

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**  
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**DEVELOPING STUDENTS' READING SKILLS USING AUTHENTIC  
LITERATURE AND READING JOURNALS**

**MA thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

The present master's thesis discusses compiling, teaching and analysing a reading project that uses an authentic literary text *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis for developing students' reading skills. In order to support the learners' understanding of the text, they were asked to read one chapter per week accompanied by keeping a reading journal for each chapter and discussing the events with the whole class. The project was conducted with Year 7 students in a school in Estonia.

The thesis consists of a literature review and an empirical part. The literature review gives an overview of guided reading and the best ways of conducting it, discusses the benefits of using authentic literature with foreign language learners and the usefulness of reading journals and how to use them effectively in lessons. The empirical part describes how the project was conducted, gives an overview of students' feedback to reading authentic literature and keeping reading journals to scaffold their understanding of the text. The conclusion summarises the main findings.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2011), one of the aims of teaching a foreign language is to advance students' reading skills to a level where they are able to understand texts at an age-appropriate level. Additionally, the second appendix of Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2014) brings out that knowledge of foreign languages gives the student access to different resources, including literature written in foreign languages. Although students read books in their mother tongue from the first form, advancing their foreign language skills to a level where they would have the confidence to read age-appropriate literature in English seems a more difficult task. As my personal teaching experience from basic school shows, students are not accustomed to reading authentic books in English.

The topic of reading in foreign languages has been studied internationally, often under the label of extensive reading (ER). Bamford and Day (1998: 6) state that the aim of ER is "to get students reading in the second language and liking it." Successful ER results in students enjoying reading varied materials, which is the ultimate goal in teaching reading in foreign language. Therefore, ER should be promoted in every foreign language classroom. But when teaching students whose language skills are not good enough to enjoy reading authentic books in English independently, an intermediate step to help them to reach the needed level is necessary. This thesis proposes that guided reading can be appropriate with Year 7 students.

According to Bamford and Day (1998), teacher's involvement is important when developing students' skills. In guided reading, the teacher helps students to understand the text, guiding students through the texts purposefully and having discussions "before, during, and after the text is read" (Hansen 2016: 3). In guided reading students are typically divided

into groups according to levels, but it was found that only students in the group of average readers benefited from this, while struggling students found it useful to have stronger peers in their group to learn from their experience.

When reading books in a foreign language, there are strategies that help in understanding the text better. Based on Alkhaleefah's (2016) list of reading strategies compiled from taxonomies in main reading studies, the project of this thesis includes the following: identifying main action in text, identifying key information in text, identifying people in the text and views or actions attributed to them, skipping unknown meaning/word to the total meaning, guessing a word from its context and deciding to read on in spite of confusion. It is also important to emphasise that when reading a book, the aim is not to translate or to use dictionaries to understand every unknown word. In order for students to improve these reading skills, guided reading is a great approach.

The process of guided reading can be effectively studied by teachers themselves in a classroom setting, with the help of action research. Action research (AR), a term first coined by Kurt Lewin, is defined by Elliott (1991: 69) as "the study of social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it". One of its most essential motives is wanting to enhance the quality of learning and teaching (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh 2005). AR consists of several stages, beginning from a teacher identifying the strategies in need of development, moving on to gathering information, deciding on the action, conducting it, evaluating the action to further develop the strategies and carrying them out again with improvements (Adelman 1993, Altrichter, Posch & Somekh 2005).

This thesis will conduct an action research project to test whether reading journals will help my students in their experience of reading an authentic English book, encouraging them to use the strategies proposed by Alkhaleefah's (2016). Like Redmann (2005), I used reading

journals. Redmann used reading journals with university students but I want to test whether they also work with basic school students.

There are many types of texts that can be used to improve students' reading skills. Graded readers have been created to provide reading practice for learners of varied levels. However, to allow students to get an as authentic reading experience as possible, authentic literature should be used to "create passion for reading" (Ciecierski and Bintz 2015: 24). However, using authentic materials with low-level EFL students requires careful consideration of what texts to use with the students to ensure their motivation. Ciecierski and Bintz (2015: 21) advise teachers to consider how students could identify themselves with the book's characters and get the opportunity to "live through the characters' lives in a vicarious experience". Another aspect to consider is the supporting materials used .

The aim of the present MA thesis is to find out whether keeping a reading journal helps students to improve their reading skills to read authentic books in English. In the class that is studied in this thesis, students will read C.S Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* one chapter per week, accompanied by keeping a reading journal and having discussions about the evolving story. I will conduct questionnaires among the students to find out whether they find keeping a reading journal and having discussions helpful in understanding the story. To frame the action research, the literature review will discuss reading in the EFL classroom, the benefits of reading authentic literature and using reading journals. The empirical section describes the action research project and its results. The main findings will be summed up in the conclusion.

## **1 LITERATURE REVIEW: Reading in EFL Classroom**

This chapter gives an overview of previous research on guided reading and the use of authentic texts in teaching reading in a foreign language classroom. This will be followed by a discussion on the use of reading journals.

### **1.1 Guided reading**

The aim of guided reading is to help students in scaffolding their reading experience. According to the Ministry of Education of New Zealand (n.d.), guided reading helps teachers make reading enjoyable and purposeful for students. It aids learners in making “meaning from texts, deepening their comprehension, and developing their critical-thinking skills” (ibid.). This is achieved by discussing what has been read through generating a conversation that is purposeful and stimulating and encouraging students to share their personal responses and understandings. The focus is on guiding students to read the text themselves, applying reading strategies that they have obtained while using other reading approaches. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2012: 268), students “begin thinking about the text before reading, attend to the meaning while reading, and are invited to share their thinking after reading”. The aim is to use thoughtful conversation to enhance the understanding of different types of texts.

In guiding students in their reading, the strategies teachers use and have taught their students play an important role. Fletcher et al. (2012) conducted multiple critical case studies of 8 teachers in New Zealand who taught 11-13-year-old students reading to find out what strategies of instruction teachers used in their guided reading lessons and how these impacted students’ participation in the discussion. The article identified three strategies implemented by

the teachers: questioning and using prompts, modelling, and telling and explaining. The research showed that when teachers asked more “closed” type questions, students did not have enough time to reflect critically (ibid.: 437). These questions resulted in short and individual answers, instead of a dialogue among the students (ibid.: 437). The different strategies teachers had taught their students influenced the dialogue taking place in the guided reading lessons. Expecting all students to answer the teacher’s “open” questions during the discussion of reading resulted in more students responding than with other strategies.

Modelling is a strategy where the teacher articulates to the students how to use reading strategies and makes the learning visible (Fletcher et al. 2012). The study discovered that the teachers observed used very little modelling. It was noted that some teachers used an *aide-mémoire* in planning their questions by marking the needed places in the text with yellow “Post-Its”. This strategy models a possible way of dealing with the text to the students.

Telling and explaining was a strategy that teachers used to a different extent in Fletcher et al’s (2012) study. Telling means giving students information, helping when students lack background knowledge or confidence to finish the task (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006 as cited in Fletcher et al. 2012). It was not used often in Fletcher et al’s study. The authors speculated that the students were aware of guided reading readers and therefore direct teacher support was not that necessary. On the other hand, explaining was used more extensively to clarify notions or issues. Explaining often occurred as follow-up to student answers, for example, to help students comprehend a concept. These strategies made the lessons teacher-directed, instead of achieving greater student-based discussion.

In guided reading, the right techniques of questioning also scaffold the understanding of the text by students. Philips (2013) conducted a case study where she explored which techniques of questioning supported the improvement of students’ reading comprehension in



guided reading. Her case study included six children in Year 3 (age of 7 or 8) who were taught reading comprehension in one guided reading group. The data was collected through observations of lessons and a semi-structured interview with the teacher. Her study suggests that different questioning techniques are needed to develop children's comprehension in a guided discussion. Phillips lists four helpful aspects: prompting discussion, teacher as respondent, rephrasing questions and question intent. In prompting discussion, the teacher, by following an open, inferential question with a subsequent statement, encouraged children to explain their opinion in depth. When the teacher joined the discussion instead of being the questioner, and shared her interpretations, it prompted students to offer a reasoned response. In another instance, the teacher agreed with one student's answers, thereby encouraging another student to express their standpoint that differed from the ones expressed previously.

