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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Teaching Literacy (1698/1628) • Level: Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 1 (Units 1–4)

Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 40

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

For Study & Reference

Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and write the assignment in their own words.

Question 1: Oral Language and Early Literacy Development (20 Marks)

Literacy development begins in the early years and is closely connected with children's language development. Explain the relationship between oral language and early literacy development. Discuss how listening, speaking, vocabulary, phonological awareness, reading, and writing support one another, with suitable examples from early childhood classrooms. (20)

Introduction

Literacy does not begin on the first day of formal reading instruction. Long before a child decodes a single printed word, he or she has spent years listening to voices, imitating sounds, learning words for the people and objects around them, joining in rhymes and songs, and telling others what happened at home or in the playground. Oral language — the spoken system of listening and speaking through which children first make meaning — is therefore the soil in which reading and writing later grow. Research on early literacy consistently shows that children who enter school with rich oral language, a wide vocabulary and a good ear for the sounds of speech learn to read and write more easily, while children whose early talk has been limited often struggle with print even when their letter knowledge is adequate. This answer

explains the relationship between oral language and early literacy and then examines how listening, speaking, vocabulary, phonological awareness, reading and writing each support the others, using examples from early childhood classrooms.

What Oral Language and Early Literacy Mean

Oral language has several parts working together: children hear and distinguish sounds (phonology), learn words and their meanings (vocabulary or semantics), learn how words are ordered into sentences (grammar or syntax), and learn how language is used socially — when to speak, how to take turns, how to tell a story so that a listener can follow it (pragmatics and discourse). Early literacy is the knowledge, skills and attitudes that develop in the years before conventional reading and writing: knowing that print carries meaning, recognising letters, understanding how books work, hearing sounds inside words, and making early attempts to write through drawing, scribbling and invented spelling. The central point is that these are not two separate subjects. Reading is, in essence, printed oral language: the reader must connect marks on a page to words he or she already knows in speech, and writing is speech written down. A child can only read with understanding a sentence whose words and structures are already familiar in listening and speaking.

Listening: The First Literacy Skill

Listening is where the whole system starts. From infancy, children tune in to the rhythm, melody and sounds of the language spoken around them. Attentive listening builds the sound memory and concentration on which phonological awareness and comprehension later depend. In the classroom, a teacher who reads a story aloud is doing far more than entertaining the class: children hear new sentence patterns, absorb the language of books — 'Once upon a

time', 'Suddenly', 'In the end' — which is richer and more organised than everyday talk, and they practise following meaning over several minutes. Listening games make this deliberate. In 'Simon Says', children must listen precisely and connect words to actions; in sound-discrimination games they judge whether two words begin with the same sound; in listening walks they identify and name environmental sounds. Each of these strengthens the attentive, analytic listening that a child will soon apply to the sounds inside spoken words and, after that, to phonics. A child who cannot yet listen carefully to speech will find it very hard to listen for the difference between 'pin' and 'bin' when reading begins.

Speaking: Practising Language for Reading and Writing

Speaking is the productive partner of listening. When children talk — retelling a story, explaining how they built a tower, negotiating roles in pretend play — they organise ideas into ordered language, and this rehearsal is directly transferred to comprehension and composition. A child who can orally sequence 'first we mixed the flour, then we rolled it, then the teacher put it in the oven' already understands the structure he or she will meet in a written recount. Talk also reveals and repairs misunderstanding: when a listener asks 'Which one?', the speaker learns to be clearer and more precise, a lesson every young writer needs. Teachers build speaking through show-and-tell, circle-time discussion, paired 'talk partners', role-play areas such as a shop or clinic where children must use the language of buying, selling and helping, and through open questions that cannot be answered with one word. Importantly, speaking feeds writing: teachers routinely ask children to 'say it first, then write it', because a sentence that has been composed aloud is far easier to hold in mind and set down on paper.

Vocabulary: The Bridge Between Speech and Print

Vocabulary is the bridge on which oral language and literacy meet. Reading comprehension is largely a matter of recognising in print words whose meanings are already known in speech; a child may decode the word 'enormous' correctly, but it adds nothing to understanding unless the word is part of his or her spoken vocabulary. The reverse is also true: books expose children to words they rarely hear in conversation — 'gigantic', 'whisper', 'habitat', 'journey' — so reading and being read to become powerful engines of vocabulary growth, which then makes the next book easier. Teachers develop vocabulary deliberately rather than leaving it to chance: they introduce a small set of 'star words' from each story, explain them in child-friendly language, act them out, display them with pictures, and praise children for using them in talk and writing. During a unit on the farm, for example, words such as 'barn', 'graze', 'harvest' and 'trough' are taught through real objects, photographs and a farm visit or video, used repeatedly across the week, and finally appear in the children's own dictated and written sentences. Vocabulary, oral language and comprehension thus rise together.

Phonological Awareness: Hearing the Structure of Speech

Phonological awareness is the part of oral language most directly aimed at print: it is the ability to hear and play with the sound structure of spoken words, without any letters involved. It develops from large units to small ones — first words in a sentence, then syllables in a word ('ba-na-na'), then the onset and rime ('c-at'), and finally individual phonemes ('c-a-t'). It is wholly an oral, listening-and-speaking skill, yet it is one of the strongest predictors of later reading success, because phonics — connecting letters to sounds — can only work if the child can hear the sounds that the letters must represent. Classrooms develop it through rhyme and

alliteration games, clapping the beats in children's names, singing songs that play with sounds, odd-one-out games ('Which word does not rhyme: cat, hat, sun?'), and blending games in which the teacher says sounds slowly ('m-a-p') and children guess the word. The example shows the interdependence clearly: listening supplies the sounds, speaking practises them, and reading and spelling later cash them in.

