

READING PATHWAYS

1

DON D: STAY AT THE CREASE

A six-week cricket reading adventure

**Build fluency. Grow confidence.
Choose a safer path.**

SET 1 SOUND ORDER

Cricket adventure • emotional regulation • stronger reading

A 30–40 MINUTE SESSION

5 MINUTES

Speed Sounds review

Revisit known sounds; keep pace brisk and responses accurate.

5 MINUTES

Word blending and decoding

Build, blend, read and revisit missed words.

10 MINUTES

Read or reread the Don D story

Adult models expression; pupils decode selected sections and reread for fluency.

5 MINUTES

Vocabulary and comprehension

Teach key words, then ask retrieval and inference questions.

5–10 MINUTES

Social and emotional skill

Name the incident, emotion and body clues; model and practise the week's strategy.

5 MINUTES

Writing or reflection

Use a short prompt to consolidate reading and regulation learning.

If pupils need repetition, use the same chapter across several sessions rather than introducing new text every day.

FIVE-DAY CYCLE • SESSIONS 1–3

SESSION 1 — SOUNDS & FIRST READ

- Introduce or review target sounds.
- Practise oral blending.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary.
- Adult reads the chapter with expression.
- Discuss initial reactions.

SESSION 2 — DECODE

- Speed Sounds.
- Word-building activity.
- Decode selected story words.
- Partner reading.
- Reread difficult sentences.

SESSION 3 — UNDERSTAND

- Reread the chapter.
- Ask retrieval questions.
- Ask inference questions.
- Discuss feelings and motivations.
- Find evidence in the text.

FLEX THE CYCLE

A five-session week can become four sessions by combining first read with decoding or combining reflection with the social-emotional lesson. Keep cumulative review in every session.

FIVE-DAY CYCLE • SESSIONS 4–5

SESSION 4 — SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILL

- Revisit the key incident.
- Identify Don's emotion.
- Identify body signals.
- Teach the week's regulation strategy.
- Role-play the strategy in another situation.

SESSION 5 — APPLY & REFLECT

- Fluency reread.
- Short comprehension check.
- Complete the writing activity.
- Discuss use in school, home or community.
- Pupil self-rates confidence.

ADULT PROMPT

“Where else could Don use this skill? Where could you use it?”

READING BASELINE • SKILLS

BEFORE WEEK 1, RECORD

- Set 1 sounds recognised automatically
- sounds requiring prompting
- ability to orally blend
- ability to decode CVC words

ALSO RECORD

- ability to read a simple sentence
- reading fluency
- willingness or confidence to attempt unfamiliar words

USE THE SIX-SESSION LOG

Record missed words or sounds, the support used and the date each becomes secure. Revisit them in the next session.

READING BASELINE • BEHAVIOURS

LOOK BEYOND RIGHT OR WRONG

Note whether the pupil:

- guesses from the first letter
- looks at the adult for the answer
- gives up quickly
- attempts to blend

NOTICE INDEPENDENCE

- self-corrects
- rereads independently
- applies a known sound in an unfamiliar word
- keeps trying after an error

RECORD EXAMPLES

A short note about what the pupil did is more useful than a tick alone. Repeat comparable tasks at the end of Week 6.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL BASELINE • 1

PUPIL RATING SCALE

- 1 — Not yet
- 2 — Sometimes
- 3 — Getting there
- 4 — Usually
- 5 — I can do this confidently

Repeat the same ratings at the end of Week 6.

I CAN...

- notice when I'm becoming angry
- calm myself when I'm frustrated
- explain how I'm feeling
- tell when somebody else might be upset
- apologise when I get something wrong

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL BASELINE • 2

I CAN...

- cope when I lose
- cope when I make a mistake
- ask for help
- step away from an argument
- listen to another person's point of view
- keep trying when something is difficult

USE THE RATINGS WELL

Ask for one example after each rating. Avoid using the score as a judgement. Use it to identify a strategy to practise and to notice change over time.

END OF WEEK 6

Repeat the scale, compare responses and celebrate specific examples of greater independence.

ADULT OBSERVATION TRACKER • 1

RECOGNISES EMOTIONAL STATE

Beginning: needs adult identification.

Developing: identifies with prompts.

Increasingly independent: identifies without prompting.

NOTICES BODY SIGNALS

Beginning: limited awareness.

Developing: identifies some signals.

Increasingly independent: uses signals as warning signs.

USES A REGULATION STRATEGY

Beginning: adult-led.

Developing: uses after a reminder.

Increasingly independent: initiates a strategy.

MANAGES LOSING OR MISTAKES

Beginning: frequently dysregulated.

Developing: recovers with support.