There are also techniques that are not helpful in leading the discussion at a higher comprehension level. Starting with an open inferential question, but almost immediately switching to closed questions resulted in only literal comprehension and limited student engagement. Not giving children enough time to answer the open questions that need more cognitive processing does not encourage their reaching a higher level of comprehension. In addition, Phillips (2013: 10) concludes that in case of teacher's "pre-conceived answer", students' interpretations may become limited, as they are trying to guess the teacher's idea. These examples illustrate the danger of the teacher controlling the discussion.

When reading, it is important to move above the text's micro-level. According to Ford and Opitz (2008), one of the dangers is focusing on understanding the texts at the level of words, sentences and literal meanings. This is where teacher's instructions play an important role as when students are repeatedly guided to only focus on the micro-level, they might misunderstand that as the main purpose of reading.

When using guided reading, it is also essential that teachers understand its purpose. The study by Ford and Opitz (2008) explored how 1,563 United States primary school teachers understood guided reading. According to the results, two-thirds of the teachers questioned thought that guided reading included demonstrating strategies, responses, skills, and/or procedures, showing that the questioned teachers found providing demonstrations more important than scaffolded instructions. On the other hand, the term “guided” indicates that it is more about coaching and supporting the learner in their use of strategies and less about modelling.

The different studies introduced above show that guided reading should make reading purposeful and enjoyable for students, teaching them to use appropriate strategies. Another aim is to help students to understand the text on a micro-level, but also going beyond literal meanings.

## **1.2 Using authentic texts**

The term authentic literature is used to refer to literature that is not adapted for learners’ needs. Authentic literature covers all types of texts, ranging from fiction to newspaper articles and blog posts (Ciecierski and Bintz 2015, Redmann 2005).

Research has shown that reading authentic materials enhances students’ lexis. Guo (2012) conducted a quantitative study involving around fifty Taiwanese fourth year English major students to find out how using authentic materials for extensive reading influenced the students’ language proficiency. The students were divided into two groups at a similar level as determined by a pre-test. These two groups were randomly divided into a control group and an experimental group. They received the same instructions in the classroom, with the only difference being that the experimental group was assigned extra online reading materials

related to the topics covered in the course. According to the post-test, the experimental group's results were remarkably higher from the group that did not read additional authentic texts. Guo (2012) also demonstrated that the experiment did not have significant impact on the students' grammar skills, but it improved their vocabulary. Students' language proficiency was tested in the class midterm and with a section of final vocabulary. Interestingly, the class midterm results did not show significant difference, but the final vocabulary section did. It can be concluded that although the first two months did not produce a noteworthy difference, a notable gain in vocabulary emerged after three to four months.

Using authentic materials in language lessons increases students' motivation to read more. Albiladi (2018) conducted a study with 16 adult English language learners who participated in an intensive English programme. After observing their lessons and interviewing the participants he noted that their motivation to read had increased. Ciecierski and Bintz (2015: 24) also suggest that using authentic literature "encourages students to learn in ways that are creative and innovative", creating a bigger interest towards reading.

On the basis of these studies it can be argued that using authentic literature in teaching a foreign language is beneficial as it develops learners' language proficiency, having especially strong impact on vocabulary. At the same time, it needs to be taken into account that using authentic literature has to be long-term, as results are not very noticeable in the short-term.

### **1.3 Reading journals**

Reading journals have been used to support students' reading experiences for many years. Burnett and Fonder-Solano (2002) mention having their students keep notebook

journals to respond to set texts, ask questions, note new vocabulary, and reflect on the comprehension strategies they use while working on a text. They found that keeping a reading journal encouraged students “to perceive reading as a process rather than a product that must be tested” (ibid. 2002: 93).

Reading journals help students to enhance their understanding of the texts. Redmann (2005) assigned reading journals in literature courses to get intermediate and advanced level foreign language students to take part in class discussions of the texts they had read at home and to help students understand, analyse and interpret the works of literature they were discussing. Students completed the journal entries in the target language before, during and after reading the required text.

Redmann’s (2005) pre-reading section was used to activate learners’ background knowledge of the text with activities like discussing the book’s cover, the meaning of the title, sharing students’ experiences related to the topic in the book, drawing pictures of something mentioned at the beginning of the text, or brainstorming why some key action happened in the book. When students try to predict what is going to happen next, they are more engaged in the story as they are interested in finding out whether their predictions come true.

Activities during reading cover the largest part of Redmann’s (2005) reading journal. The first section asked students to summarise what they read to identify the main events of the text. The length of the summary was limited to force students to choose the most important details. A similar strategy was used in Sun’s (2021) study. In addition, Redmann (2005) asked learners to write down the most important or interesting elements in the text in one or two sentences to make them interpret the events.

Another aspect that reading journals tend to focus on is new vocabulary. Students were asked to note down new words they learnt in their reading in the study conducted by Dincer

(2020). Redmann (2005) also asked students to write down around ten phrases or words central to the meaning of the text, restricting the number of words to make students not only analyse what they have read, but also how it is written. The aim is to not get stuck on the micro level of the text. One of the teachers in Sun's (2021) study asked the students to pay attention to the new words only if they severely hindered understanding.

There are different tasks to support reflection on reading. Redmann (2005) asked students to write down questions for in-class discussion to teach them to compose critical questions about characters' development and motivation, the progression of the story, meaning of images, or consequences of events. These questions could be written on the board in the class and the students can decide which to discuss. The teacher's task is to monitor that all important aspects of the text will be covered and, if needed, to add questions. This way learners' individual reading process is turned into a group activity where they benefit from the work they did at home. Other task types to guide thinking about reading include writing a short reflection on what they read, noting down something that touched them or provoked thinking, expressing personal opinions about the text or finding how their life is connected to the text (Sun 2021).

The last section the students fill in in Redmann's (2005) journal before their lesson is about the reading process, commenting on whether the text was easy or difficult and why, making them conscious of the reading strategies they use. This also benefits the teacher in giving them an overview of students' individual reading processes and helping to decide whether they need to address some of the issues individually.

Students' reading journal entries can be used in class in many ways, although teachers are not always aware of them (Sun 2021). Redmann (2015) lists different ways to use the students' summaries in class to help students understand how differently the same text can be

interpreted. Her students start the in-class activities by comparing the summaries they have written, establishing the key facts of a text, discussing the vocabulary, and there could be in-class work that helps to develop students' interpretive skills through speaking and writing. She first mentions rereading certain passages from the text and analysing these in syntactic or semantic terms. Another option is using a mapping activity to give students a visual depiction of the ideas in the text and their connections. Redmann also mentions matrix or grid assignments where students are first asked to list important details and then to analyse them. Transformative activities include turning an expository passage into a performed dialogue or a journal entry from another character's standpoint.

Redmann (2005) has reserved the final page of her journal for students to reflect on what knowledge they have gained about a text by either choosing a question to answer as a group or freely choosing which question to write about. By doing so, learners approach the text one more time on a deeper level, with the knowledge gained through the in-class discussion. The last section of the journal gives students an opportunity to record their personal response on the text, commenting on whether they liked the given reading and why, what they found puzzling, or if they identified with anything in the text.

In Redmann's (2005) experience, keeping a reading journal helped to advance students' literacy skills by improving their skills of reading, interpreting and negotiating texts. Redmann (2005) stressed the importance of keeping a reading journal throughout foreign language learning at all levels to develop reading, writing, and, in the classroom, also speaking skills. This is supported by Dincer (2020), who also observed the improvement of vocabulary and grammar. Using reading journals combines critical thinking and cultural content with language learning, in addition to shifting the focus of the language course to developing students' literacy instead of simple skill building or transferring knowledge (Redmann 2005).

