

The Story primer design

Lesson 1



Anita na Bubu go long maket



Wanpela taim Anita na Bubu blong em, tupela i go long salim banana long maket. Tupela i kisim PMV i go long maket.



Toktok long dispela samting

1. Where did Bubu and Anita go?
2. How did they go there?
3. Why did they go to market?

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English

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Glenys Waters , 2018

[This paper replaces an earlier paper, The IMR Primer Design, that I first wrote in 2008 with contributions from Karen Hopping. Shortly after that Robyn Terrey joined me and several trainers from the Literacy Association of Solomon Islands (LASI) as we developed some instructional materials based on what we then called the IMR primer design. As a result of this process modifications were made to the design. Then I worked with the Bloom programers to develop Story Primer templates for use in Bloom, so that the primers could be produced using the program. Thus the original primer format has changed over time, and has now become known as the Story Primer. There is also a new set of icons that are used in the primers. This paper explains the Story Primer design as it currently stands.]

The Story Primer design was initially created as part of an SILA consultancy in the Solomon Islands (2008-2014). The design was used to create many different primers in different languages. These have been used in Solomon Island villages and towns by various organisations to help adults and youth become literate. An important feature of the design is that each topic or set of lessons is based on a key text or story that is relevant and of interest to the learner. The theoretical underpinnings of the design are discussed in the paper, *Story Primers – designed for adult literacy learners*. Story primers worked very well in the Solomons and people in other countries have expressed interest in the approach. Story Primer templates are now available in Bloom, an extremely popular and useful book layout program which is a free download from bloomlibrary.org. This paper explains the current elements of the Story Primer design and gives some examples of activities that might be included in the primer.

The Story Primer is designed to encourage new readers to build their reading ability and fluency in their local language through repeated readings, and by reading with and to others, discussing, understanding and responding to texts. These aspects of the primer lesson follow a holistic and interconnected approach so that the learners develop fluency, comprehension skills and enjoyment in reading early in the process and see the connection of what they are doing to real reading and writing. At the same time the necessary attention to building phonetic knowledge and word building ability is also incorporated into each lesson. But it is always clear how this knowledge and ability is put to work in the process of real reading and writing.

Overview of the Story Primer design

As mentioned above, Story Primer lessons are based on a key text or story. These texts are written on a topic or theme of interest of the target group. The whole text is included at the beginning of a set of approximately 4-6 lessons. We chose to print

approximately 4 sets of lessons in one primer. You can print each set separately if needed. This gives the learners flexibility to choose which text they work with next. Obviously some texts are more complex than others and if new readers are to have this level of flexibility, then they would be encouraged to choose texts that are not too difficult for them to attempt.

In the Solomons we set the topics for the first 40 lessons (2 primers) so that we could make sure all the sounds of the language were introduced and revised before readers branched out to choosing the next primer. Also in the first primer we included an alphabet chart at the beginning of the primer so students could refer to the chart when they couldn't remember a certain sound-letter combination. We also added, at the trainers suggestion, two lessons that introduced the simple vowel sounds of the language and a vowel chant that was spontaneously and locally authored. Teaching the simple vowels first meant that in the lessons that followed, each new sound that was taught could be immediately combined with the vowels.

Each topic in the primer begins with the full text on which the topic is based. It is presented on facing pages with pictures included.



Stori Maket

Aeda Kogana

Wanpela taim Anita na Bubu blong em, tupela i go long salim banana long maket. Tupela i kisim PMV i go long maket. Tasol long taim ol i kamap long maket, Anita em i no stap wantaim Bubu bilong en, em i go na painim ples long salim kaikai bilong em. Na Bubu tu, em i painim narapela ples long salim bananan bilong em.

Tupela i stap long maket i go long 12 kilok. Na draiva bilong PMV i kam na askim Anita, "Yu tupela pinis work long salim kaikai o nogat?" Anita em i tok, "Mi pinis, tasol mi no save long Bubu bilong me. Bai me go na painim em na kisim save."

Bai mi go painim em na kisim save." Anita i go na painim Bubu bilong en, na taim em i lukim em, em i tok, "Bubu,



yu pinis wok long salim banana o nogat?" Anita lukim planti banana long Bubu i stap yet na em i tok, "O.K. Yu stap yet na bai me kam bek bihain."

