

**Response:**

1. a) The National Reading Plan for Grades R-12 which was released in April 2013, includes norms for the number of books to be read by learners per term in Grades R- 3. The prescribed number of books to be read per grade is as follows:

<b>READING NORM :NUMBER OF BOOKS TO BE READ</b>				
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Term 1</b>	<b>Term 2</b>	<b>Term 3</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
R	2 picture books	2 picture books	3 picture books	4 picture books
1	5 picture books	5 storybooks	5 -6 story books	7-8 story books
2	8-10 story books	8 -10 story books	10-12 story books	10-12 story books
3	10 -12 story books	10 -15 story books	15-20 story books	15-20 story books

The Department of Basic Education released the National Catalogue for Grades 1-3 in 2011. Provinces are expected to utilize their Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) budgets for the procurement of reading and library resources. The DBE is collaborating with Department of Arts and Culture to escalate access and provisioning of Library and Information Services in primary schools.

b) Advocacy on the implementation of reading norms has gained momentum following the release of the National Education and Evaluation Development Unit (NEEDU) and Ministerial Reading Audit report. The provisioning of quality reading materials and the implementation of reading norms is a key pillar which features prominently in the National Reading Programme and Provincial Reading Programmes. Quarterly provincial reading norms indicate that reading norms with regard to the number of books to be read per grade and the number of words to be read per minute is being prioritized across the Sector.

c) The reading benchmarks for fluency levels relating to the number of **words per minute (wpm)** and **number of books** to be read per term are not mediated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The NEEDU report benchmarks for **wpm** have been used which is informed by the World Bank norm for English, hence plans have been put in place to do research on the development of norms that are appropriate for African languages. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has put plans in place to use the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) data to set appropriate norms for African languages. The EGRA will be implemented in 1000 schools in May 2015 in all official languages offered as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grades 1-3 nationally.

2.
  - a) School Based Assessment (SBA) is mandatory for Grades 1-3. SBA is used to assess the curriculum requirements set out for each grade in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) through the implementation of formal and informal assessment tasks. Reading norms are a core component of Home Language and First Additional Language curriculum which are assessed on an ongoing basis in Grades 1-3.
  - b) The reading norms for reading namely phonics, word recognition, comprehension (listening and written) and words per minute (wpm) are assessed using different forms of assessment namely observation, oral and written recording. CAPS prescribes the number of formal assessment tasks per term and content focus of each assessment task for each quarter for Grades 1-3.
3. In accordance with the National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 and the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, it is mandatory for School Based Assessments (SBA) to be recorded and reported upon on a quarterly basis. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has initiated the utilization of the South African School Management System (SA-SAMS) which is a computer software that has been programmed to set up a DBE database which will facilitate the collation of SBA nationally on a quarterly basis.
4. The National Reading Plan for Grades R-12 which was developed in 2013 gives guidance on the planning of effective reading programmes. In addition, the DBE distributed a Reading Handbook entitled, "Teaching Reading in the Early Grades", in 2008 to all schools. Reading methodologies and strategies are up fronted in the Foundation Phase CAPS documents. During the CAPS training workshops teachers were trained on reading methodologies. The DBE has developed a DVD, entitled "Getting Literacy and Numeracy" which showcases the different reading methodologies (shared reading, group guided reading, paired and independent reading). In partnership with the British Council, the DBE has implemented the Certificate in Primary English Language Teaching (CiPELT). The CiPELT programme focuses on the teaching of reading and writing skills. CiPELT workshops have been rolled out in provinces since 2013. In 2015; the DBE will conduct a follow-up CiPELT programme which will focus on underperforming districts.
5.
  - a) Poor performance in under performing schools is attributed to contextual and systemic factors related to the high levels of poverty and illiteracy in rural communities. In such communities children are not exposed to books at home. Research findings have shown that learners who are exposed to reading resources at an early age outperform those that do not have access to these resources. In addition parents whose children read to them become better readers.
  - b) Since 2006, the DBE has put in place the following interventions to enhance reading and literacy levels namely:
    - 100 Storybook project;

- Book bags distributed to Grade R and 1 learners as part of the Drop All and Read Campaign;
- Workbook project; and
- National Catalogue for Grades 1-12.

In addition provinces submit **quarterly reading progress reports** which respond to these four (4) pillars namely:

- Provisioning of resources;
- Monitoring and support;
- Advocacy and communication; and
- Library and Information Services (LIS).

The provincial reading reports are analysed for best practices and a consolidated quarterly report is compiled for the Sector which is presented at different fora such as Council of Education Ministers (CEM), Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM) and Teacher Development and Curriculum Management (TD&CM). Reading promotion and Library and Information Services is a standing agenda item at all these fora. The following programmes have been planned for 2015-16 namely:

- Development of Reading norms for Grades R -12 aligned to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for all languages offered as Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).
- The implementation of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in Grades 1-3 which will be implemented in at least 100 schools per province.
- Support for the strengthening of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in grade 4 through the issuing of an English Storybook to every Grade 4 learner.
- Launch of Book Flood Campaigns on special days such as Mandela day in shopping malls nationally commencing in 2015 and beyond.
- Advocacy and resuscitation of the "Drop All and Read" and "Reading across the Curriculum" Programmes.
- Development of digital content (electronic readers) for use in libraries and reading centres in 2015 and beyond.
- Collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) to provide access and provisioning of library and information services in 2015 and beyond.