



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

The READY Framework

A framework for engaging with
sensitive issues in literature.



The READY Framework

*Supporting Teachers with Sensitive and
Controversial Classroom Content*

R

Recognise

E

Establish Boundaries

A

Activate Content/Context

D

**Discuss Responsibly/
Responsibility**

Y

Yield Space



Suggestive Planning Tools

R - Recognise



Content Sensitivity Audit
Representation Grid
Student Readiness Questionnaire

E - Establish Boundaries



Classroom Charter
Difficult Dialogue Anticipation Planner
Disagreement Language Bank

A - Activate Content/Context



Contextual Timeline
Multiple Perspective Map
Key Terms Glossary

D - Discuss Responsibly/ Responsibility



Student Role Planner
Critical Lens
Talk participation Tracker

Y - Yield Space



Student Reflection Journal
Personal Connection Opportunities
Opportunities to link to real world issues



The READY Framework Quick Guide

Supporting Sensitive and Controversial Texts in the English Classroom

| Letter | Principle | Guidelines for Teachers | Possible Classroom Activity |
|--------|--|---|--|
| R | RECOGNISE - the sensitive, topical, or controversial nature of certain texts and anticipate the emotional or intellectual challenges they might pose for students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify sensitive themes.Consider how content may affect different students.Reflect on representation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Text Mapping: Before reading, invite students to brainstorm potential themes or issues that might emerge in a text. Encourage them to flag topics that might be challenging, creating awareness before deeper engagement.Content Warnings/Notes: Provide short, neutral context-setting notes at the start of lessons when tackling potentially distressing themes. |
| E | ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES - for classroom discussions, ensuring respectful dialogue and psychological safety. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Set discussion norms.Define respectful behaviour.Reinforce expectations clearly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Respect Charter: As a class, co-create rules for discussion (e.g., active listening, no interrupting, disagreeing respectfully). Display these agreements visibly in the classroom.Role Rotation: Assign rotating roles such as discussion chair, timekeeper, or summariser to maintain structure and fairness in conversations. |
| A | ACTIVATE CONTENT/CONTEXT - activate prior knowledge and connect literary content to students' lives, experiences, and contemporary contexts to deepen engagement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide background information.Explain outdated views.Connect themes to real life. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Think–Pair–Share: Before reading, have students connect the theme (e.g., identity, justice) to real-world issues they know about.Media Collage: Ask students to bring in news stories, songs, or social media posts related to the text's themes, building bridges between literature and life. |



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Supporting Sensitive and Controversial Texts in the English Classroom

| Letter | Principle | Guidelines for Teachers | Possible Classroom Activity |
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| D | DISCUSS RESPONSIBLY/ RESPONSIBILITY - our own students have responsibility to consider their role as citizens and how to debate sensitive or controversial material responsibly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model inclusive talk.• Address bias calmly.• Support emotional responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perspective Journals: After reading a challenging passage, students write short reflections on personal or societal responsibilities related to the issue.• Ethics Corners: Create four “opinion corners” (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) and have students physically position themselves in the room, justifying their stance. |
| Y | YIELD SPACE - for multiple voices, allowing students to process, respond, and reflect at their own pace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow time to process.• Offer different response options.• Follow up privately if needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Silent Conversations: Students write responses on large sheets of paper or digital platforms, reading and replying to peers’ comments silently before whole-class discussion.• Reflection Circles: Use closing circles where each student can share one takeaway, question, or feeling about the lesson, ensuring all voices are heard. |

Reflection for Teachers



Before introducing sensitive or controversial texts, consider the following questions:

- Are students emotionally and cognitively ready for this text?
- Have I planned how to support both discussion and silence?
- What systems are in place if a student needs additional care?



Teacher Reflection Prompts

R

Recognise

- What themes might be emotionally or morally sensitive?
- How might students from different backgrounds react?
- Who is represented or excluded in this text?
- How does the author's background influence the content?