Anita i go na raun raun long maket na bihain em i go bek long Bubu, tasol em i lukim planti banana blong Bubu i stap yet. Anita tokim Bubu olsen, "Bubu, bilong wanem banana blo yu i stap yet?" Bubu bekim tok olsen, "Mi tu, mi no save!"

Anita i lukim prais long banana i stap long pepa Bubu em i putim long maket na tingting bilong em i kirap. Em i askim Bubu, "Husait putim prais lo ol disla banana blo yu?" Na Bubu bekim tok olsen, "Mi lukim pepa long maket na mi tasol putim dispela long banana blong mi."

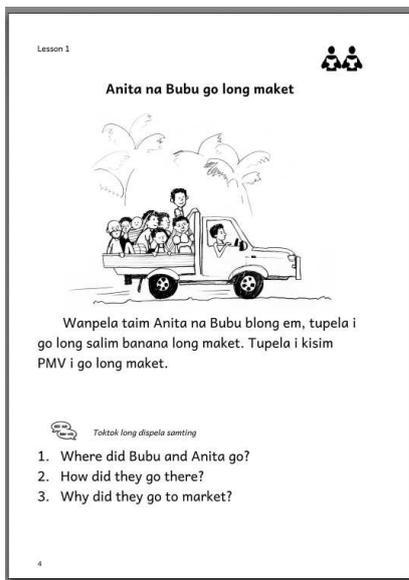
Na Anita i bekim dispela tok olsen, "Bubu, yu bin putim prais blong melen em i K50 no prais blong banana em i K5 tasol!" Anita putim nupela prais long banana, K5, na kwiktaim tru planti manmeri i kam na kisim banana long mama!

Bihain tupela i go bek long PMV na Anita i stori long olgeta manmeri long PMV na olgeta i lap nogut tru! Na ol i kamap long ples.



The the teacher reads the complete story at the beginning of the first lesson to the learners. This sets the context for following lessons and any related activities. This reading also activates any knowledge that the learners have about the story or topic and cues them into the words and phrases they will meet in the text. It should be read again at the end of the lesson.

Following these two pages of the full story, the lesson pages begin. Each lesson occupies two facing pages in the primer. Students are free to do the early lessons more than once if they feel the need to do so.

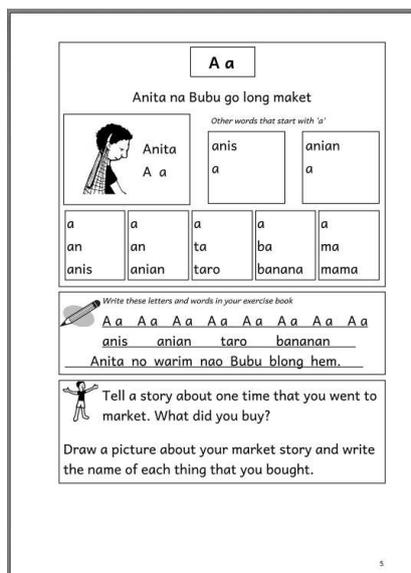


Each primer lesson begins with an extract from the main text for that topic and this provides the main focus for the lesson activities. These extracts follow the progression of the text so that the learners focus carefully on each part of the text over time. The person teaching uses shared reading and repeated reading techniques with the student following the text in their own primer or on a chart. This part of the lesson helps students to build

concepts about print, learn left to right eye movement, begin to see that the same words are written the same way and so forth, and thus begin to build reading fluency and understanding of words and sentences. The teacher also talks about the text at various points, drawing students attention to important features, encouraging thinking and discussion of key parts, along with prediction of what might come next or of possible future outcomes or implications.



Some key discussion questions are included in each lesson. These begin with simple questions – Who? What? When? How? – all questions that can be answered from the text. Soon appropriate Why? What if ? and For what purpose? type questions are included.



The second page of the lesson is the word work page.

As the student works through this page they are encouraged to interact with specific sentences and words from the text and are systematically introduced to how the sounds of the language are represented in print – linking their knowledge of sounds to the correct symbols. Knowledge of sounds is also linked to other words the students know that are not in the text.