Students also find reading journals to be useful, as they motivate them to read more (Dincer 2020, Salsabila et al. 2021). It also benefits their understanding of texts, especially if they filled the journals diligently. The journal entries also gave feedback to the students themselves, helping them understand where they had comprehension problems (Redmann 2005, Salsabila et al. 2021). The teacher's feedback is vital in order to motivate students to keep completing their journals. Journals also help students who do not tend to speak up in class to voice their opinions (Redmann 2005).

As the different studies cited above show, guided reading is one of the proven approaches to teaching reading in foreign language classroom. It teaches students strategies to advance their reading skills and analytical thinking if teachers use correct strategies to emphasise them. Authentic literature enables students to experience literature as it has been written in original, not adapted to suit their level. Keeping a reading journal helps students to deepen their understanding of the texts they read and discuss them in the class as well as developing their language.

## **2 EMPIRICAL PART: The Designing, Teaching and Analysing the Reading Project of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe***

### **2.1 Research methodology**

The present study was conducted to test whether and how using a reading journal helps to advance students' reading skills when reading an authentic text. The study was carried out as action research. I used an authentic literary text, read with a class of my students one chapter a week, and assigned reading journal entries for each week to scaffold students' reading skills. In addition, after reading a chapter and filling out the journal entry, the chapter was discussed in a reading lesson with the whole class to help students understand what they had read.

After deciding to develop students' reading skills, the stages that are characteristic to AR were followed. Information was gathered to then decide on the best way of action. During the research, the action was evaluated by asking feedback from the students participating in the project. Based on their feedback, improvements were made to the action in order to develop the strategies even more and then they were carried out again (Adelman 1993, Altrichter, Posch & Somekh 2005).

I decided to use C. S. Lewis's book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as it is a children's adventure book and interesting for teenagers. The book is also a classic of English literature. The book is about four siblings who are of similar age to my students and who are drawn into exciting adventures. In addition, the story provides an educative message about betrayal, forgiveness, courage and transformation to the developing youth. As I have read the



book with Year 7 students in previous years, I have seen that students tend to enjoy the book and, with some help from their teacher, are able to understand it.

I decided to carry out the project in Year 7 as the students should have acquired A2 level in English by this time according to the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2011). The students' language level was tested through their participation in the electronic national standard-determining test for the II stage of study in the Examination Information System in October 2021. Based on the results, most of them have acquired the A2 level in their reading, listening, writing and speaking skills, although there is some variation in the level of English among the group. According to the test results, 13 students have acquired the A2 level in their reading skills, 6 students have almost reached the A2 level and 2 students have not.

Being on the A2 level, students have obtained skills of understanding “short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items” (Council of Europe 2020: 54). Year 7 students need to continue developing all of their English language skills in order to reach the B1 level which they are expected to achieve by the requirements of the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2011) by the end of Year 9. To reach the B1 level in reading, students are required to “understand most factual information that they are likely to come across on familiar subjects of interest, provided they have sufficient time for rereading” (ibid 2020: 57).

### **2.1.1 The Participants**

The study was conducted from November 2021 to March 2022 in Year 7 in a secondary school in southern Estonia. The students participating in the study have been learning English since Year 3. From Year 3 to Year 5 they had 4 English lessons per week.

Since Year 6 they have had 3 English lessons per week. The class has 21 students of whom 11 are boys and 10 are girls. All the students are 13 and 14 years old.

### **2.1.2 Data Collection**

Data for the study was collected from three sources - students' reading journals, pre-, mid- and post-reading questionnaires and author's lesson observations and notes.

The reading journals were set up in Google Docs so that each student was assigned their own document. I used Google Docs as it allows me to add new entries easily and keep one students' entries in one place. A new entry was added for the students for each week that they had to complete after reading the assigned chapter of the week. The entries consisted of different tasks for each week that were inspired by Redmann's (2005) work. As Redmann used her journal with university students, the journal contained a number of tasks. Taking into account the students participating in the present study, I assigned only one or two tasks per week. I used five types of tasks in the journals - summarising the chapter, answering questions about the chapter, formulating questions about the chapter, writing down the key points of the chapter, and writing about what different characters did. The distribution of reading journal tasks throughout the weeks can be seen in the figure below.

The pre-reading questionnaire consisted of 11 questions about background information on the students participating in the study: their reading preferences, whether they had read literature in English before and what they thought of it. Students were also asked to predict whether reading a book in English would be difficult.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Writing a summary		x						X				x	x				
Formulating questions about the chapter			x			x										x	
Writing the key points of the chapter					x				x						x		
Answering questions about the chapter	x						x			x				x			x
Writing about what different characters did				x							x						

Figure 1. Overview of the distribution of reading journal tasks.

The mid-reading questionnaire consisted of 12 questions that gave information on which reading journal and lesson tasks students found helpful and which not and how different tasks helped students understand the book. The students were also asked what other types of tasks they think could be helpful for them.

The post-reading questionnaire had 11 questions that focused on what students thought of reading a book in English, what they found difficult and what helped them. The questionnaire also asked them to reflect on how keeping a reading journal was helpful and how different activities in the lessons were useful for understanding what they had read at home.

The last source for data collection was my own notes and observations of lessons. I used a notepad to write my observations of the lessons. Some notes were written during the lesson shortly as key words, but most of them were written after the lessons.

### **2.1.3 Types of journal entries**

Some materials had to be developed to support students' reading experience in this project. Different teaching materials for guiding students through the book being used exist, but they have been compiled for native speakers and are therefore sometimes too difficult for students who learn English as a foreign language on a lower level. To make the reading journal more effective, I created tasks that are suitable to the level of the students' English. I started with easier journal entry tasks and moved to more difficult ones, explaining to the students what was expected of them before they started with the tasks.

In the first journal entry students were asked to write a summary of the chapter they read in ten full sentences. This had two purposes: to identify the most important events of the chapter and to get them used to writing short summaries in their own words.

In the second journal entry students had to formulate questions about the chapter to make them think critically about the key information of the chapter and to find interesting events or facts from the chapter.

In the third journal entry students wrote the key points of the chapter in 10 or 15 full sentences. Differently from the summary, the key points were written in a numbered order.

In the fourth journal entry students answered questions about the chapter. The aim was to help students to focus their reading. As most of the students were not used to reading longer texts in English, having concrete questions to answer helped them understand the main events in the chapter. I gave them 8-10 questions about the chapter, trying to make sure they would cover the main events and key points. When students had read more and we had focused on more analytical questions in the lessons, I included one or two questions in their entries as well.

I used *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe: Educator's Guide* (2012) issued by C. S. Lewis's Foundation that includes questions about each chapter to improve comprehension of the book. I chose questions appropriate for the students' language level and also came up with additional questions.

In the last journal entry, students wrote what different characters did in the chapter. In this task, the names of the main characters that appear in the chapter were listed. Students had to describe the main activities of each character during the chapter to focus on each one of them separately. This task let students practise reading for gist and reading for detail, and developed their thinking skills as they needed to select important events and organise them.

#### **2.1.4 Reading lessons**

Students had one lesson per week where I guided their discussion on the chapter they had read. The lessons were built up differently, depending on what tasks students had, but they always included discussing the main events of the read chapter. Students were usually asked to share their general impressions of the chapter they had read at home. This was usually followed by letting students compare their reading journal tasks in pairs or groups of three. The lessons also included discussing what happened in the chapter with the whole class. These discussions were led by the teacher. Students could use their summaries, questions they had formed, answers to questions, key points of the chapter and what different characters did in the chapter to help them to remember what had happened in the read text. Based on the discussion, the teacher wrote down the most important events of the chapter on the whiteboard to help the students to get a good overview of the text.

## **2.2 Results and analysis of questionnaires and lessons**

### **2.2.1 Pre-Reading Questionnaire**

The pre-reading questionnaire was conducted to get an overview of students' reading experience in general and in English. It was the first entry in the participants' reading journals and they were given time to fill it out in an English lesson so that they would get used to using their journals on Google Drive. The questions were in English, but students could answer them in English or in Estonian. 12 students answered in English and 9 in Estonian.