Increasingly independent: increasingly able to reset.

ADULT OBSERVATION TRACKER • 2

PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

Beginning: focuses on own view.

Developing: considers another view with prompts.

Increasingly independent: spontaneously considers others.

REPAIRS RELATIONSHIPS

Beginning: needs adult mediation.

Developing: apologises with prompting.

Increasingly independent: attempts repair.

MANAGES CONFLICT

Beginning: escalates or withdraws.

Developing: uses taught language with support.

Increasingly independent: uses de-escalation strategies.

READING RESILIENCE

Beginning: avoids difficult words.

Developing: attempts with encouragement.

Increasingly independent: attempts and self-corrects.

Record examples, not only ticks.

AT THE CREASE • PRESSURE BUILDING

GREEN — AT THE CREASE

I'm OK.

- body calm
- thinking clearly
- ready to learn

WHAT I NEED: Keep going.

YELLOW — PRESSURE BUILDING

Something is bothering me.

- getting tense
- distracted
- worried
- irritated

WHAT I NEED: Breathe. Talk. Use THIS BALL.

Use the cricket language for age-respectful emotional check-ins.

LOSING MY WICKET • MATCH STOPPED

ORANGE — LOSING MY WICKET

I'm struggling to control my reaction.

- hot or angry
- arguing
- cannot focus
- want to leave

WHAT I NEED: Stop. Step away. Reset.

RED — MATCH STOPPED

I cannot manage this safely right now.

WHAT I NEED: Space, a trusted adult and time to regulate before solving the problem.

IMPORTANT

The goal is not to stay green all day. Everyone moves through emotional states. The skill is noticing where you are and knowing what may help you move towards regulation.

DON D’S 5-POINT CHECK-IN



How high is the pressure? *Notice the score. Choose your next play.*

	CRICKET SCORE	WHAT I NOTICE	NEXT SAFE PLAY
5	MATCH STOPPED HELP NOW	Furious, panicked or out of control. I cannot think or act safely.	Stop the match. Move to safety. Get a trusted adult. Talk later.
4	WICKET IN DANGER STEP BACK	Angry, distressed or overwhelmed. Hot face, tight jaw, arguing or pacing.	STEP BACK. Put equipment down. RESET. Ask for space.
3	PRESSURE BUILDING USE A STRATEGY	Worried, frustrated, restless or over-excited. My focus starts to slip.	Breathe. Use THIS BALL. Say: “I need a minute.”
2	AT THE CREASE READY TO LEARN	Calm, focused and ready. My body is steady; my thinking is clear.	Keep going. Read one sentence at a time. Notice what is working.
1	PAVILION PAUSE RAISE ENERGY	Tired, sad, bored or withdrawn. My body feels heavy or slow.	Check in. Drink, stretch or pause. Start with one small step.

A number is not good or bad—it is information about what you need next.

BEYOND CRICKET

CRICKET → EVERYDAY LIFE

Don gets out → getting an answer wrong → RESET

Don waits to bat → waiting for a turn → STOP-BREATHE-THINK

Don feels match pressure → test or class anxiety → THIS BALL

Reece feels embarrassed → a peer is upset → FACE-BODY-WORDS

Don argues with Max → playground disagreement → STEP BACK-LISTEN-REPAIR

Someone mocks Don → peer provocation → RESET

Don makes a mistake → something goes wrong in class → THIS BALL

ASK REGULARLY

“Where else could Don use this skill?”

“Where could you use it?”

MY READING

COMPLETE

A sound I know confidently now is...

A word I can read now that I would have found difficult before is...

When I get stuck on a word, I can...

Something I'm proud of in my reading is...

LOOK BACK

Use the session log to find one word that moved from difficult to secure.

Compare the Week 1 and Week 6 reading behaviours.

CELEBRATE THE PROCESS

Name one example of blending, rereading, self-correcting or continuing after a mistake.

MY REGULATION

COMPLETE

I know I'm getting frustrated when...

A strategy that works for me is...

When I'm worried, I can...

When I disagree with someone, I can...

If I upset someone, I can...

One thing I cannot always control is...

One thing I can control is...

FINISH WITH AN EXAMPLE

Describe one real moment when you noticed, regulated, communicated, recovered or repaired.

SIX-SESSION READING LOG

Record words the pupil found difficult. Revisit them in the next session and note when each word is read securely.

PUPIL _____ GROUP _____ START _____

SESSION	WHEN	WORDS MISSED / DIFFICULT	SUPPORT / NEXT STEP	SECURE
1				☐
2				☐
3				☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

READ, RESET, STAY AT THE CREASE

SIX WEEKS. ONE CRICKET STORY.

