **illustrations** + **narration**
- A **comic strip**:
captions + **drawings** + **speech bubbles**
- A **website**:
words + **photos** + **videos** + **layout designs**
- An **animated video**:
subtitles + **animations** + **voice-over** + **music**
- A **song**:
lyrics + **music**

Can you name a few more multimodal texts?
Find out more examples on the next slide!

Source: Adapted from ELE, EDB - "SOW Your Discovery" Multimodal Composition Contest <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/SOW/discovery.html>

Examples of Multimodal Texts

Text-based Formats

- We **read** them
- Use mostly words

Video-based Formats

- We **watch/listen to** them
- Use mostly moving pictures or sounds

Both formats

Storybooks

Recipes

Blog posts

Webpages

Movies & Animations

Comics

Posters

Digital stories / e-Books

Educational games

Recorded performances

Music videos / Songs

Diagrams & Graphs

Source: Adapted from ELE, EDB - "SOW Your Discovery" Multimodal Composition Contest <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/SOW/discovery.html>

Multimodal literacy skills

Multimodal literacy skills refer to the ability to **interpret, analyze, and create meaning using multiple modes of communication**. These **modes** can include **linguistic** (words, grammar), **visual** (images, charts), **auditory** (speech, sounds), **spatial** (layout, design), and **gestural** elements (body movement), often combined in digital or multimedia texts. Developing these skills involves understanding how different modes interact to convey meaning, critically evaluating their combined impact, and effectively using them to communicate ideas in diverse contexts.

Referencing source: Jewitt, C., & Kress, G. R. (2003). *Multimodal literacy*. P. Lang.

Multimodal literacy skills

Literacy skills	
Visual literacy	The ability to interpret, understand, and create visual images and visual texts. It involves critically analyzing the visual elements (such as color, composition, and perspective) used to convey meaning, and effectively communicating through visual means.
Information literacy	The ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information. This includes understanding the ethical issues surrounding the use of information.
Digital literacy	The ability to use digital technology, communication tools, and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to communicate effectively in a knowledge society. It encompasses technical proficiency, critical thinking, and communication skills in digital environments.
Critical literacy	The ability to analyze and critique the relationships among power, social groups, and different forms of representation (including texts, images, and other media). It involves questioning the perspective, bias, and underlying ideologies presented in a text and understanding how texts can shape perceptions and beliefs.

Referencing source: Jewitt, C., & Kress, G. R. (2003). *Multimodal literacy*. P. Lang.

An example of a teaching idea

Text – Advertisement

Purpose – To enhance **visual literacy** and **critical literacy**

Teaching steps

1. Introduce the purpose of the activity - how images communicate meaning, not just words
2. Briefly introduce key focuses:
 - Visual elements (colour, image, layout, font)
 - Message (what the text is trying to say or persuade us to think)
3. Guided visual analysis
 - Q: What colours are used?
 - Q: What images or symbols are included?
 - Q: Where is your eye drawn first? Why?
 - Q: How is information arranged on the page?

Teaching steps

4. Identify the main message
 - Encourage multiple interpretation
 - Encourage justifications using visual evidence
5. Identify perspective and intent
 - Who do you think created this text?
 - Who is the intended audience?
 - Where do you think you can find this?
6. Reflection or response

How else would you use this advertisement?

Discuss with your groupmates and make suggestions.

Considerations when adopting multimodal texts

ARTISTS	
Authenticity	Ensure texts reflect real-world language use and genuine contexts, promoting meaningful engagement and credibility for learners.
Relevance	Select texts aligned with curriculum goals and learners' needs, making content purposeful and connected to their experiences.
Text selection	Choose multimodal texts that balance complexity and accessibility, supporting comprehension while encouraging critical thinking and creativity.
Interactivity	Incorporate texts that allow active learner participation, fostering collaboration, exploration, and dynamic engagement with multiple modes.
Students' interests	Prioritize topics and formats that resonate with learners' preferences, motivating them to interact meaningfully with multimodal content.
Themes	Adopt themes that are culturally inclusive, age-appropriate, and relevant to contemporary issues, promoting deeper understanding and empathy.
Style	Consider tone, design, and presentation of multimodal texts to ensure clarity, coherence, and aesthetic appeal for effective communication.