The answers showed that reading is not very popular among students. 3 students said that they read books, 5 said that they do not read at all, 5 participants replied that they do not read much, 2 said they only read if the book is interesting and 6 students said they only read compulsory books for school.

The question about what kinds of books students like reading showed that there were three very popular genres. The most popular were horror, adventure and action books, which were mentioned 11, 9 and 8 times, respectively. Other popular genres were fantasy (mentioned 4 times) and comics (3 times). Crime was mentioned twice. Students also named young adult novels, biographies, non-fiction, and history books. The results were encouraging as the book they were going to read for this project was an adventure book.

5 students said that they find reading boring. In contrast, 6 students wrote that reading is good if the book is entertaining. Some students understood the benefits of reading, saying that it helps to broaden their mind, educates them and one student pointed out that reading is good for the brain, helping to develop imagination. One participant wrote that reading is a great activity as it helps them become part of the story.

13 students out of 21 had not read a book in English before. The main reasons were that students did not have books in English or they had not thought of it. 8 students had read in English before. When sharing their reading experiences and what helped them in understanding the text better, students said that reading in English was nice and pretty easy as the texts they had read had been simple and interesting. The most popular answer on what helped students was playing video or computer games, which was mentioned 5 times. Watching videos, studying vocabulary and language rules at school and watching films were mentioned three times. Students also mentioned looking up words they did not know, chatting in English while playing video games online and one respondent highlighted that watching films with English subtitles had helped their reading skills in English.

When students were asked to predict whether reading a book in English would be hard, only 4 students thought so. One of them said that they thought they would not understand some words. Another student pointed out that books in English could be difficult to understand in general. Two respondents explained that they were “not good enough at English”. It was positive to see that most of the students (17 out of 21) thought reading a book in English would not be hard at all or only somewhat hard. One of the students wrote that they think it would be harder than reading in Estonian, but manageable. Students explained that they mostly understood the texts they read in English and felt that they were good at English. Two students said that they consumed almost all of their content in English already. Students also saw the positive sides of this project. One student wrote that this would develop their English, another that it would be a new experience and help them learn to understand texts better. One student also stated that they thought this would be a fun experience.

In the last question students predicted what could be difficult in reading a book in English. There were three types of answers. 14 students out of 21 said that they thought

understanding words or sentences that they do not know would be hard. One student also mentioned not understanding the text as a possible challenge. 3 students stated that nothing would be difficult and 2 respondents were not sure what would be hard.

The students' answers show that they were most worried about not having enough vocabulary to understand what they read. At the same time, the purpose of this reading project was to develop reading skills for general understanding, which students seem to be not used to and need to be trained for.

### **2.2.2 Mid-Reading Questionnaire**

The mid-reading questionnaire was conducted after reading 12 chapters of the book when students had had the chance to try all types of tasks at least two times and could analyse what was or was not useful for them. There were 19 responses to the questionnaire as two students did not fill it out. The questionnaire was in English, but students could also answer in Estonian. 10 students answered in English, 8 in Estonian and one student used both languages.

The first two questions listed 5 types of reading journal entries and students had to choose which ones were and were not useful for them in their reading process. Students were able to select several answers from the list.



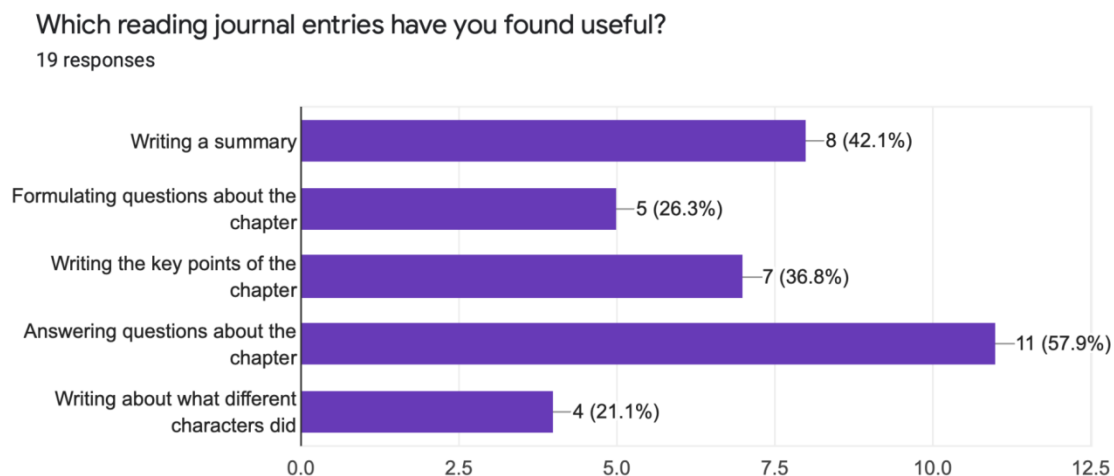


Figure 2. Which reading journal entries have you found useful?

Students marked 35 items as useful (see Figure 2). The most popular answer (11 responses) was answering questions about the chapter. Writing a summary of the chapter was selected by 8 students. Participants also found it useful to write the key points of the chapter in full sentences. 5 students thought formulating questions about the chapter was useful. 4 students said that writing about what characters did in the read chapter helped them.

Students marked 27 items as not seeming useful (see Figure 3). Writing about what different characters did in the chapter was chosen 8 times, formulating questions about the chapter 7 times. Writing a summary about the chapter, answering questions and writing the key points of the chapter were chosen 5, 4 and 3 times, respectively.

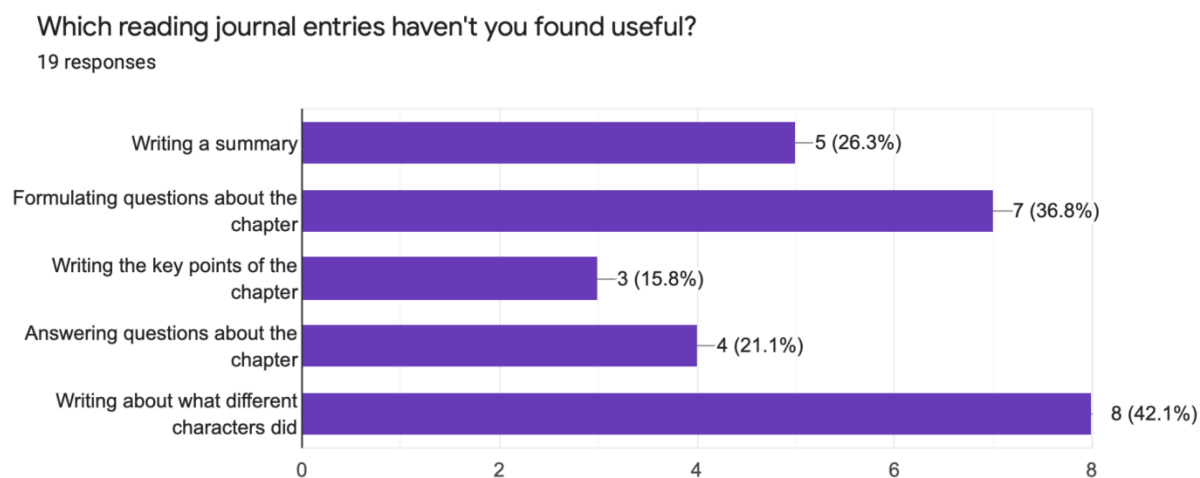


Figure 3. Which reading journal entries haven't you found useful?

Questions 3-7 asked participants to explain in their own words how different types of journal entries either were or were not useful for them when reading the chapters. Participants pointed out three main benefits of writing a summary of the chapter. 5 students said that it helped them to understand the chapter better. 3 students wrote that the summary provided an overview of the chapter that they could check in case they forgot what had happened. 2 students pointed out that it helped them think through what they had read. Writing a summary of the chapter was also liked for providing additional knowledge about the events in the book, making them rewrite the chapter, giving them a chance to learn how to retell the story in their own words and being easy to write. Only one student did not find it useful and two said that it took time to write.