A structured reading intervention linking decoding, comprehension, social communication and emotional regulation.

6
WEEKS

4–5
SESSIONS
PER WEEK

WHO IT IS FOR

Target KS2/KS3 struggling readers
Focus Age-respectful, engaging reading
Theme Cricket, friendship and emotions
Session 30–40 minutes

CORE AIMS

- Build decoding fluency in the Reading Pathways Set 1 sound order
- Grow reading confidence and vocabulary
- Strengthen comprehension and spoken language
- Practise positive communication

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING BUILT INTO THE STORY

- Notice feelings in the body
- Manage anger and frustration
- Regulate anxiety and pressure
- Pause before reacting
- Include others and show empathy
- Read face, body and words
- De-escalate disagreements
- Repair relationships

Uses the Reading Pathways Set 1 sound order.

INTERVENTION ESSENTIALS

WHO IT IS FOR

Target group: KS2/KS3 struggling readers.

Audience focus: boys who need engaging, age-respectful reading material plus support with social communication and emotional regulation.

DELIVERY

Length: 6 weeks

Frequency: 4–5 sessions per week

Session length: 30–40 minutes

Sound sequence: Reading Pathways Set 1 sound order.

THEME

Cricket, friendship, managing emotions and making positive choices.

“I can’t control every ball that comes at me. I can control what I do next.”

ONE CONTINUOUS STORY

Don D is cricket-mad, competitive and determined. He often reacts quickly when frustrated, then learns to regulate and recover.

Dad is calm and supportive. Sam is Don’s friend and bowling rival. Max challenges Don to share and manage disagreements. Reece helps him learn empathy. Coach links cricket with pressure, conflict and self-control.

THE STORY SPINE

Across six weeks, Don learns that strength is not only batting, bowling or winning.

Real strength also means stopping, regulating, communicating, recovering from mistakes and repairing relationships.

CORE AIMS

READING

- Build decoding fluency through the Reading Pathways Set 1 sound sequence.
- Develop confidence and enjoyment in reading.
- Increase vocabulary and reading comprehension.

EMOTIONAL LITERACY

- Recognise and name emotions.
- Notice physical signs of anger, frustration and anxiety.
- Understand that feelings are valid while actions remain choices.

COMMUNICATION & RELATIONSHIPS

- Practise positive communication.
- Develop perspective-taking and empathy.
- Manage disagreements without escalation.

REGULATION & TRANSFER

- Learn practical strategies for anger, frustration and anxiety.
- Recover from mistakes and keep trying.
- Transfer regulation strategies from cricket and sport into school, home and everyday life.

MEET DON D'S TEAM

ONE CRICKET STORY CONNECTS ALL SIX WEEKS

Don D is cricket-mad, competitive and determined. Across six matches and training sessions, he learns that real strength means pausing, regulating, communicating and recovering after mistakes.

1 DON D competitive; learning self-control

2 DAD calm, supportive and steady

3 SAM friend and bowling rival

4 MAX new teammate and challenger

5 REECE • COACH quiet new player • trusted adult mentor

“I can’t control every ball that comes at me. I can control what I do next.”

A REPEATABLE WEEKLY RHYTHM

Each chapter combines phonics, shared reading, discussion, strategy practice and a short-written reflection.

1	SPEED SOUNDS	5 mins
2	BLENDING & DECODING	5 mins
3	SHARED READING	10 mins
4	VOCABULARY	5 mins
5	COMPREHENSION	5 mins
6	SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING	10 mins
7	SHORT WRITING	5 mins

EVERY WEEK ALSO INCLUDES

- Emotion and body-clue check-ins
- A practical regulation strategy
- Transfer from cricket into school and everyday life

THE SIX-WEEK JOURNEY

WK	STORY	PHONICS	SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILL
1	BAT AND BALL	m a s d t i n p mat • sat • Sam • Dad	Letting others join. STOP • BREATHE • THINK • ACT
2	OUT!	g o c k u b f dog • cup • kick • back	Managing anger. RESET the body before speaking.
3	THE NEW PLAYER	e l h s h r shop • shell • rush • fish	Empathy. Read FACE + BODY + WORDS.
4	PRESSURE	j v y w t h this • that • with • win	Managing anxiety. Focus on THIS BALL.
5	THE ARGUMENT	z c h q u x chat • quiz • quit • six	De-escalate conflict. STEP BACK • LISTEN • REPAIR.
6	STAY AT THE CREASE	ng nk + review ring • think • bank • strong	Resilience. Use all five skills independently.