Another example of a teaching idea

Text – Short Youtube video clip

Shaun the sheep – Home-baked pizza

Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEbcZtoZNR8>

What do you think about this video?

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What do you think about this video?

Relevance	✓ It's relevant to topics such as food and cooking. ✓ It depicts everyday challenges and social interaction (e.g. cooperation, frustration, creativity, solving problems).
Text selection	✓ Though it is a wordless animated video, it mirrors how people often communicate in real life through facial expressions, gestures, body language, and actions.
Interactivity	✓ The video invites active participation rather than passive viewing. Teachers can pause at key moments to: • Ask students to predict what will happen next • Discuss characters' emotions and intentions • Encourage students to explain their interpretations
Students' interests	✓ The playful characters, humorous situations, and fast-paced animation align with primary students' interests.
Themes	✓ The video explores age-appropriate and culturally inclusive themes, including friendship and cooperation, problem-solving, creativity and resilience.
Style	✓ The video uses a playful, humorous, fast-paced cartoon style with exaggerated movements and visual comedy, making it highly engaging and accessible for primary students.

Shaun the sheep – Home-baked pizza

Some possible activities to design for students:

1. Thoughts and Talks
2. Caption the scenes
3. Hot seating

Activity 1 (Version A)

Thoughts and Talks

- ✓ Support visual literacy by requiring students to interpret facial expressions, body language, and actions in a wordless video to infer what characters might be saying or thinking
- ✓ Reduce linguistic barriers for diverse learners, as students can express meaning through short phrases, familiar vocabulary, or symbols rather than extended written sentences

Activity 1 (Version B)

Thoughts and Talks

- ✓ Provide examples for students who might need more scaffolding
- ✓ Allow for differentiation, enabling students to respond at varying levels of complexity while engaging with the same visual text

Activity 1 (Version C)

Thoughts and Talks

- ✓ Acknowledge that multiple interpretations are possible, as the wordless nature of the video allows students to generate different yet valid speech or thought bubbles based on individual observations and perspectives
- ✓ Enhance creativity by inviting students to imaginatively construct dialogue and inner thoughts, using the visual cues as a springboard for original ideas

Activity 2 (Version A)

Caption the scenes

- ✓ Develop visual literacy by requiring students to closely observe images from the wordless video and translate visual information into written language
- ✓ Encourage attention to detail, prompting students to notice small visual clues such as character actions, facial expressions, and setting

Choose the best captions below and fill the blanks.

A. A tired and sweaty chef	B. Delicious pizzas for sale
C. Yummy pizzas for piggies	D. Adding cheese before baking

Activity 2 (Version B)

Caption the scenes

- ✓ Support weaker and emerging learners by removing the need for writing, allowing students to demonstrate comprehension without the added demands of spelling, handwriting, or sentence construction
- ✓ Provide clear scaffolding, with choices acting as support cues that guide students toward correct understanding while still requiring active thinking

Activity 2 (Version C)

Caption the scenes

- ✓ Support sentence-level literacy development by helping students recognise correct word order and basic grammatical patterns
- ✓ Strengthen comprehension, requiring students to understand the image or scene in order to accurately sequence the jumbled words

Activity 3 Hot seating

Activity 3 Hot seating

Hot seating is a drama strategy where one student (or the teacher) sits in the “hot seat” and takes on the role of a character.

The rest of the class asks questions, and the teacher/student must answer in character.

Teaching steps:

- 1. Choose a character from the story, e.g. Shaun the Sheep*
- 2. Invite one student to take on the role of Shaun the Sheep*
- 3. Allow some time for the class to prepare their questions*
- 4. Have Shaun answer the questions in character*
- 5. Conclude as a class, e.g. reflect what has been learned about Shaun’s character*

Group work and discussion time

1. Try the Hot Seating task with your groupmates.
2. Suggest additional versions of the worksheets introduced to you earlier that could further support students at different proficiency levels.
3. Based on this video, propose other activities that could be designed to enhance students' English language skills.