Formulating questions about the chapter made 4 students think more about what happened in the text. 2 respondents said the task increased their understanding of the chapter. It was also mentioned that it helped to remember what happened in the chapter and to find facts from the text. One student also said that it was useful, but did not give them a good

overview of the chapter. On the other hand, 3 students did not know if this was useful for them and 2 said that they did not see the point of this entry.

4 students said that listing the key points of the chapter in full sentences helped them understand the book better. The task made 3 students think more about the text and another 3 participants mentioned that it gave them a good overview of the chapter that they could also look over later. 2 students also pointed out that this entry helped them to remember better what happened in the text. One respondent said that it “helped to learn writing” and another mentioned “finding meaningful sentences” from the text as its benefits. One student answered that it was not very useful.

Answering questions about the chapter helped 3 students understand the chapter better, while 2 students thought that it made them think through the chapter. 2 students said that the task made them “go deeper” in the text and they noticed things that they did not pay attention to by just reading it. Students also mentioned benefits like giving them a guide of what to look for in the text and a way to check how much they remember. Students also considered this their favourite journal entry. On the other hand, one student did not know if it was useful and 4 respondents did not find it useful. One of the students explained that it was not useful for them as it took a long time to find answers to the questions.

Writing what different characters did in the chapter was the students’ least favourite task. 11 students said that this entry was either not useful, did not help them or they did not know if it was useful. One student did not reply at all. 3 respondents pointed out that it helped them to get to know the characters of the book better and to focus on how they changed. It made one student read the chapter attentively and another mentioned that this entry was easy.

Questions 8 and 9 asked students to decide which of the five journal entries was the hardest for them and to explain why. Respondents were supposed to choose only one option,

but because I accidentally left the option of marking more answers, two students marked two entries, therefore the total of answers under question 8 is 21, although there were 19 students.

#### Which reading journal entry was the hardest for you?

19 responses

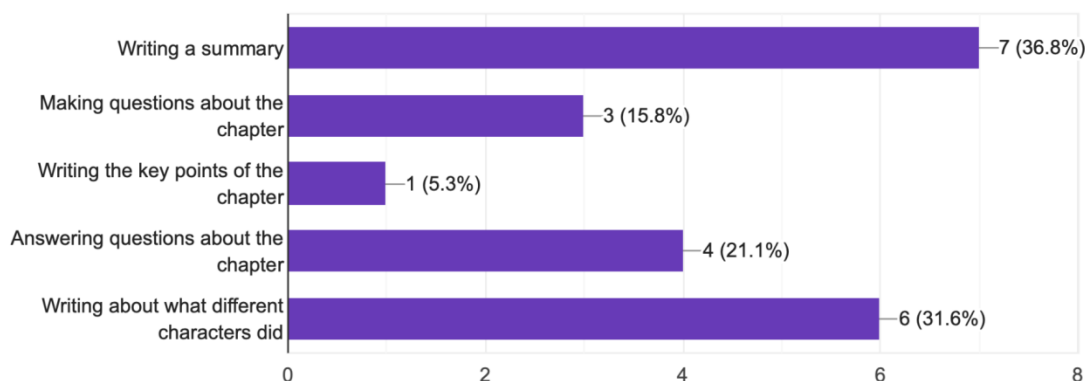


Figure 4. Which reading journal entry was the hardest for you?

The most difficult entry was writing a summary of the chapter (chosen by 7 students). I thought that this could be a hard task as it requires students to analyse the chapter. The students wrote twice that it took a long time to complete. Other answers were that students felt they were not good at writing in English, did not know what to write in a summary, and did not like typing in general.

The next hardest journal entry was writing about what different characters did (marked by 6 students). As this task required observing characters one at a time, it probably took time and concentration to complete. 3 students found it to be the hardest as it took a long time to do. One student considered the task inconvenient to complete as they had to look at each character separately and another student replied that it required them to search the characters' actions while reading. One student who chose this option said that they actually found all tasks pretty easy.

The third hardest task according to the respondents was answering questions about the chapter. The opinions of students varied as each reply was given only once. Students pointed out that they “do not always remember” what they read, they sometimes did not find an answer, it took a lot of time, and one student did not comment on their choice.

According to 3 students, the hardest task was making questions about the chapter because it took longer time to complete, they did not know what questions to ask and the last respondent said that it was easier for them to answer questions than to make them. For one student writing about the key points of the chapter was the hardest task because they had to read the text many times to complete the task.

In question 10 students could decide what activities in the lesson had been useful for them. It was possible to mark several answers to see what students thought was relevant for them. Four activities were listed in the options - discussing what happened in the chapter all together, talking about the chapter with two-three classmates, comparing your summary to those of the others, discussing why characters did things. The list included activities that had been used in the lessons where the class discussed the chapter that students had read at home and made a reading journal entry on. One lesson could include several of the activities.

Students believed that the most useful activity was discussing what happened in the chapter all together. This option was chosen by 15 students. This shows that although they read the chapter at home and filled their reading journal, they needed to discuss the content of the chapter to help them understand it.

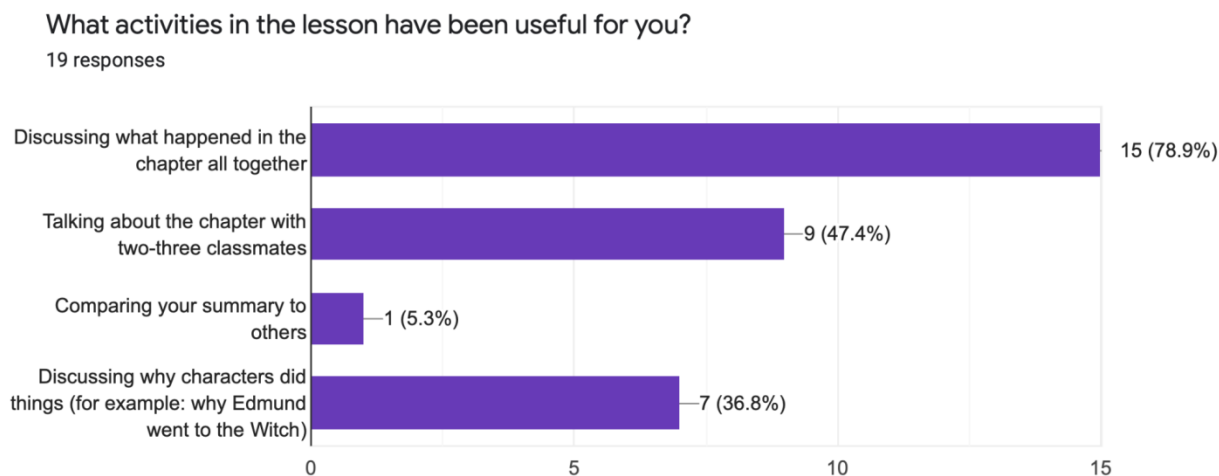


Figure 5. What activities in the lesson have been useful for you?

The second activity defined as useful by students was talking about the chapter with two-three classmates. In this case, students were divided into pairs or groups of three and given time to talk about what they had read at home, using the notes from their journal entries. I thought that this would be a popular choice as it gave them a chance to share what they understood in a small group, not in front of the whole class. 9 students found this useful in helping to understand the chapter, but having whole-class discussions was more popular.

7 students believed that discussing why characters did things was also beneficial for them. The aim of this activity was to help students go deeper in the understanding of the text, not just to list the facts. These types of questions were included in the discussion in the classroom to help students analyse the characters and how they change throughout the book.

The option of comparing one's summary to the ones written by other students was chosen once. The aim of this activity was for students to talk about the main events of the chapter and discuss in the group or pair which events of the chapter were important in their

opinion. The respondents' replies show that they did not see this as a very useful task in the lessons.