DETAILED SESSION NOTES AND FULL STORY TEXTS FOLLOW

DELIVERY, ENGAGEMENT & ASSESSMENT

DESIGNED TO ENGAGE

- Continuous cricket storyline
- Age-respectful dialogue
- Competition, teamwork and recovery
- Practical strategies pupils can rehearse
- Trusted adults model calm choices

ASSESSMENT CHECKPOINTS

Baseline sound recognition, oral blending, fluency and confidence

Week 3 Set 1 recall, decodable sentence reading and strategy vocabulary

Final fluency passage, comprehension, confidence and personal regulation plan

EXTEND THE LEARNING

- Role-play match-day scenarios
- Map anger and anxiety in the body
- Rehearse calm phrases
- Practise “This Ball” with school tasks
- Create a personal RESET plan
- Reflect on repair and resilience

Use the same story, sounds and regulation language across reading, discussion and writing so pupils can rehearse each skill in more than one way.

BAT AND BALL

1

SESSION NOTES

Sounds m, a, s, d, t, i, n, p

Story focus Max asks to bat; Don pauses and lets him join.

Decodable words mat, sat, Sam, Dad, map, pin, tap

Emotional focus Include others: STOP • BREATHE • THINK • ACT.

Reading Blend, read, then reread smoothly.

Vocabulary join, share, choice, pause

Comprehension Why does Don pause? How might Max feel?

Writing Complete two reflection stems.

Key message Feelings happen; actions are choices.

STORY TEXT • BAT AND BALL

Don D had a bat. It was his best bat. Don sat on a mat with Dad. "Match at six," Dad said. Don had a big grin.

At the park, Don met Sam. Sam had the ball. "I can spin it," Sam said. "No chance," said Don. Sam ran in. Don hit. SMACK! The ball went past Sam. "Yes!" Don yelled.

Then a new lad came up. "Can I bat?" Don did not want him to. It was his bat. His game. Don felt his hand grip the bat. Dad saw him. "Don."

Don stopped. He took a breath. Then he held out the bat. "Go on then. You can have a hit." The lad grinned. "I'm Max." Don smiled. A new lad had joined the game. Maybe that was not so bad.

DECODE & BUILD FLUENCY

SOUNDS

m, a, s, d, t, i, n, p

STORY FOCUS

Don takes his favourite bat to the park. Max asks to join. Don notices his body becoming tense, pauses, then shares and discovers that including someone can be positive.

DECODING ROUTINE

1. Identify each sound.
2. Blend the sounds orally.
3. Read the whole word.
4. Reread the sentence smoothly.

EXAMPLE WORDS

mat • sat • Sam • Dad • map • mad • sad

pin • tap • tip • dip • pat • sit • Tim

FLUENCY PHRASES

Sam sat.

Dad had a bat.

Don did not sit.

Sam had a bat.

TEACHING NOTE

Model pure sounds, oral blending and a smooth reread. Praise attempts and self-corrections, not speed alone.

VOCABULARY & COMPREHENSION

VOCABULARY

join — become part of an activity or group

share — allow somebody else to use something

choice — deciding between different actions

reaction — what we do in response to something

pause — briefly stop before doing something

RETRIEVAL

- What does Don take to the park?
- Who asks to join the game?
- Why doesn't Don want Max to use the bat?

INFERENCE

- How might Max feel when Don does not want him to join?
- What clues show Don becoming frustrated?
- Why does Don change his mind?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

- How might you feel if somebody would not let you join?
- Is sharing always easy?
- What could you say if you were not ready to share?

Ask pupils to point to words or actions in the story that support each answer.

STOP BEFORE REACTING

STOP – BREATHE – THINK – ACT

STOP

Do not react immediately.

BREATHE

Take one slow breath.

THINK

What happened? What choices do I have?

ACT

Choose what to do.

A feeling can happen automatically. An action is something we can learn to choose.

PRACTISE WITH SCENARIOS

- Someone asks to borrow your football.
- Someone sits in your usual seat.
- Somebody joins your game.
- Someone accidentally knocks your things over.

PROMPTS

What might you feel? Where do you notice it? Now rehearse
STOP → BREATHE → THINK → ACT.

WRITING LEAD-IN

I feel annoyed when...

When I feel annoyed, instead of reacting straight away I can...

Week 1 — Writing response

Pause before reacting

YOUR WRITING TASK

Complete both
stems:

I feel annoyed
when...

When I feel
annoyed, instead of
reacting straight
away I can...

- CHECK
- ☐ name the feeling
 - ☐ choose a calm
action
 - ☐ use full
sentences
 - ☐ read it aloud

SESSION NOTES

Sounds g, o, c, k, u, b, f

Story focus Don is out, feels anger rise and uses RESET.

Decodable words dog, cup, bug, back, kick, fog, cat

Emotional focus Notice anger; calm the body before acting.