Students also learn how to write the sounds, and are encouraged to copy or produce words and sentences using those sounds. This reinforces phonemic knowledge that can be used in decoding or encoding and builds students' ability and confidence to express their thoughts and words in writing.

There is also space on the second page of the primer to include other activities in the lesson. These can be text participating activities where the students are encouraged to discuss how they apply what they have learned from the text. It may include extra information that the students need to know about the topic, or activities students can do with or for their families or community. Generally these activities are done in groups because this is less threatening for new students, and others can continue to scaffold their learning. Also, it is good to work in groups as people usually learn and achieve more when working together.

Tutors are encouraged to complete the lesson by having students return to the portion of text for the lesson, and to re-read the text. Students are encouraged to join in with the words and sentences they now recognise.

Explanation of lesson elements and activities

There is no teachers guide for use with the Story Primer. The lessons were designed to have a fairly repetitive format so that teachers or tutors become very familiar with the lesson routines and do not need complicated teachers' guides. Icons or symbols are used throughout the lesson to indicate what teachers or tutors need to do at each point. Sometimes there are additional instructions (in small italic print) where necessary. This section explains some of the icons used.



This symbol means the teacher reads the text to the student or group. As previously mentioned, each set of lessons in the primer begins with a double page devoted to a whole text. This text is unknown to the students. Therefore the tutor or teacher reads the text to the students. This allows learners to become familiar with the new text before they begin to learn to read parts of it for themselves.



This symbol means read the text with others (shared reading) and usually appears on the story page of the primer along with a selection from the full story or text. The text is separated into individual sections for each lesson. This shared reading symbol indicates that students should read this text several times as a whole class, then in small groups, or possibly with partners, until the text is familiar. Once the *Word Work* and other learning activities of this lesson have been taught, teachers and students return to this text and read the whole text again.



Word work



The second page of the lesson begins with a focus on *Working with words* or *Word work*. Two symbols have been used in past primers to signal this. But they are not always necessary, as the page itself makes this clear.

A a

Anita na Bubu go long maket

 Anita A a	Other words that start with 'a' anis a	anian a
---	--	------------

a	a	a	a	a
an	an	ta	ba	ma
anis	anian	taro	banana	mama

Write these letters and words in your exercise book


 A a A a A a A a A a A a A a A a
 anis anian taro bananan
 Anita no warim nao Bubu blong hem.


 Tell a story about one time that you went to market. What did you buy?
 Draw a picture about your market story and write the name of each thing that you bought.

5

B b

All *Word Work* pages indicate clearly at the top of the page, which letter or letters are being taught or revised in this lesson – both lower case and upper case forms. This reminds students and teachers what letter is in focus.

Bubu go salim planti banana.

Next is the key sentence for the lesson. This sentence should contain several words that begin with or include the key letter of the lesson so that students can see the letter in context. Where possible the sentence relates to the text on the previous page. The teacher reads the sentence a few times and students echo back the sentence and find the key letter in words within that sentence.



Bubu

b

Next is a picture of a key word that starts with the sound being taught. Next to the picture is the word itself and underneath that word is the letter, lined up directly below. The teacher names what is pictured and then points to the word for that picture and says it, then says the letter that starts the word. Students echo back.

Other words that start with 'b'

banana b	botol b
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The next two boxes contain *Other words that start with 'b'*. These words may or may not be from the text. The words are introduced and then the beginning sound is in focus. Students echo back the words

and sounds. These 'break down drills' help students to identify the new sound being taught in different words.

a ba banana	e be bebe	i bi bikpela	o bo botol	u bu bubu
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Build up drills

Once the new sound has been taught, then word building exercises follow. When the lesson teaches a consonant, I choose to build from a vowel, to a syllable and then to a word that begins with the letter in focus. But if you are following a syllable focus, you can build from the syllable level. When teaching a vowel, then all the word building examples build from the vowel if possible. In some languages, some vowels rarely occur at the beginning of a word so you have to adapt your build up drills accordingly.