Questions 11 and 12 asked the participants to propose what other activities they thought would help them when reading or in the lessons. It was interesting to see that the majority of students (13) said that they did not know what else to do or there were no suggestions. 2 students mentioned that using a dictionary for unfamiliar words would be useful. One student said that they should take notes when reading as they sometimes forget what happened in the chapter. Working through the chapter was also mentioned by one student. Two students pointed out that the activities that had been done were enough to help them.

Most students (13) also did not have any suggestions for classroom activities. 3 respondents mentioned breaking the chapter down to help everyone understand, but this was already being done in each lesson. There was also a suggestion to have a game of Kahoot about the chapter that had been read at home.

Students' replies were taken into account in designing the rest of the journal entries and preparing the lessons, putting more emphasis on the tasks that they found useful in their reading experience.

### **2.2.3 Post-Reading Questionnaire**

The post-reading questionnaire was conducted right after finishing reading the whole book with the students to find out students' impressions and experience of reading a book in English, keeping a reading journal and whether and how discussions about the book were helpful in understanding the book. There were 21 responses to the questionnaire, that is, all the

students answered it. The questionnaire was in English, but students could also answer in Estonian. 13 students answered in English and 8 in Estonian.

As most of the students read a book in English for the first time, the first question asked for general impressions on what it was like to read a book in English. 14 students out of 21 had positive thoughts, with answers varying from “easy”, “okay”, “fun”, “good experience”, “nice” to “interesting” and “great”. One student did not know how to describe their experience and two students said it was “weird” as it was their first time reading such a long text in English. Two students thought it was boring, one said it was different and one student described it as “kind of hard, but not very hard”.

In the second question students had to describe what was difficult about reading a book in English. Most of the students (16 out of 21) said that they had trouble understanding some words or sentences. For 4 students there was nothing difficult and for one student the most difficult part was opening the book to start reading.

In the third question students named what helped them in understanding the text. Several students named more than one thing. 6 respondents were helped by their knowledge of English. 5 students mentioned looking up the words they did not know. Two people found keeping the reading journal helpful and one student mentioned focusing on reading. Two students considered discussing the chapters in the lessons useful. Another two thought that the teacher was helpful, but I believe that they also meant talking about the chapter with the teacher here. One student’s parents helped them in understanding the text. 4 respondents said that nothing helped them, which probably means that they did not have trouble understanding the text. 2 people did not know what helped them to understand the text.

The fourth question asked whether it was useful to keep a reading journal. 14 students out of 21 answered that it was useful for them. A couple of the students added that using the



reading journal helped them to focus more on the reading and to remember what happened in the chapter. 4 students said that it was somewhat useful, two that it was not really useful, but one of them added that it was fun sometimes. Only one student said that keeping the reading journal was not useful.

In the fifth question students could explain how keeping a reading journal helped them in understanding the book. Keeping a reading journal helped one third of the students (7 out of 21) to understand what they read better. 5 students said that it made them think more of what they read. Another 5 respondents found positive things in keeping the reading journals, mentioning that checking the journal in class and discussing it was useful, it helped to pay attention to minor character details and growth, writing the key points of the chapter and summary was beneficial and that it was useful in general. On the other hand, one student wrote that keeping a journal was not useful, two said that they did not know how it was useful and one mentioned that they did not have a clear answer to this question.

In question 6 students could comment on the lessons. One student wrote that the lessons were useful, but did not specify how. 4 participants pointed out that discussing what they had read at home in the lesson was helpful for them. 6 students specified that talking about the events of the chapter helped them to understand better what they had read and get answers to the parts they had not understood at home. Lessons helped 2 students to remember what had happened in the chapter. 3 students found it useful to hear what others thought of the book and learn from each other. 1 participant pointed out that they got a good overview of the more important events of the chapter which helped them to analyse their own reading journal entries. 4 students did not know how the lessons about the book were useful for them.

Questions 7-10 asked the students to explain in their own words how different types of activities in the lessons were or were not useful for them in understanding the book. Each

question listed one activity used in the lesson and students were able to comment on whether they considered it useful and how.

The first activity listed was discussing what happened in the chapter all together. Most students (18 out of 21) considered this useful. 2 students did not specify how. Talking about what happened with the whole class helped almost half of the respondents (9 out of 21) to get a better understanding of the text. 4 participants got answers to the questions they did not know and 1 person said that it helped them to remember what the text was about. One student also mentioned that they benefited from hearing what others thought about the text and one wrote that the teacher helped them. Three students did not find this activity useful, one did not know and two clarified that it was not useful as they already knew everything about the chapter.

When the students were asked about the usefulness of talking about the chapter with two-three classmates, the answers varied. More than half of the participants (11 out of 21) found this useful. The most popular answer (7 respondents) was that it gave them an opportunity to find out how others understood the chapter and to discuss what they had read. Other reasons included it being fun, being able to check their answers, understanding the text better and not having to raise their hand to talk. On the other hand, a number of students (9 out of 21) did not find the task effective as it could turn into small talk and in some groups only one person would have had the task done. Two participants emphasised that although speaking to their classmates was useful, they thought discussion with the whole class was better.

More than a half of the students (14 out of 21) wrote that comparing their summary to those of others was useful. The most frequent reason was the ability to compare how they understood the text. One student also pointed out that they could discuss their interpretations. Three students said that it was okay, but did not specify any further. One respondent wrote that

it allowed them to check their answers with others. One third of the students (7 out of 21) either did not know whether it was useful or did not find it helpful. Two students specified that either everyone had the same answers or no one was taking the task seriously.

In the last question students commented on discussing why characters did things, focusing on “open” questions that require students to synthesise and think critically about what they had read. Two thirds of the students (14 out of 21) wrote that this task was useful. It helped 10 respondents to understand characters’ actions. It helped 3 students to remember what each character did. One person pointed out that this made them read more in detail. 4 participants did not know whether it was useful and 2 said it was not, one explaining that they got the information by reading the chapter at home.

In the last question students could say what they thought of the book and why. One third of the participants (7 out of 21) said that the book was either boring or they did not like it very much. Several of the students did not like this genre or found all books they read boring. 2 students considered the book a bit boring sometimes, but at the same time captivating as well. One of them added that the book got so engaging once that they read the next chapter right away as well. 6 participants described the book as “good” or “really cool” because there was a lot of action and as it was in English. 6 students also said that the book was very exciting in their opinion. The respondents who found the book interesting thought that it was mysterious and enjoyed the adventures. One person also pointed out that reading in English was an interesting and new experience for them.

#### **2.2.4 Analysis of the questionnaires**

For many students the kinds of books they read determines their response to reading in general. This also shows that finding a book that is exciting for students is crucial in the

context of reading lessons, as Ciecierski and Bintz (2015) also confirmed. As a number of students read only when they have compulsory reading at school, they had not developed a reading habit and reading an authentic book in English might increase their interest in reading. On the other hand, the students who had not developed a habit of reading could find it difficult to read a book. A number of students skipped their reading tasks at the beginning, but as the story progressed, they became interested and did their reading.

Students' reading experience in English had previously included short stories or simpler children's books. Thus, reading a longer book in English was a first-time experience for all of the participants. When predicting what could be difficult, most were afraid of unknown vocabulary. This proved to be true as after finishing the book, most students said that not knowing some words or sentences made reading in English difficult. This suggests that some work with vocabulary is needed when reading authentic texts with low-level students. It could be done by asking students to write out some new words in their reading journals or the teacher could pick out the most essential vocabulary and introduce it beforehand.