Reading Build, blend and reread dialogue.

Vocabulary frustrated, anger, reset, control

Comprehension What did Don want to do? What did he choose?

Writing Create a personal RESET plan.

Key message Anger is OK; it does not choose your actions.

STORY TEXT • OUT!

It was a big game. Don D took his bat. “Good luck,” said Dad. Don walked out. Sam bowled. Don hit one, then two, then four. “Come on!” yelled Don.

Sam ran in again. Don swung. CLACK! The ball hit the wicket. “OUT!” yelled Max. Don froze. “No! That was not out!” His face got hot. He kicked the grass and wanted to shout or kick the wicket.

Dad called from the side. “Don. Reset.” Don put his bat down, took two slow breaths and counted: 1... 2... 3... 4... 5. His body began to calm.

Don looked at Max. “Good ball.” Max smiled. “Good batting.” Don was still fed up, but being angry did not mean he had to act angry.

DECODE & UNDERSTAND

SOUNDS

g, o, c, k, u, b, f

STORY FOCUS

Don is batting well when the ball hits his wicket. He wants to shout and kick the wicket. Dad prompts him to use a reset strategy.

EXAMPLE WORDS

dog • got • cup • bug • back
• kick

fog • big • bun • cat • cub •
off

**Mix these words with sounds
already learned in Week 1.**

VOCABULARY

frustrated — annoyed because something did not go the way you wanted

anger — a strong feeling when something seems wrong or unfair

reset — calm yourself and start again

control — managing what you do

decision — a choice about what happens next

FLUENCY

Decode selected words, reread difficult sentences and then reread the passage smoothly.

COMPREHENSION & BODY CLUES

RETRIEVAL

- What happens to Don's wicket?
- What does Don want to do?
- Who tells Don to reset?
- What does Don count to?

INFERENCE

- How does Don's body tell him that he is angry?
- Why might kicking the wicket make things worse?
- Is Don still angry after he resets?

ANGER BODY MAP

Invite pupils to mark possible early warning signs:

- hot face • tight jaw • clenched fists
- fast heartbeat • tight chest
- tense shoulders • wanting to shout
- wanting to move or hit something

The earlier we notice a warning sign, the easier it can be to regulate.

Regulation does not make the emotion disappear. It makes us calm enough to choose what happens next.

BUILD A RESET PLAN

DON'S RESET STRATEGY

**STOP → PUT IT DOWN →
BREATHE → COUNT → SPEAK**

SAFE LANGUAGE

"I need a minute."

"I'm getting angry."

"Can I have some space?"

"I don't agree. Can you explain?"

MODEL

Name the body clue,
demonstrate putting
equipment down safely,
breathe slowly, count and use
one calm sentence.

MY RESET PLAN

I know I'm getting angry when...

My body feels...

Something that helps me calm
down is...

A safe thing I can say is...

PRACTISE

Rehearse the plan first when
calm. Repeat it after low-level
frustration so the sequence
becomes familiar before a
difficult moment.

Week 2 — Writing response

Create your personal MY RESET PLAN

YOUR WRITING TASK

I know I’m getting
angry when...

My body feels...

Something that
helps me calm
down is...

A safe thing I can
say is...

CHECK
[] notice body clues
[] choose a safe
strategy

Week 3 — Meet sh

Start with one pair: model it, mark it and blend it

sh is two letters working together to spell one sound. Keep the pair together when you decode cricket words.

sh

ROUTINE

Use this four-step routine

- 1 SCAN** Look across the whole word
- 2 MARK** Underline the two letters working as one sound.
- 3 BLEND** Say the sound, then blend it into the whole word.
- 4 CHECK** Ask: does the word sound right and make sense?

Important: do not split the pair while reading.

A **sh** word I can read:

EXAMPLES

ship • sh

shop • sh

fish • sh

rush • sh

shell • sh

dish • sh

Week 3 — Practise sh

Underline sh, then blend the whole word

sh

PRACTICE WORDS

SCAN • MARK • BLEND

ship

shop

fish

shell

rush

cash

dish

shut

wish

brush

shed

mash

STRETCH

Write two sh words, then use one in a sentence about cricket club.

THE NEW PLAYER

3

SESSION NOTES

Sounds e, l, h, sh, r**Story focus** Don notices Reece is hurt and repairs the situation.**Decodable words** red, leg, shell, shop, rush, hill, fish**Social focus** Read feelings: FACE + BODY + WORDS.**Reading** Spot sh; echo read; build fluency.**Vocabulary** embarrassed, empathy, repair, encourage**Comprehension** Which clues show Reece is upset?**Writing** Write Don's apology to Reece.**Key message** Notice clues, check in, apologise and repair.