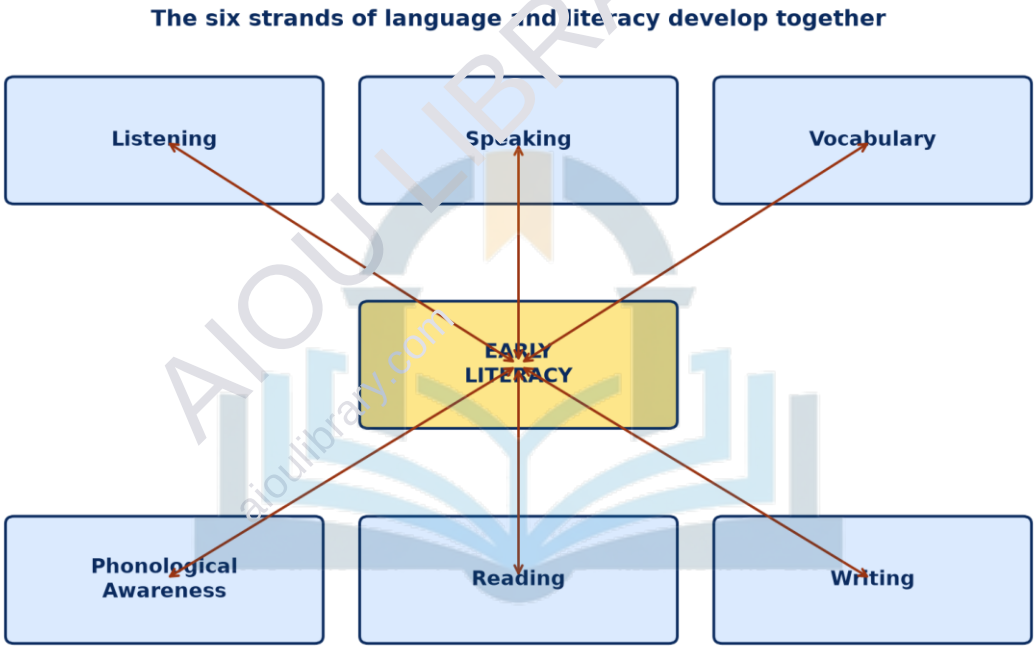

Figure 1: Listening, speaking, vocabulary, phonological awareness, reading and writing are interdependent strands of one developing system.

Reading and Writing: Print Joins the System

When reading and writing enter, they do not replace oral language; they feed on it and feed back into it. Shared reading of a big book works because the teacher's talk surrounds the print — predicting, questioning, explaining — so comprehension strategies are first practised orally. Writing, likewise, grows out of talk and drawing: the young child tells the teacher a sentence, the teacher writes it (language experience approach), and the child reads back his or her own

spoken words in print, discovering in the most direct way possible that speech can be written and writing can be read. As writing develops, it strengthens reading: trying to spell 'went' as 'wet' forces the child to listen closely to sounds and to look closely at letter sequences, sharpening exactly the phonological awareness and letter knowledge that reading requires. Reading, in turn, gives writers models of sentences, story openings and information structures that appear first in their talk and then in their compositions.

How the Six Strands Support One Another: A Classroom Picture

The interdependence is easiest to see across a single week built around one story, for example 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. On the first day the teacher reads the story aloud (listening) and children join in with the repeated phrases (speaking). Difficult words — 'cocoon', 'feast', 'plum' — are explained, acted and added to the word wall (vocabulary). In a rhyme-and-sound session children clap the syllables in 'cat-er-pil-lar' and hunt for words beginning with the same sound as 'butterfly' (phonological awareness). In shared reading, children track the print, find known words and read the refrains (reading). Finally, each child draws and writes, at his or her own level, a sentence about a favourite food day, first saying it aloud to a partner (writing built on speaking). No strand was taught in isolation, yet every strand was exercised, and progress in any one of them — a bigger vocabulary, a sharper ear for sounds — makes the others easier. This is why effective early childhood programmes treat language and literacy as one integrated area rather than as separate lessons competing for time.

Table 1: How each strand supports the others

Strand	What it contributes	How the others strengthen it
Listening	Attention, sound discrimination, story language and	Speaking and shared reading give listening a purpose;

	comprehension strategies	vocabulary makes listening easier
Speaking	Organised ideas, sentence patterns, narrative structure for reading and writing	Listening provides models; reading supplies new things to talk about
Vocabulary	Meanings that make decoded print understandable	Talk, stories and reading introduce new words; writing fixes them in memory
Phonological awareness	Hearing sounds in words, the readiness for phonics and spelling	Rhymes, songs and talk develop the ear; early spelling practice sharpens it
Reading	Access to book language, knowledge and vocabulary beyond daily talk	Oral language supplies the meanings; writing practice builds letter and word knowledge
Writing	Recording speech in print; strengthens sound and letter analysis	Talk composes the sentence first; reading provides models and spellings

Conclusion

Oral language and early literacy are, therefore, one continuous development viewed from two sides. Listening lays the foundation of attention and sound awareness; speaking organises thought into language; vocabulary supplies the meanings that print will carry; phonological awareness tunes the ear to the sounds that letters represent; and reading and writing convert the spoken system into a permanent, expandable one, while feeding new language back into speech. The practical lesson for the early childhood teacher is clear: a classroom rich in conversation, stories, songs, rhymes and purposeful talk is not a soft preparation for 'real' literacy work later — it is literacy work, and the children who talk most and best in the early years are, in general, the children who read and write most successfully afterwards.