The mid-reading questionnaire asked students about their opinion on different reading journal types. Students pointed out that they had trouble writing a summary, which indicates that some extra time should have been devoted to teaching them how to write this text type. Writing the key points of the chapter was easier for students as it is more concrete. Students' answers show that numbering the main events was helpful. It was thought-provoking to read that some students felt that formulating questions was challenging. I thought it would not be very difficult as they had already had a task of answering questions about the chapter when this task was assigned to them for the first time. This is probably something that could be practised more beforehand in order for the students to understand better how to complete it. Toward the end of the project I asked students to formulate questions again, but added to the

introduction that they should try to cover the main events of the chapter with their questions instead of just asking for simple facts. This was also something that I worked toward throughout the project, moving students from understanding the micro-level of the text to reflecting on what they read and analysing it. To achieve that, students were asked to write down their favourite and most surprising part of the chapter several times. I think it worked well as students had to think through what had happened in the chapter and several answers showed that they analysed the chapter.

Some of the students stated that reading journal entries were not useful because completing them took a long time. I believe that students consider difficult tasks ineffective because they are not sure they did them correctly.

Regarding suggestions to help students in the lessons, one student proposed having a quiz on Kahoot about the chapter read at home. I think this can be done, but weaker students might not understand the questions or the options for answers. It can be more useful when used after discussing the events of the chapter with the whole class or by pairing the weaker students up with stronger ones.

I noticed that several of the students who had said that the book was boring did not complete their reading journal tasks properly. This can mean that they did not read the book carefully or this genre was not interesting for them. On the other hand, there were several students who reported that they became very engaged in the book and there were times they could not wait to find out what would happen next.

### **2.2.5 Analysis of the reading lessons**

I kept a lesson journal to record the lesson plans and to write down lesson observations and notes. In general, the reading lessons went well and students were eager to share what they

had read. As there was a discussion in every lesson, students became used to it and joined in, answering questions asked by the teacher or the other students. I made sure that the reading journal tasks students had completed at home would be used in the reading lesson as suggested by Redmann (2005). At first, I tended to start with the general discussion at the beginning of the lesson, but realised quickly that students need time to look over what they had read as some of them had done it several days ago. I then switched to giving the students time to discuss their journal entries in pairs or in groups of three to refresh their memory. This also gave the students who had not read the chapter for some reason a chance to get an idea of what happened in the text. After starting the lesson with some discussion in groups, I noticed that students were more willing to join the discussion with the whole class.

To give students a better picture of the interesting creatures inhabiting Narnia, the land they had their adventures in, I asked students to list the creatures in their reading journal entries. During the lesson, I asked students to name the creatures and wrote them on the board, first making sure all of them were in the list. As a number of them were difficult words and students would not know who they were even if they had read the book in Estonian, I divided the creatures between the students and asked them to find their pictures online and to share the pictures with their classmates. This helped students to get a better understanding of Narnia and its creatures.

Students were willing to think along and share their thoughts. I noticed that some students were more eager to answer than others, but that is usual in a class context. Willingness to speak up did not depend on the students' language level, as some of the strongest students did not voice their opinion much. On the other hand, weaker students did not volunteer to answer, but when they were asked, they were usually ready to answer. As one of the weaker students wrote in the questionnaires, they did not always understand everything

read at home but the class discussions helped them to understand why characters acted in certain ways.

As the reading advanced, I worked on guiding students' discussion of the book to a deeper level, asking more questions about why characters acted as they did, not just about facts. One of these types of lessons was after finishing chapter 11 where we talked about Edmund, the brother who had betrayed his siblings to join the White Witch. The focus of the lesson was to discuss whether Edmund had been happy in the story at all and why he had betrayed others. At this point, Edmund had started changing, so I asked whether students had noticed any changes. The lesson also included a discussion about Aslan, whom children did not know very well, but all the good animals of Narnia trusted. Students were asked to predict how Aslan would gain the children's trust. Students were asked to write at the end of the lesson in their reading journals how this lesson helped them in understanding the events of the book. It was very positive to read that several students considered it very helpful in better understanding the intentions, actual feelings and thoughts and background of the characters.

In order to advance learners' deeper thinking, the next journal entry asked them to write a short summary of the chapter and formulate three questions about the chapter. The questions about chapter 12 were still very factual, so we looked at them in the lesson, but I also encouraged the students to ask questions that do not have simple answers. With the next chapter, I gave them a similar reading journal task, but clarified that the questions should not be just about facts. It was nice to see the next week that students had made some progress in deepening their thinking and many of them had made questions that went beyond the micro-level of the text.

Using reading journals was definitely beneficial, especially considering that the class had students with varying levels of English. It was good to see that stronger students tended to write longer and more detailed answers, while weaker students had written shorter answers.



## CONCLUSION

Foreign language teaching in basic schools should advance students' language skills so that they are able to understand texts that are age-appropriate and have access to literature that is written in the foreign language (Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011, 2014). In order to do that, it is essential that students read authentic literature from as early on as possible. As reading authentic books in the foreign language on their own is difficult for students, teachers need to guide them with different scaffolding activities.

The aim of the present thesis was to conduct an action research project to introduce students to reading authentic literature in English by scaffolding their understanding of the text via guided reading and keeping reading journals. Guided reading is an approach that helps students in making meaning of the texts they read by the support of their teacher via helpful strategies of questioning (Ministry of Education of New Zealand n.d., Philips 2013). Previous research has shown that reading authentic texts develops reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary skills in addition to increasing learners' motivation to read more (Guo 2012, Albiladi 2018). Keeping a reading journal and discussing what they read helps students improve their writing, listening and speaking skills but also makes them reflect on the texts (Redmann 2005, Dincer 2020).

An authentic text was used in English as a foreign language class. C. S. Lewis's novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was chosen as it is age-appropriate for Year 7 students that the project was conducted with. 21 students between the ages of 13 and 14 in an Estonian secondary school participated in the project. The students had mostly obtained the A2 level in

English, as confirmed by the electronic national standard-determining test for the II stage of study in the Examination Information System before the project started.

During the 17-week project that lasted from November 2021 to March 2022, the focus was on improving students' reading skills and understanding of the text. Students read one chapter a week accompanied by keeping reading journals about each chapter and participated in class and group discussions. Prior to the reading, students filled out a questionnaire about their reading habits and their experiences in reading books in English. Two more questionnaires were used in order to get feedback from the students on whether and how different reading journal entries and lesson activities were helpful in scaffolding their understanding of the novel.

Most students had not read literature in English before, but they thought it would not be very difficult. In the middle of the project, students said that they found keeping a reading journal useful as it helped them in understanding what they read and focusing on the main events of the chapter. After finishing the project, students' answers showed that most of them thought reading a book in English was a positive experience that was not too hard. The greatest challenge reported was not understanding some vocabulary they encountered while reading.

As the aim of the project was to scaffold students' reading skills, no vocabulary tasks were included in the reading journals. Students' feedback suggests that some vocabulary items could be used in the future, like other authors have done (Sun 2021, Dincer 2020). The reading journal entries could also be improved upon, by asking students about their thoughts on the chapter each time to advance their reflection skills (Redmann 2005). As the participants were students with a lower level of English, they should have received more support in writing a summary of a chapter, a task that some students struggled with.

Considering students' responses, it can be concluded that keeping a reading journal increased their understanding of the authentic text and helped them to reflect on what they read. Discussing the journal entries and the events of the chapter with the whole class also improved their understanding, especially if there were parts they did not comprehend by themselves.

Based on the findings of the present thesis, keeping a reading journal advanced students' understanding of the text and was also helpful for students who tend to be quieter as they do not speak up in class, but can express their opinion and thoughts in writing (Redmann 2005). It showed that working with the vocabulary is important for low-level learners as the majority of students said that not knowing some words and sentences made reading the book difficult. This is confirmed by Albiladi's (2018) study that found that students struggled with understanding the authentic texts because of their limited vocabulary. It would be useful to have students reflect on what they read after every chapter.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1. Reading journal entries for students

#### Reading journal for “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe”

##### **Entry 1: background information**

##### **Date:**

Answer these questions in Estonian or in English. Write full sentences.