STORY TEXT • THE NEW PLAYER

A new lad came to cricket club. His name was Reece. Coach put him with Don. "Help Reece settle in." Don wanted to train with Sam instead.

Reece bowled left, then right, then very wide. Don laughed. "That was well bad!" Reece looked at the floor, went red and became quiet. Don saw his face. The laugh stopped. Coach asked, "How would you feel?"

Don went to Reece. "Sorry, mate." Reece looked up. "I am rubbish." "Nah," said Don. "You just need to get the hang of it." Don showed him how to hold the ball.

Reece tried again. This time it went straight. Don grinned. "Yes! That's it!" Reece smiled. Helping someone felt much better than laughing at them.

DECODE & BUILD MEANING

SOUNDS

e, l, h, sh, r

STORY FOCUS

Reece struggles to bowl accurately. Don laughs, notices Reece's reaction, apologises and helps him improve.

EXAMPLE WORDS

red • leg • let • hen • shell
shop • rush • hill • fish • rest

**Keep sh together as two letters
spelling one sound.**

VOCABULARY

embarrassed — uncomfortable because you think others are judging you

empathy — trying to understand another person's feelings

expression — what someone's face may communicate

repair — improving a relationship after something went wrong

encourage — helping someone feel more confident

COMPREHENSION & EMPATHY

RETRIEVAL

- Who joins the cricket club?
- What does Reece find difficult?
- What does Don do?
- How does Reece react?
- How does Don put things right?

INFERENCE

- Why does Reece look at the floor?
- Why does Don stop laughing?
- How do Reece's feelings change after Don helps him?

EVIDENCE

Ask pupils to identify the face, body, words or actions that support their answer. Remind them that clues support a sensible guess; they do not prove exactly how someone feels.

FACE, BODY, WORDS

READING OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS

FACE

What might their expression be telling me?

BODY

What is their body doing?

WORDS

What are they saying — or not saying?

When unsure, check: “Are you OK?”

REPAIR LANGUAGE

“Sorry.”

“That wasn't kind.”

“Are you OK?”

“I didn't mean to upset you.”

“Can we start again?”

“How can I put it right?”

WRITING CHALLENGE

Include what Don did, Reece's possible feelings, an apology and how Don can put it right.

Week 3 — Writing response

Write Don’s repair message to Reece

YOUR WRITING TASK

Include:

- 1 what Don did
- 2 how Reece may have felt
- 3 a clear apology
- 4 how Don can put it right

TRY

“Sorry. That wasn’t kind.”
“Are you OK?”
“Can we start again?”

Week 4 — Add th

Sort each word under sh or th; mark the pair before you blend

WORD BANK

shop • shell • fish • rush • this • that • with • then • think • thing

sh

th

PRESSURE

4

SESSION NOTES

Sounds j, v, y, w, th

Story focus Don feels anxious; Coach says, "This ball."

Decodable words yes, web, win, van, this, that, with

Emotional focus

Manage anxiety with THIS BALL.

Reading Mark th; partner read; add phrasing.

Vocabulary anxious, pressure, focus, present

Comprehension Why is telling Coach a strong choice?

Writing Name a worry and one next step.

Key message LOOK • BREATHE • FOCUS • DO.

STORY TEXT • PRESSURE

Don had a match on Thursday. He wanted to win badly. "You're the best batter here," Jay said. Don smiled, but his belly felt odd. What if he got out? What if everyone laughed? His heart went fast.

Coach saw him. "You good?" Don said yes, then looked down. "Not really. I think I'm gonna mess up." Coach nodded. "That's nerves. Good players get nervous too."

Coach pointed at the wicket. "Don't play the whole match in your head. Just play this ball." Don took a breath and walked out.

The bowler ran in. Don watched the ball — not the crowd, the score or the next ball. This ball. He hit it, reset, then focused on the next ball.

DECODE PRESSURE WORDS

SOUNDS

j, v, y, w, th

STORY FOCUS

Before an important match, Don worries that he will make a mistake and be judged. Coach helps him focus on this ball.

EXAMPLE WORDS

yes • yet • web • win • van
vet • this • that • with • then

Keep th together, then blend the complete word.

VOCABULARY

anxious — worried or nervous about what might happen

pressure — feeling that you must perform or succeed

focus — putting your attention on one thing

nervous — worried or excited about what is coming

present — what is happening right now

FLUENCY

Reread the lines that show Don's worry, first accurately and then with expression.

COMPREHENSION & ANXIETY

RETRIEVAL

- What is Don worried about?
- What happens to his stomach?
- Who notices something is wrong?
- What advice does Coach give?