Question 2: Major Components of Reading and How Teachers Support Them (20 Marks)

A preschool teacher wants to help children become successful readers but finds that some children struggle with sounds, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Analyze the major components of reading and explain how a teacher can support the development of each component through classroom activities. (20)

Introduction

Reading looks like a single act — eyes moving across print, meaning arising — but underneath it several distinct abilities must work together, and a breakdown in any one of them produces a struggling reader. One child cannot hear the sounds in words; another knows letters but reads so slowly that the meaning is lost; a third decodes accurately yet cannot say what the story was about. The teacher in this question will only help such children if she can analyse reading into its major components, recognise which component is weak in which child, and provide activities aimed precisely at that component. The widely used framework identifies five core components — phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension — resting on foundations of oral language, concepts of print and motivation. This answer analyses each component in turn and explains the classroom activities through which a preschool and early-years teacher can support it.

An Overview of the Components

The components are interlocking rather than a sequence of separate hurdles. Phonological awareness lets the child hear the sounds that phonics will attach to letters; phonics and word recognition turn print into language; fluency makes that process fast and automatic enough for

the mind to attend to meaning; vocabulary supplies the meanings of the words recognised; and comprehension — the real purpose of reading — integrates everything with the child's knowledge of the world. Because attention is limited, weakness low in the system starves the levels above it: a child using all his mental energy to sound out words has none left for understanding them. This is why early support must be diagnostic: the same outward symptom, 'he cannot read this book', can have five different causes requiring five different kinds of help.

Table 1: Major components of reading, typical difficulty and classroom support

Component	What it involves	Typical struggle	Example support activities
Phonological awareness	Hearing and manipulating sounds in spoken words	Cannot rhyme, clap syllables or hear first sounds	Rhyme games, syllable clapping, sound hunts, blending games
Phonics and word recognition	Linking letters to sounds; recognising words accurately	Guesses words from pictures; does not use letter sounds	Letter-sound games, word building with letter cards, decodable mini-books
Fluency	Reading accurately, at a suitable pace, with expression	Word-by-word, hesitant reading; ignores punctuation	Repeated reading, echo and choral reading, paired reading of familiar books
Vocabulary	Knowing the meanings of words	Decodes words he does not understand; limited talk	Star words, real objects and pictures, word walls, rich read-aloud discussion
Comprehension	Constructing meaning from text	Reads without understanding; cannot retell or answer questions	Predicting, questioning, retelling with props, story sequencing
Print concepts and motivation	Knowing how books and print work; wanting to read	Holds book wrongly; avoids books	Book corner, shared reading with print tracking, choice of books, praise

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability to attend to the sounds of spoken language apart from meaning — to know that 'cat' begins with /k/, that 'banana' has three beats, and that 'sun' and 'fun' rhyme. It is taught entirely through listening and speaking, in short playful sessions, moving from larger units (words, syllables) to smaller ones (onsets, rimes and single phonemes) and from easier tasks (identifying and matching sounds) to harder ones (blending, segmenting, deleting and substituting sounds). A preschool teacher supports it daily: children clap the syllables in their names at registration; sing rhyming songs and supply the missing rhyming word; play 'I spy with my little eye, something beginning with /s/'; sort picture cards by their first sound; and blend sounds the teacher stretches out ('sss-un — what is the word?'). Children who struggle here — who cannot hear rhyme or first sounds after the rest of the class can — need more frequent, smaller-group practice, because this weakness, left alone, becomes a phonics failure next year.

Phonics and Word Recognition

Phonics is knowledge of the systematic relationships between letters and sounds, and word recognition is the outcome: the ability to identify printed words accurately, first by decoding them sound by sound and eventually at sight. The teacher's task is to build the alphabetic principle — the insight that letters stand for the sounds the child can already hear. Activities should be active and multisensory: children trace sandpaper letters while saying the sound, find the letter that begins a classmate's name, build simple words with magnetic letters by changing one letter at a time ('cat — cap — map'), read short decodable texts that contain only patterns

already taught, and play matching games pairing letters, sounds and pictures. High-frequency words that cannot be fully sounded out are taught through repeated, meaningful exposure — on the word wall, in morning messages and in the children's own writing. The key principle is alignment: children should meet in real reading and writing the same letter-sound patterns they are being taught, so that phonics is experienced as a tool for reading, not as a separate drill.