Write these letters and words in your exercise book

Having learned the new letter, the student is now taught how to write it, both lower and upper case forms. Then they are encouraged to write other words that contain the new sound and a sentence containing words with the new sound. Some students will not complete all the writing exercise in beginning lessons. But some will. Also, in the early lessons students will just copy the sentence that is provided. As confidence and knowledge grows they can be encouraged to create their own sentences.

Other activities

There is usually space for one more activity on the *Word Work* page. These can be chosen from any of the following activities.



Work with the family

This is an activity to encourage the family or the community to be involved in literacy -- not just those who are able to attend literacy classes. When whole families are involved in reading and writing activities that are meaningful and enjoyable this helps to strengthen their view of the importance of literacy and the benefits it provides to their family and community.

This can be encouraged by asking families to write about something related to the topic – a personal experience story, a family experience story, a poem or song, or some family information. These texts are then brought back to the class and shared and discussed. Or the family may be encouraged to help the student with homework in some other way.



Did you know?

This symbol stands for 'Did You Know?' (In later primers you can just use the icon.) These sections contain a small amount of text that gives additional background facts related to the focus text for the week. It helps to increase the students' knowledge of such things as the people, places and culture of the focus text or gives additional interesting information not included in the story. If students are not yet able to read these sections, the teacher should read and discuss them with the class.



Additional writing activities can be included in the lesson. Once students become more confident writers they should be encouraged to do some extra writing. These can be innovations on the text they have read. This can include re-writing a text from a specific character's point of view; writing a different ending to a story; disagreeing with the key points in a text; writing to the local council about an issue the text raises; writing a drama, song or instruction procedure from the text.

These kinds of writing activities should always be first modeled by the teacher with the group. Once students have done this several times, then they can write working in small groups, and when ready they can write in pairs or individually depending on their literacy ability and confidence.



Retelling the story or performing a drama about the story encourages the students to learn the story well and to share what they are learning with others. This recognises the importance of people sharing new knowledge with others in their community. This activity is generally the final lesson in the topic and based on the full text, before students move on to another text or topic. The text will by now be very familiar to the learners and as they go through the process of preparing to tell the story they will be using many of their newly acquired literacy skills.

Memory Sentence

In Scripture based primers it is very appropriate to include Memory Sentences (or verses) in the primer lesson. These will summarise the main point of the whole text. Students can be encouraged to write them on cards or in their exercise books and to memorise them. Memory sentences can also be used for appropriate slogans - for example when doing topics related to sustainability or health issues.

Conclusion

Having considered all the elements of the Story Primer we can see that the primer has been designed to reflect a *Sociocultural model of literacy* and to leverage how adults learn in group based cultures. The design encourages the following things:

- * immersion of the learner in print from day one, with opportunities to engage with real, relevant and meaningful texts
- * provision of many opportunities for the learner to observe good reading and writing behaviour
- * a variety of opportunities for learners to become capable decoder-encoders, text participants, text users, and text analysts
- * opportunities for personal practice in reading and writing in a supportive environment
- * sufficient repetition so that the learning is in gradual steps but not so much that lessons becomes boring or feel irrelevant
- * learning activities that are interesting, relevant and fun
- * inclusion or a variety of text types
- * opportunities to learn with others, with support and independently

These aspects are further explained in the paper, *The Story Primer – designed for adult literacy learners*.

The Story Primer can be used in adult and youth literacy classes or in informal small groups with people who have a strong desire to learn to read and write. Because real texts about issues of interest to adults provide the basis of the lessons, there is real learning for real purposes from the beginning. This means that learners can immediately see pathways or progress towards their personal learning goals from day one.

We also designed the primer with a community approach in mind. One of our goals was to help increase the literacy levels of whole groups not just individuals, and to begin to embed literacy practices within the fabric of the community. Thus we have included learning activities that encourage participation in literacy activities by whole families not just those who attend the classes or small groups. So where possible we encourage whole families to participate with the student in reading and writing activities in an enjoyable non-threatening way. The retelling or performing activity, serves not only to reinforce and celebrate learning that has taken place, but to emphasise the importance of sharing knowledge that has been gained with other community members thus putting that knowledge to work for the good of the community.

The primers worked very well in the Solomons. I hope they work well for you too.