INFERENCE

- Why does Don first say that he is OK?
- Can good sportspeople still feel nervous?
- Why does thinking about the whole match increase anxiety?

DISCUSS

Normalise nerves. Identify thoughts, body clues and the next action separately so pupils see that worry is information, not an instruction.

USE THIS BALL

THIS BALL STRATEGY

LOOK

What is actually happening now?

BREATHE

Take one slow breath.

FOCUS

What is my job right now?

DO

Take one manageable action.

TRANSFER

Reading: just this sentence.
Maths: this question.
Homework: the first five minutes. Conflict: calm my body first.

PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION

Present 20 questions as one overwhelming task. Discuss the thoughts that appear. Cover all but Question 1.

Say "This ball." Complete one question, then reveal the next. Physically demonstrate breaking a large demand into manageable pieces.

WRITING LEAD-IN

Name the worry, the thought it creates and one small next step.

Week 4 — Writing response

Use THIS BALL to take one small step

YOUR WRITING TASK

Something I worry
about is...

My thoughts
sometimes tell me...

If I use THIS BALL,
my next small step
could be...

CHECK
☐ name the worry
☐ focus on now
☐ choose one
action

Week 5 — Add ch and qu

Find sh, th, ch and qu in a cricket passage; count only those four partners

sh

ch

th

qu

PASSAGE

Read carefully. Mark each sound partner before you blend the word.

Don had a chat with Coach. “Think about this ball,” Coach said. Don shut out the crowd, chose a quick breath and watched the pitch. Then he hit the ball through the gap.

Challenge: reread smoothly without losing the marked partners.

COUNTS

How many times does each of the four sound partners appear?

sh _____

ch _____

th _____

qu _____

THE ARGUMENT

5

SESSION NOTES

Sounds z, ch, qu, x**Story focus** A run-out causes conflict; both boys repair.**Decodable words** chat, much, zip, quiz, quit, box, six**Social focus** STEP BACK
• CALM • LISTEN • REPAIR.**Reading** Decode, reread and rehearse calm dialogue.**Vocabulary** conflict, perspective, compromise**Comprehension** Can both boys have a point?**Writing** Rewrite the argument calmly.**Key message** Different perspectives can both hold truth.

STORY TEXT • THE ARGUMENT

Don was batting. Max was at the other end. Don hit the ball. "RUN!" he shouted, then "NO!" But it was too late. Max was run out.

Max threw his gloves down. "You made me run!" "You should have stopped!" Don snapped. "You said RUN!" They stood face to face. Don's heart banged and Max's fists were tight.

Don remembered. Stop. He stepped back. "I'm vexed. Give me a sec." Max stepped back too. Don breathed; Max picked up his gloves.

"I did shout run," Don said. Max nodded. "But I shouted at you as well." Don held out his fist. "My bad?" Max bumped it. "My bad." Not every disagreement needed a winner. Sometimes both people had a point.

DECODE CONFLICT WORDS

SOUNDS

z, ch, qu, x

STORY FOCUS

A misunderstanding between Don and Max escalates. Don steps back, calms, listens and recognises that each person can hold a different perspective.

EXAMPLE WORDS

chat • much • chop • zip • quiz

quit • fox • box • six

Continue revising every previously taught sound.

VOCABULARY

conflict — a disagreement between people

escalate — become more serious or intense

perspective — the way somebody sees a situation

misunderstanding — when people understand something differently

compromise — a solution that considers both people

COMPREHENSION & PERSPECTIVE

RETRIEVAL

- Why does Max run?
- Why does Don shout?
- What does Max do with his gloves?
- What does Don do when things become heated?
- How do they end the disagreement?

INFERENCE

- Why does Don's heart beat quickly?
- What might happen if he moved closer?
- Who was responsible for the misunderstanding?
- Can two people remember the same event differently?

DISCUSS

Separate intent, impact and memory. Two perspectives can differ without either person deliberately lying.

DE-ESCALATE CONFLICT

**STEP BACK → CALM BODY →
LISTEN → EXPLAIN → REPAIR**

REPLACE ESCALATING LANGUAGE

Instead of “Shut up!” try “Let me explain.”

Instead of “It’s all your fault!” try “This is what I thought happened.”

Instead of “What are you looking at?” try “I need some space.”

Instead of “You’re lying!” try “I remember it differently.”

ROLE-PLAY

Use low-level disagreements: whose turn it is; a possible push; shared equipment; blame after losing; or a comment someone thinks was aimed at them.

Rehearse: STEP BACK → CALM → LISTEN → EXPLAIN → REPAIR.

WRITING LEAD-IN

Rewrite “It’s your fault!” using calm language that explains, listens and repairs.