Fluency

Fluency is reading that is accurate, reasonably paced and expressive — reading that sounds like speech. It matters because fluent word recognition frees attention for comprehension; the slow, effortful reader forgets the beginning of the sentence before reaching its end. In the preschool and early years, fluency is built mainly through supported, repeated encounters with familiar language rather than through speed pressure. The teacher reads aloud daily as a model of fluent, expressive reading; children echo-read lines after her, read refrains chorally from big books, re-read favourite stories until they can 'read' them confidently, perform short rhymes and poems for the class, and read in pairs with a more able partner. Listening to a child read the same short passage on successive days, and praising smoothness and expression rather than speed, shows both teacher and child that fluency is growing. Accuracy must never be sacrificed: fluent reading is first of all correct reading, delivered at a pace that preserves meaning.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary — knowing what words mean — limits comprehension from below: a text full of unknown words cannot be understood however well it is decoded. Because preschool children learn most words through language experiences rather than definitions, the teacher engineers

those experiences. She chooses read-aloud books slightly above the children's own speaking level, selects a few important words from each book, explains them in simple language ('enormous means very, very big'), connects them to pictures, real objects and actions, and plans for children to hear and use them many times — in discussion, in role play, in the writing corner. Topic work multiplies this effect: a 'weather' theme brings 'drizzle', 'thunder', 'frost' and 'breeze' into displays, experiments, songs and stories within a single week. Word-consciousness is also taught: children are praised for noticing interesting words, a 'word of the day' is celebrated, and word walls are used actively in games rather than serving as wallpaper. For children with small vocabularies — often those with least book experience at home — this deliberate, repeated, playful exposure is the difference between catching up and falling further behind.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the construction of meaning: understanding what a text says, connecting it to what one already knows, and thinking about it. Even before children can decode, comprehension can and must be taught through listening. During read-alouds the teacher thinks aloud ('I wonder why the bear is sad — let us look at the picture'), teaches children to predict from the cover and from events so far, asks questions before, during and after reading, and has children retell stories in order using props, puppets or picture sequences. She teaches them to visualise ('Close your eyes — what do you see when I read this part?'), to notice when meaning breaks down, and to connect the story to their own lives ('Has anything like this happened to you?'). Once independent reading begins, the same strategies are transferred to the children's own texts through short guided-reading sessions. Children who struggle with

comprehension despite adequate decoding usually need more background knowledge, more vocabulary and more practice in talking about texts — not more phonics — which again shows the value of analysing reading into its components.

Supporting Struggling Readers: Assessment and Differentiation

Running through all five components is the teacher's professional cycle of observation, identification and targeted support. She keeps simple records: which children can hear first sounds, which letter-sounds each child knows, how a child reads a familiar text, which words he uses and understands, and whether he can retell a story. Short, playful checks — never formal tests at this age — reveal the weak component, and teaching is then differentiated: the whole class enjoys stories and talk, small groups receive extra practice in their area of need, and individual children get brief, frequent sessions on their specific difficulty, always ending with success. Progress is monitored and the focus changes as the child improves. The teacher also works with families — sending home rhymes, word games and books to share — because practice distributed between home and school is far more powerful than school practice alone.

Conclusion

Successful reading rests on phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, built on oral language, print concepts and motivation. The preschool teacher supports each component through distinct but interconnected activities: sound games for the ear, letter play and decodable texts for the code, repeated and modelled reading for fluency, rich talk and deliberate word teaching for vocabulary, and questioning, predicting and retelling for comprehension. Her most important professional skill is diagnosis — seeing past the general label of 'struggling reader' to the particular component that is failing a

particular child, and supplying exactly the experiences that component requires. Taught this way, the components strengthen one another, and children move from effortful early attempts towards the fluent, understanding reading on which all later learning depends.

Question 3: Bottom-Up, Top-Down and Interactive Models of Reading (20 Marks)

Compare the bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models of reading. Explain the assumptions of each model and discuss why an interactive approach can be useful in developing children's reading skills. (20)

Introduction

Teachers hold theories about reading even when they have never named them, and those theories silently decide what happens in their classrooms: whether the lesson begins with letters or with stories, whether guessing from context is praised or corrected, and what a teacher does when a child is stuck on a word. Three models dominate the discussion of how reading works. The bottom-up model sees reading as building meaning from small parts upwards; the top-down model sees it as the reader's knowledge and expectations driving the process downwards; and the interactive model holds that skilled reading constantly combines both directions. This answer explains the assumptions of each model, compares them, and shows why an interactive approach offers the most complete and useful basis for developing children's reading.

The Bottom-Up Model

The bottom-up model assumes that meaning lies in the text and is extracted from it in a strict sequence of stages, like assembling a machine from its smallest parts. The reader first identifies letters, then converts letters into sounds, blends sounds into words, words into sentences, and only then arrives at meaning. Comprehension is the end product of accurate decoding; the reader's background knowledge plays little part in the early stages, and errors are mainly failures of letter-sound knowledge. Teaching based on this model is systematic and sequential: phonics is taught step by step, children read carefully controlled texts using only patterns already taught, accuracy is prized, and guessing is discouraged. The model's strength is real — it recognises that the alphabetic code must actually be learned, and decades of classroom experience confirm that children taught letter-sound relationships systematically decode better than children left to discover them. Its weakness is equally real: carried to an extreme, it produces children who can 'bark at print' — reading words aloud accurately without understanding or enjoying them — and it cannot explain how skilled readers recognise familiar words instantly, without sounding them out, or how they often understand a text despite misprints and missing words.