E

Establish Boundaries

- What classroom norms are essential for a safe discussion?
- How can I promote respectful disagreement?
- How do I model listening and care?

A

Activate Content/Context

- What contextual information is essential to prevent misinterpretation?
- How can I make students aware of outdated or controversial views?
- How can I link the themes to current societal issues?

D

Discuss Responsibly/ Responsibility

- How do I ensure all voices are included?
- What structures can help reduce tension during disagreements?
- How will I intervene if bias or harm occurs?

Y

Yield Space

- What options do students have to reflect privately?
- How do I follow up after a difficult discussion?
- What if a student has a personal connection to the issue?



Here are some possible strategies and ideas that you might like to explore in your own classroom.

Silent Graffiti Wall

Students anonymously write thoughts or emotions about upcoming themes.

Stoplight Sorting Task

Categorise topics into Green (safe), Amber (sensitive), Red (triggering).

Recognise

Help students anticipate and explore sensitivities in content.



Click to access

Media Bias Comparison

Examine how different outlets present the same issue.

Identity Lens Reflection

Students explore how their identity shapes their reading of a text.

Quick Polling Tool

Use Google Forms, Mentimeter, or sticky notes to check student comfort and awareness.



Here are some possible strategies and ideas that you might like to explore in your own classroom.



Click to access

Discussion Role Cards

Assign roles like summariser, clarifier, challenger.

Establish Boundaries

Support students in co-creating norms and respectful dialogue practices.

Co-Create Class Agreements

Build a shared set of norms with student input.

Values Voting

Use prompts like “Which value is most important in discussion?”

Disagreement Sentence Starters

Practice using respectful disagreement phrases.



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Comfort Compass

Visual signals for students to indicate comfort levels with topics.



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Then & Now Comparison table

Compare how issues were understood historically versus today.

Author's Context Interview

Create a mock interview with the author based on research.

Activate Content/Context

Build background knowledge and contextual understanding.

Documentary Viewing Guide

View short videos with guided context questions.

Empathy Mapping

Explore the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of characters or groups.

Background Knowledge Stations

Interactive research centers
with maps, articles, and
images.



Click to access



Here are some possible strategies and ideas that you might like to explore in your own classroom.



Click to access

Quote Reflection

Pair-Share

Students react to provocative or sensitive quotes in pairs before whole-class discussion.

Spectrum Line Debate

Students physically place themselves along a line according to their opinions and explain why.

Rotating Triads

Small group discussions with one rotating member.

Spider Web

Track who speaks & builds on ideas.

Scenario Response

Cards

Students respond to ethical dilemmas based on text themes.



Click to access

Discuss Responsibly/ Responsibility

Foster thoughtful, inclusive, and respectful classroom discussion.



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Click to access

Creative Response **Menu**

Choose poetry, artwork,
narrative, or media response
to process emotions.

Yield Space

Invite reflection, emotional processing, and follow-up.

“This Reminds Me Of...” Prompt

Connect lesson to personal experience, book, or world event.

“What I’m Still Thinking About...” Cards

Capture unresolved thoughts or questions.

Blog Entry or Vlog Script

Write a diary-style blog or video monologue processing key events.

“Seen/Unsent” Note

Compose a message that a character wanted to send but never did.



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- Model inclusive talk.
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- Allow time to process.
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Guidelines for Teachers

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Possible Classroom Strategies



- Preview the text for challenges.
- Share content warnings.
- Plan for flexibility.



- Consult respect charter.
- Use sentence starters.
- Implement role rotation.



- Use pre-reading activities.
- Share author and historical context.
- Pre-teach key concepts.
- Consider Think - Pair- Share.
- Compile media collage.



- Use structured discussion formats.
- Monitor tone and engagement.
- Pause when needed.
- Utilise perspective Journals.
- Consider ethics corners.



- Try reflection circles.
- Include creative responses.
- Provide opportunity for feedback.



Research References

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