Week 5 — Writing response

Rewrite an argument using calm language

YOUR WRITING TASK

Start with:
“It’s your fault!”
shouted Don.

Rewrite the
conversation. Use at
least two:

“Let me explain.”
“This is what I
thought happened.”
“I need some
space.”
“I remember it
differently.”
“Can we repair
this?”

Week 6 — Add ng, nk and ck

Introduce the final three, then practise all seven partners together

sh

ch

th

qu

ng

nk

ck

WORD LIST

Mark the sound partner(s) beside each word as you read. Aim for accuracy first, then fluency.

01 shop 06 chat 11 sing 16 clack

02 shell 07 much 12 think 17 strong

03 this 08 quiz 13 bank 18 with

04 that 09 quit 14 back 19 sunk

05 fish 10 ring 15 kick 20 thing

RESULTS

Round 1: Round 2: Accurate words:

STAY AT THE CREASE

6

SESSION NOTES

Sounds ng, nk + review Set 1

Story focus Don uses his skills after missing and being mocked.

Decodable words ring, sing, long, think, bank, sunk, strong

Emotional focus

Resilience: recover, regulate, respond.

Reading Longer passage; repeated reading.

Vocabulary resilience, regulate, recover, control

Comprehension Why does Coach praise Don's reset?

Writing Complete the final reflection.

Key message Control what you do next.

STORY TEXT • STAY AT THE CREASE

Final match. Don's team needed six runs with one wicket left. Don's hands shook. The bowler ran in. Don swung and missed. "Can't bat!" a boy shouted. Don felt anger rise and wanted to shout back.

He looked at his bat and remembered Dad: Reset. He breathed. He remembered Coach: This ball. Don blocked the next ball, then hit two runs. Four needed.

The next ball came fast. Don hit it high. It dropped just before the line. The boys ran — one, two, three. "RUN!" yelled Max. Don turned. Four! The team exploded.

Later Coach said, "Good batting, but that wasn't your best bit. You missed, got mocked and felt angry — then you reset." Don understood. Six weeks ago, every bad ball felt like a disaster. Now he knew he could not control every ball or what others said, but he could control what he did next.

DECODE, REVIEW, RECOVER

SOUNDS

ng, nk plus review of all Set 1 sounds

STORY FOCUS

In the final, Don misses and another player mocks him. He uses his strategies independently. His biggest achievement is recovering, not winning.

EXAMPLE WORDS

ring • sing • long • thing • think
pink • bank • sunk • wing • strong

Review sounds and words from every previous week.

VOCABULARY

resilience — recovering and continuing after difficulty

regulate — managing emotions and behaviour

recover — getting yourself back on track

response — what you choose after something happens

control — managing your own actions, not everything around you

COMPREHENSION & CHANGE

RETRIEVAL

- How many runs does Don's team need?
- What happens when Don misses?
- What does another player shout?
- Which strategies does Don remember?
- What does Coach praise?

INFERENCE

- Why is Coach more impressed by Don's response than his winning runs?
- How has Don changed since Week 1?
- What has cricket taught him about everyday life?

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Compare Don's first impulse, body clues, self-talk and chosen action in Weeks 1 and 6.

DON D'S TOOLKIT

1 STOP – BREATHE – THINK – ACT

Use when you feel like reacting immediately.

2 FACE – BODY – WORDS

Use when you need to understand how someone might feel.

3 RESET

Use when anger or frustration is getting bigger.

4 THIS BALL

Use when worry or pressure feels overwhelming.

5 STEP BACK – LISTEN – REPAIR

Use when a disagreement is escalating.

The aim is not never to feel. The aim is to notice, regulate and choose what happens next.

FINAL WRITING

Reflect on reading progress, body clues, useful strategies, repair and what is within your control.

Week 6 — Writing response

Complete Don D’s final reflection

YOUR WRITING TASK

When I get angry, I
can...

When I feel worried,
I can...

If I upset someone, I
can...

A good friend...

One thing I can
control is...

CHECK
[] use full
sentences
[] give one real
example

Don D’s toolkit & final reflection

Use the five skills, then write about what you can control

STOP

BREATHE

RESET

FACE

WORDS

NOW

REPAIR

YOUR CHALLENGE

Choose one moment when you could use Don’s skills.

Write:

- what happened
- what you felt in your body
- which strategy you used
- what you chose to do next

FINISH

“One thing I can control is...”

STAY AT THE CREASE

You won't hit every ball.

You won't win every game.

You won't always get things right.

Sometimes you'll feel angry, worried, embarrassed
or disappointed.

The important bit is what you do next.

STOP. RESET. STAY AT THE CREASE.

I can't control every ball that comes at me. I can
control what I do next.