The Top-Down Model

The top-down model reverses the direction. It assumes that reading is driven by the reader: by his or her knowledge of the world, of language and of how texts work. Reading is described as a 'psycholinguistic guessing game' in which the skilled reader samples the print, predicts what will come next on the basis of meaning and grammar, and confirms or corrects the prediction, using the smallest amount of visual information necessary. On this view, meaning is not extracted

from the page but brought to it, and fluent reading is built on rich language, background knowledge and purposeful engagement with whole, real texts. Teaching based on this model emphasises shared reading of enjoyable books, prediction, discussion, immersion in print and learning words as wholes in meaningful contexts, with phonics picked up incidentally along the way. Its strength is its reminder that comprehension, purpose and motivation are the point of reading, and that context genuinely helps readers. Its weakness is serious for beginners: prediction works well only for readers who already know most of the words. A child with weak decoding who is encouraged to guess from pictures and first letters develops habits that collapse when texts become harder and pictures disappear; research on eye movements shows that skilled readers in fact look closely at nearly every word, the opposite of sampling lightly.

The Interactive Model

The interactive model assumes that reading is neither purely bottom-up nor purely top-down but a continuous interaction between the two — between information from the text (letters, words, grammar) and information from the reader (sounds, vocabulary, knowledge, purpose). Both processes run at the same time and compensate for each other: when a word is unfamiliar, the reader leans on decoding; when decoding is uncertain, context helps confirm the choice; when the topic is familiar, reading speeds up, and when it is new, the reader slows and relies more heavily on the print itself. A related idea, the interactive-compensatory view, points out that a weakness at one level forces greater reliance on another — which explains why a child with poor phonics guesses wildly from context: the guessing is a symptom of weak lower-level skill, not a healthy strategy to be trained. Teaching on this model is deliberately balanced: systematic phonics and word work are taught explicitly, and the same children are

immersed in meaningful reading and writing, rich talk and comprehension work, so that each direction of processing supports the other.

Table 1: Comparison of the three models of reading

Aspect	**Bottom-Up Model**	**Top-Down Model**	**Interactive Model**
Direction of processing	From letters and sounds up to meaning	From reader's knowledge and expectations down to the text	Both directions simultaneously, interacting
Main assumption	Meaning is in the text; decoding must come first	Meaning is brought by the reader; prediction drives reading	Meaning is constructed by interaction of text and reader
Role of background knowledge	Minor until decoding is complete	Central from the very start	Important, and works together with print information
View of errors	Mainly decoding failures to be corrected	Miscues are natural signs of predicting and thinking	Errors show which source of information the reader is over- or under-using
Typical teaching	Sequential phonics, controlled texts, accuracy drills	Whole books, prediction, immersion, incidental phonics	Explicit phonics plus rich reading, talk, writing and comprehension teaching
Main strength	Ensures the code is learned systematically	Keeps purpose, meaning and motivation central	Most complete account; supports all readers
Main limitation	Can produce accurate reading without understanding	Beginners cannot predict what they cannot yet read; guessing habits	Requires teachers skilled in balancing both kinds of teaching

Why the Interactive Approach Is Useful for Children

The interactive approach is useful, first, because it matches how children actually learn to read. A beginner sounding out 'c-a-t' under a picture of a cat uses letter knowledge and context together; neither source alone tells the whole story, and the teacher can strengthen both. Second, it protects children from the characteristic failures of each single model: no child is left to guess without the code, and no child is drilled in the code without real books, talk and reasons to read. Third, it gives the teacher a diagnostic lens. When a child reads 'house' for 'horse', the interactive teacher sees over-reliance on context and first letters and responds with word-level work; when a child decodes perfectly but cannot retell, she sees neglected top-down processing and responds with discussion, vocabulary and background building. Fourth, it supports children at different stages and with different difficulties within one classroom philosophy, since the balance of support can shift — more code emphasis for the child who cannot decode, more meaning emphasis for the child who decodes without understanding. Finally, it keeps motivation and meaning at the centre while treating accuracy as non-negotiable, which is precisely the combination young readers need.

Implications for Classroom Practice

In an interactive classroom the day contains both directions of teaching, deliberately connected. A short, focused phonics session teaches a letter-sound pattern; immediately afterwards, guided reading uses a text containing that pattern inside a real story, and the teacher prompts children to use both strategies together: 'Use the sounds — and think what would make sense.' Shared reading builds prediction, vocabulary and comprehension; writing gives children daily practice in using sounds to spell, which strengthens decoding from the

other side; and a well-stocked book corner, story time and discussion feed the knowledge and language on which top-down processing depends. Assessment is equally two-sided: the teacher records both what a child can decode and what a child understands and enjoys. The approach asks more of the teacher than either single model, because she must know phonics well enough to teach it systematically and know children's literature and talk strategies well enough to teach meaning — but it is the only approach that respects the full complexity of learning to read.

Conclusion

The bottom-up model is right that the alphabetic code must be mastered, the top-down model is right that knowledge, prediction and purpose drive real reading, and each is wrong only in claiming to be the whole story. The interactive model unites their strengths: reading is the simultaneous interaction of print information and reader knowledge, with each process compensating for and strengthening the other. For children's reading development this means balanced teaching — systematic phonics joined to rich language, real books, writing and comprehension work — and teachers who can diagnose whether a struggling reader needs help from the print side, the meaning side, or both. That completeness is why the interactive approach is the most useful foundation for early literacy teaching.

Question 4: Stages of the Writing Process and the Move to Independent Writing (20 Marks)

Writing develops gradually and requires appropriate support from teachers. Explain the stages of the writing process and discuss how teachers can move children from teacher-supported writing toward independent writing. Include examples of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing activities. (20)

Introduction

Young children do not become writers by being handed a pencil and told to write correctly. Writing is a process with recognisable stages — thinking and planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing — and at the same time a development, in which children pass from scribbling and drawing, through writing with single letters and invented spellings, towards conventional, independent composition. The teacher's art is to support both journeys at once: to teach the stages of the process explicitly while gradually handing control of each stage from herself to the child. This answer explains each stage of the writing process with classroom examples, and then discusses how modelled, shared and guided writing move children step by step towards independence.