- Refer to the comic 'Dengue Vector Control and Prevention'
- Source:
https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/library/pdf_pest_control/comic_of_dvc_e.pdf



Discussion time

1. How far do you think this comic meets the criteria we discussed before?
2. How would you use this text to enhance students' English language skills?

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Exploring the design of learning tasks/activities with the use of various multimodal texts to stimulate students' thinking skills and/or creativity

1. Using e-learning tools to support diverse needs through multimodal learning

2. Using digital resources to co-construct creative multimodal texts with students

3. Using voice-enhanced slides to produce multimodal resources for flipped learning

1. Using e-learning tools to support diverse needs through multimodal learning

- Natural readers.com

<https://www.naturalreaders.com/online/>

What to do with this tool to facilitate learning?

- ✓ Add an audio version of instructions
- ✓ Promote self-paced learning where students benefit from hearing clear, modelled pronunciation and pacing
- ✓ Give students a recorded version of an assigned reading passage

- Snorkl

<https://snorkl.app>

What to do with this tool to facilitate learning?

- ✓ Give students prompt, personalized feedback from the built-in AI tutor
- ✓ Promote multimodal production by having students record audio and/or visual explanations using the AI tool
- ✓ Strengthen critical thinking by prompting students to ask questions and explain
- ✓ Encourage reflection and revision

**2. Using digital resources to
co-construct creative
multimodal texts with
students**

Canva

<https://www.canva.com/>

What to do with this tool to facilitate learning?

- ✓ Provide ready-made templates (e.g. infographics) that support students in producing texts combining words, images, icons, shapes, and layout elements - ideal for multimodal literacy
- ✓ Support visual–verbal integration by allowing students to pair their written text with photos, illustrations, and graphics, strengthening comprehension and meaning-making
- ✓ Encourage creativity and agency as students choose design elements (fonts, colours, shapes) to express tone and purpose in their multimodal texts

Demonstration and Hands-On Try-Out

Book Creator

<https://bookcreator.com/>

What to do with this tool to facilitate learning?

- ✓ Enhance noticing of language errors because students can immediately see the text displayed in a clear, multimodal layout, making mistakes more visible and easier to identify during whole-class review
- ✓ Facilitate collective correction as the teacher can project common mistakes made
- ✓ Promote collaborative language awareness when students co-edit pages with the teacher and suggest improvements

3. Using voice-enhanced slides to produce multimodal resources for flipped learning

- Microsoft Powerpoint
- Powtoon <https://www.powtoon.com>

What to do with these tools to facilitate learning?

- ✓ Support self-paced learning as students can pause, replay, or skip ahead, allowing them to learn at a speed that suits their needs and abilities
- ✓ Provide multimodal input when a combination of audio with visual inputs caters to diverse learning preferences
- ✓ Promote autonomy and responsibility – Students choose when, where, and how many times to review content, encouraging ownership of their learning process

Contextualizing the effective use of multimodal texts - PPP

Setting of a unit plan

Mr. Ben visited Hong Kong last week and he loved it here! He is thinking about staying and becoming a new teacher at our school. He would like to share with you what he did last week.

Theme of this unit plan – Travelling around Hong Kong

Stages	Lesson activities
P resentation	Establish the context - Flipped learning using Powtoon (e.g. a video about Mr. Ben's visit to Hong Kong) Vocabulary instruction on target irregular past tense forms - Digital flashcards created using Perplexity
P practice	Reading a transactional text - Shared reading and listening to a memo sent by Mr. Ben to the class using NaturalReader Practise target grammar items - Semi-controlled practice on Snorkl focusing on the simple past tense
P roduction	Writing a reply memo to Mr. Ben - Co-construction of a memo to Mr. Ben inviting him to join our school as a teacher using Book Creator Reading aloud (Speaking) - Read the memo on Snorkl and seek AI feedback on pronunciation accuracy and intonation