Writing as a Process and a Development

Two ideas frame everything that follows. First, writing is recursive, not a straight line: real writers plan, draft a little, re-read, change their minds, draft more, and only edit for correctness near the end. Children should experience the stages in this natural, flexible order rather than as a rigid ladder. Second, young children's writing develops through forms the teacher must welcome rather than correct away: scribbles that imitate writing, letter-like shapes, strings of letters, writing in which one letter stands for a whole syllable or word, and invented spelling that gradually approaches the standard form. Each form shows developing knowledge of print and sound. If only perfect writing is accepted, children write as little and as simply as possible; if attempts are valued and supported, they write more, take risks with words and sounds, and learn faster. Support therefore means scaffolding — providing temporary help, through talk,

demonstration and tools such as word walls and alphabet charts, that is removed piece by piece as competence grows.

Stage 1: Planning (Pre-Writing)

Planning is gathering and organising ideas before and while writing begins. For young children, planning is mostly oral and visual, because talk and drawing are their strongest tools for thinking. Examples of planning activities include: brainstorming and webbing ideas around a topic word after a shared experience such as a visit to the market; drawing a picture first and talking about it with a partner ('Draw it, say it, then write it'); using story maps with boxes for beginning, middle and end before retelling a familiar tale; sequencing three or four pictures of how a seed grows before writing about growth; and 'talk partners' rehearsing the exact first sentence aloud before writing it. The teacher supports planning by modelling her own thinking aloud — 'I want to write about our trip. What did we see first? I shall draw a small bus here to remind me' — and by giving planning a short, protected time in every writing session, so children learn that writers think before they write.

Stage 2: Drafting

Drafting is getting the ideas down in a first version, with attention on meaning rather than correctness. The teacher's central message is: 'Say what you want to say; use the sounds you can hear; keep going.' Examples of drafting activities include writing a sentence or two under a drawing about a personal experience; composing a class news sentence each morning; writing labels, lists and captions, which are natural first drafts; continuing a story begun in shared reading; and free writing in personal notebooks for a few minutes without interruption. Support during drafting is light but skilled: the teacher circulates, asks children to read back

what they have written, helps a stuck child stretch a word slowly to hear its sounds ('s-s-sun'), and points to the alphabet chart or word wall instead of simply supplying spellings. Drafting in pencil, on alternate lines or in a special draft book, signals that this version is expected to change — an idea young writers must absorb if the later stages are to make sense.

Stage 3: Revising

Revising means improving the content of the draft — making the meaning clearer, fuller and more interesting — and is distinct from correcting its surface. Many young children believe writing is finished once words are on paper, so revising must be taught concretely and on a small scale. Examples include: reading a draft aloud to a partner who says one thing he liked and asks one question ('Where were you standing?'), prompting the writer to add a line; the teacher modelling revision on a shared text, crossing out a dull word and choosing a livelier one, or inserting an extra sentence with a caret; adding detail with 'who, where, when' prompts; reordering picture-supported sentences so a recount is in the right sequence; and using simple checklists with pictures ('Did I say who? Did I say where?'). Because heavy rewriting is tiring for small hands, revision at this age is often a matter of one addition, one better word, or an oral improvement carried into the next piece — but even this teaches the essential writer's insight that a text can be changed for a reader's benefit.

Stage 4: Editing

Editing is correcting the surface of the writing — spelling, capital letters, spaces between words and end punctuation — so that a reader can read it easily. It is deliberately placed late in the process: editing a text whose ideas may still change wastes effort, and demanding correctness during drafting silences children. Examples of editing activities include: the teacher modelling

how to check a shared draft against a simple editing code (a circle for a word to check, a mark where a capital letter belongs); children hunting in their own drafts for the specific feature recently taught, for example capital letters at sentence starts; 'word detective' work in which a child checks two or three words against the word wall or a personal word book; partner editing, where a friend reads the draft aloud and points out places where the reading 'gets stuck'; and short conferences in which the teacher edits with the child, explaining each correction so that it becomes learning rather than mere tidying. Editing is taught feature by feature, matched to what has been taught in phonics and language work, so children are only asked to correct what they have been shown how to notice.

Stage 5: Publishing

Publishing gives writing its purpose: a real audience reads and responds to it. When children know their writing will be displayed, read or given to someone, they care about both its meaning and its presentation, and their identity as authors grows. Examples of publishing include: copying or typing a finished piece as a class book ('Our Trip to the Park') placed in the book corner; mounting illustrated writing on a display board with the author's photograph; reading a piece aloud from the 'author's chair' to applause and questions; making greeting cards, letters and invitations that are actually delivered — a thank-you letter to a visitor, an invitation to parents; contributing a page to a class newspaper or wall magazine; and performing a written poem or rhyme for another class. Publishing need not be elaborate or reserved for the neatest work; regular, quick forms of sharing — reading today's sentence to a partner, pinning a label where it will be used — keep audience and purpose alive in everyday writing.

From Teacher-Supported Writing to Independent Writing

The movement towards independence follows a gradual release of responsibility, usually described in three teaching formats. In modelled writing, the teacher writes in front of the children, thinking aloud, while children watch and listen: she demonstrates the whole process — planning aloud, drafting, hesitating over a spelling and trying its sounds, revising a word, checking punctuation — making the invisible thinking of a writer visible. In shared writing, teacher and children compose together: the children supply the ideas and sentences, the teacher scribes and guides, and responsibility is genuinely shared; this is the ideal setting for teaching revising and editing, because decisions can be discussed by the whole class. In guided writing, small groups of children write their own texts while the teacher supports the specific skill the group needs — hearing sounds in words, using capital letters, adding detail. Finally, in independent writing, children plan, draft and present their own work, using the tools of the classroom — alphabet charts, word walls, word books, checklists — and the strategies they have internalised. Children move backwards and forwards along this path according to the difficulty of the task: a child independent in writing a label may still need shared support for a story, and that variation is normal.

Table 1: The writing process at a glance

Stage	What the writer does	Classroom example	Teacher's main support
Planning	Gathers and orders ideas, mostly through talk and drawing	Story map and partner talk before writing	Models thinking aloud; provides talk time and picture prompts
Drafting	Gets ideas down, concentrating on meaning	Sentence under a drawing; class news; free writing	Encourages sound-based attempts; helps children stretch words

Revising	Improves content: clarity, detail, order, word choice	Partner response; modelling one better word or added line	Teaches response routines and simple checklists
Editing	Corrects spelling, capitals, spacing and punctuation	Word detective work on the word wall; partner re-reading	Models editing on shared texts; teaches one feature at a time
Publishing	Shares the finished piece with a real audience	Class books, displays, author's chair, delivered letters	Creates audiences; celebrates authorship

Conclusion

Writing develops when children are treated as writers from the start: planning through talk and drawing, drafting for meaning with spellings they construct themselves, revising to improve content, editing to help the reader, and publishing for a genuine audience. The teacher moves children towards independence not by withdrawing help suddenly but by releasing responsibility gradually — modelling the process with thinking aloud, sharing it in joint composition, guiding it in small groups, and finally standing back while children use internalised strategies and classroom tools on their own. A child who has experienced this support does not merely produce neater pages; he or she understands what writers do, believes 'I am a writer', and can face a blank page with a plan — the true meaning of independent writing.

Question 5: Developing Early Numeracy Through Everyday Classroom Activities (20 Marks)

Early numeracy can be developed through children's everyday experiences rather than only through formal mathematics lessons. Design a set of classroom activities that develop counting, one-to-one correspondence, geometry, measurement, and sorting/classifying skills among young children. Explain what children would learn through each activity. (20)

Introduction

Young children are doing mathematics long before they meet a textbook. They count the stairs, argue about who has more biscuits, fit shapes into holes, pour water from jug to cup, and sort their crayons by colour. Early numeracy grows best when teachers deliberately build on such everyday experiences — through play, routines, stories, songs and practical tasks — because young minds learn number and shape through handling real objects, moving, talking and solving real problems, not through abstract symbols alone. Formal lessons still have a place, but they land on fertile ground only when children have first built the underlying ideas with their hands. This answer designs a set of classroom activities for five foundational skills — counting, one-to-one correspondence, geometry, measurement, and sorting and classifying — and explains what children learn through each one.

Counting: Names, Order and Quantity

Counting is more than reciting a rhyme of number names. Children must learn the stable order of the number words, that each object gets one count, that the last word tells 'how many' (cardinality), and eventually that numbers can be compared and combined. Activity 1 — Counting routines woven into the day: children count classmates present at registration, count jumps, claps or steps in movement games, and count down from ten before tidy-up time; the teacher varies the starting point and direction so counting is understood, not just chanted. Activity 2 — Counting collections: each child receives a small bag of shells, buttons or bottle tops, counts them onto a counting mat, records the total with a numeral card or drawing, and checks a partner's count; collections grow in size and are sometimes arranged in lines, circles or piles so children learn that arrangement does not change quantity. Activity 3 — Number

rhymes and story counting: songs such as 'Five Little Ducks' and counting books let children count forwards and backwards, see one object disappear at a time, and connect number words with pictures and actions. Through these activities children learn stable order, cardinality, numeral recognition, and the beginnings of more-and-less comparison — the gateway to all later arithmetic.

One-to-One Correspondence: Matching Exactly

One-to-one correspondence — matching each item in one set with exactly one item in another — underlies accurate counting and the very idea of equality between sets. Activity 1 — Setting the table: in the home corner or at snack time, children place one cup for each saucer, one spoon for each child and one napkin for each plate, dealing them out one at a time; errors are visible and self-correcting ('We have a cup left over — someone has no spoon'). Activity 2 — Posting and pairing games: children post one letter into each labelled box, match socks, gloves and shoes into pairs, give one hat to each teddy in the teddy bears' picnic, and connect each picture card to its matching outline. Activity 3 — Correspondence in movement and music: each child stands on one floor spot, holds one shaker, and taps once for each beat the teacher plays, linking number to action and sound. Through such activities children learn to count accurately by tagging each object once and only once, to judge whether two sets are equal or which has more without counting every item, and to understand pairing — foundations for counting, sharing equally and early division.

Geometry: Shapes and Space in the Real World

Early geometry is about recognising, naming, building with and talking about shapes and positions — in two dimensions (circle, square, triangle, rectangle) and three (ball-like spheres,

box-like cuboids, cylinders), and in the space around the child's own body. Activity 1 — Shape hunts and walks: children hunt the classroom and school grounds for circles, rectangles and triangles — clock, door, sandwich, window — photograph or draw them, and sort their finds on a shape table, learning that shapes keep their identity in different sizes, colours and orientations. Activity 2 — Building and block play: with wooden blocks, construction sets and recycled boxes, children build towers, bridges and houses, copy a model from a photograph, and describe what they used ('I put the triangle on top for the roof'), developing spatial reasoning, stability ideas and shape vocabulary. Activity 3 — Puzzles, tangrams and feely bags: children complete inset and jigsaw puzzles, make pictures from shape pieces, and identify shapes hidden in a feely bag by touch alone; position language is taught explicitly in games ('Put the bear under the chair, behind the box, next to the door'). Through these activities children learn shape names and properties in simple form (a triangle has three sides; a ball rolls, a box stacks), positional language, and the spatial confidence on which later geometry, map work and even letter formation depend.

Measurement: Comparing and Ordering

Measurement begins not with rulers and centimetres but with direct comparison — longer and shorter, heavier and lighter, fuller and emptier — and with measuring using informal units before standard ones are introduced. Activity 1 — Comparing and ordering: children order classmates, ribbons, pencils and towers by height or length, line up three jugs by fullness, and use balance scales to discover which of two objects is heavier, recording findings in drawings and simple charts. Activity 2 — Measuring with informal units: children measure the table in hand-spans, the carpet in footsteps, a ribbon in paperclips and a bucket in cupfuls of water or

sand, then discuss why answers differ when units differ ('My feet are smaller, so I needed more steps') — a genuine first insight into why standard units exist. Activity 3 — Time and daily sequence: a visual daily timetable, sequencing cards for a familiar routine, sand timers for tidy-up challenges and talk about yesterday, today and tomorrow build early concepts of time and duration; cooking activities add weighing, spoonfuls and 'half' and 'full' language in an irresistible context. Through these activities children learn comparison language, ordering (seriation), conservation in simple form, estimation, and the logic of units — the complete conceptual groundwork for standard measurement later.

Sorting and Classifying: Finding Rules and Patterns

Sorting and classifying — grouping objects by shared attributes and explaining the rule — trains logical thinking and prepares children for data handling, pattern work and scientific observation. Activity 1 — Free and guided sorting: children sort a mixed tray of buttons, leaves, shells or toy animals first in their own way, then explain their rule; the teacher then sets rules ('Sort by colour', 'Sort by size', 'Things that roll and things that do not'), and children learn that the same collection can be sorted in several correct ways. Activity 2 — Sorting in real life: children sort laundry in the home corner, cutlery after washing up, books by size on the shelf, waste into recycling groups, and classmates by attributes in games ('Stand up if you are wearing something red'), learning that classification is a tool for organising the world. Activity 3 — From sorting to patterns and graphs: sorted collections are laid out in rows as living pictographs ('How many red buttons? Which group is biggest?'), and children extend the thinking into repeating patterns with beads, blocks and claps (red-blue-red-blue). Through these activities children learn to notice attributes, define and state rules, reclassify flexibly, count and compare

groups, and read simple representations of data — thinking skills that serve mathematics and science alike.

Table 1: Summary of the activity set

Skill	Key activities	Main materials	What children learn
Counting	Daily counting routines; counting collections; number rhymes and books	Counters, shells, buttons, numeral cards, counting books	Stable order, cardinality, numeral recognition, comparing quantities
One-to-one correspondence	Setting the table; pairing and posting games; one action per beat	Cups and saucers, socks, teddies, letters and boxes, shakers	Accurate counting, equality of sets, pairing, fair sharing
Geometry	Shape hunts; block building; puzzles and feely bags	Blocks, boxes, puzzles, tangrams, feely bag	Shape names and properties, position language, spatial reasoning
Measurement	Comparing and ordering; informal-unit measuring; time sequences	Balance scales, ribbons, paperclips, jugs, timers, visual timetable	Comparison language, ordering, units and estimation, time concepts
Sorting / classifying	Free and guided sorting; real-life sorting; pictographs and patterns	Buttons, leaves, shells, beads, sorting trays	Attributes and rules, flexible grouping, counting groups, simple data handling

The Teacher's Role: Talk, Observation and Progression

Activities alone do not teach; the teacher's talk and observation turn play into learning. She uses mathematical language constantly and precisely — more, fewer, equal, longer, heavier, between — asks questions that make children think ('How do you know there are six?', 'What happens if we add one more?'), and encourages children to explain and demonstrate rather than merely answer. She observes during play with simple notes or photographs, noting, for

example, which children count a collection accurately, who still recounts when asked 'how many', and who can state a sorting rule, and she uses these observations to plan the next step for each child: larger collections, shapes in new orientations, two-attribute sorting, or measuring with a standard unit. She also sends the message home — counting stairs, setting tables, sorting washing — so families continue the same learning in daily life, where numeracy naturally lives.

Conclusion

Counting, one-to-one correspondence, geometry, measurement and sorting are not five separate topics to be drilled but five ways in which young children meet the mathematical structure of their everyday world. Counting routines and collections build number sense; matching games build exactness and equality; shape hunts and block play build spatial understanding; comparing and measuring with informal units build the logic of measurement; and sorting builds rule-based, logical thinking. Designed as play, routines and practical tasks — and enriched by the teacher's language, questioning and observation — these activities give children confident, meaningful foundations on which formal mathematics can later be built securely.