1. Do you read books?
2. What kind of books do you like reading? (for example: adventure, action, horror, crime, comic book, fantasy, historical etc)
3. How often do you read?
4. How much do you read? (how many pages)
5. What do you think about reading? Why?
6. Have you ever read any books or short stories in English? Why/why not?
7. If **yes**, how was reading in English? Why?
8. If **not**, what has stopped you?
9. What helped you to understand the text in English better?
10. Do you think reading a book in English will be hard? Why / why not?
11. What could be difficult about reading a book in English?

**Entry 2: Chapter 1 - Lucy looks into a wardrobe****Date:**

*Answer the questions about the chapter. NB! Write in English! Use full sentences.*

1. Where did the children live before this story began?
2. Why are the children staying at the Professor's house?
3. Write after each child's name what you have found out about them so far.  
Peter -  
Susan -  
Edmund -  
Lucy -
4. How does Lucy discover the wardrobe?
5. What first made Lucy realise that something queer was happening in the wardrobe?
6. What was the source of light in the wood?
7. What new character did Lucy meet at the end of the chapter?
8. Write down three unusual things about the appearance of the "strange person" Lucy sees in the wood.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
9. My thoughts about the first chapter:



**Entry 3: Chapter 2 - What Lucy Found There****Date:**

*Write a short summary of the chapter (about 10 sentences).*

***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.***

**Entry 4: Chapter 3 - Edmund and the Wardrobe****Date:****Make up 10 questions about chapter 3.*****NB! Write in English and use full sentences.***

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

After the class discussion of chapter 3 - How did forming questions about the chapter help you in understanding what you read?

**Entry 5: Chapter 4 - Turkish Delight****Date:****Read chapter 4 and describe what each character did in this chapter.***NB! Write in **English** and use **full sentences**.***Edmund -****Lucy -****The Queen -****What do you think will happen next? -**

**Entry 6: Chapter 5 - Back on This side of the Door****Date:****Read chapter 5 and write down 15 key points that happened in chapter 5.***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

Also, write what was your favourite part of the chapter -

And what was most surprising -

**Entry 7: Chapter 6 - Into the Forest****Date:****Make up 10 questions about chapter 6.***NB! Write in **English** and use **full sentences**.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Entry 8: Chapter 7 - A Day with the Beavers****Date:**

*Answer the questions about the chapter. NB! Write in English! Use full sentences.*

1. What was strange about the animal children saw? -
2. How does the beaver prove that he is a friend? -
3. What did Mr. Beaver say about the trees? -
4. Personification is the giving of human characters to something non-human. The book says “The trees are always listening.” Explain how this is an example of personification. -
5. How did the name of Aslan affect each of the children? -  
Peter -  
Susan -  
Edmund -  
Lucy -
6. When Edmund saw the hills, “horrible came into his head”. What do you think Edmund is planning to do? -
7. What does Mrs. Beaver serve at her house for dinner? -
8. Why was Mr. Beaver pleased it was snowing again? -

**Entry 9: Chapter 8 - What Happened After Dinner****Date:**

*Write a short summary of the chapter (about 10 sentences).*

***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.***

**Entry 10: Chapter 9 - In the Witch's House****Date:****Read chapter 9 and write down 10 key points that happened in chapter 9.***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Also, list the creatures that had been made into stone statues -

What was the most surprising part of the chapter? -

What do you think will happen next? -



**Entry 11: Chapter 10 - The Spell Begins to Break****Date:**

*Answer the questions about the chapter. NB! Write in English! Use full sentences.*

1. What was Mrs. Beaver doing while the others were getting dressed?
2. Why did Mr. Beaver say they should stay down in the valley?
3. Where did the children and beavers have a rest?
4. What awakened everyone from their sleep in the cave?
5. What was Father Christmas like, and how did children feel when seeing him?
6. What gifts did everyone get from Father Christmas?

Mrs. Beaver -

Mr. Beaver -

Peter -

Susan -

Lucy -

7. What gift did Father Christmas give for the whole group?
8. "The spell begins to break" - What do you think happens in the next chapters?

**Entry 12: Chapter 11 - Aslan is Nearer****Date:****Read chapter 11 and describe what these characters did in this chapter.***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.***Edmund -****The Queen -****The dwarf -****The Wolf (wolves) -****A merry party -**

What do you think of the book so far? -

After the class discussion: How did the class discussion help you in understanding the chapter?

**Entry 13: Chapter 12 - Peter's First Battle****Date:**

*1. Write a short summary of the chapter (about 15 sentences).*

***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.***

*2. Formulate three questions to discuss in class about chapter 12.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Entry 14: Chapter 13 - Deep Magic from the Dawn of Time****Date:**

1. *Write a short summary of the chapter (about 15 sentences).*

***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.***

2. *Formulate three questions to discuss in class about chapter 12. NB! Try to come up with questions that do not have direct answers (for example: Why did Edmund go to the White Witch's house?)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Entry 15: Chapter 14 - The Triumph of the Witch****Date:**

*Answer the questions about the chapter. NB! Write in English! Use full sentences.*

1. What instructions does Aslan give Peter at the beginning of the chapter and why does he give these instructions? -
2. How is Aslan acting the whole day? -
3. Why can't Lucy and Susan sleep that night? -
4. What do Lucy and Susan decide to do? -
5. Where did Aslan go? -
6. What creatures were there? (List them) -
7. The Witch's creatures think Aslan looks just like a big cat, and not scary at all when his mane is shaved off. What do Lucy and Susan think he looks like? -
8. Describe what the White Witch and her evil minions did to Aslan. Why did Aslan let them do that? -
9. What did Aslan and the White Witch agree at the end of chapter 13? -
10. What is the White Witch's plan? -
11. Why do you think Aslan didn't tell anyone about what was going to happen? -

**Entry 16: Chapter 15 - Deeper Magic from Before the Dawn of Time****Date:****Read chapter 15 and write down 15 key points that happened in the chapter.***NB! Write in English and use full sentences.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

Also, write what was your favourite part of the chapter -

And what was most surprising -

**Entry 17: Chapter 16 - What Happened about the Statues****Date:****Make up 10 questions about chapter 16.****NB! Write in English and use full sentences.**

Try to form questions so that you cover the key events of the chapter.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Entry 18: Chapter 17 - The Hunting of the White Stag****Date:**

*Answer the questions about the chapter. NB! Write in English! Use full sentences.*

1. What happens when Witch's companions realise that the White Witch is dead?
2. What did Edmund do to stop the Witch from beating Aslan's forces?
3. How does Lucy help the wounded?
4. Do you think Edmund should have been told what Aslan had done for him? Why (not)?
5. Where did everyone go the day after the battle and what happened there?
6. What did Aslan do in the middle of the celebration and why?
7. What are the names children are given in Narnia over the years and why?  
Peter -  
Susan -  
Edmund -  
Lucy -
8. What do the children find when they are chasing the White Stag?
9. How did the Professor react to their story?
10. Why do you think the Professor advised the children not to talk too much about their adventures?



## **APPENDIX 2. Mid-reading questionnaire**

Please answer the questions about your reading

Answer these questions in Estonian or in English. Write full sentences.

1. Which reading journal entries have you found useful?
2. Which reading journal entries haven't you found useful?
3. How was/wasn't writing a summary useful for you?
4. How was/wasn't formulating questions about the chapter useful for you?
5. How was/wasn't writing the key points of the chapter useful for you?
6. How was/wasn't answering questions about the chapter useful for you?
7. How was/wasn't writing about what different characters did useful for you?
8. Which reading journal entry was the hardest for you?
9. Why was this journal entry the hardest for you? (Answer about the one you chose in the last question)
10. What activities in the lesson have been useful for you?
11. What other activities do you think would help you when reading?
12. What other activities would help you in the lessons?

### **APPENDIX 3. Post-reading questionnaire**

Please answer the questions about your reading

Answer these questions in Estonian or in English. Write full sentences.

1. What was it like to read a book in English?
2. What was difficult about reading a book in English?
3. What helped you to understand the text?
4. Was it helpful to keep a reading journal?
5. How was keeping a reading journal helpful in understanding the book?
6. How were lessons about the book useful?
7. How was/wasn't useful discussing what happened in the chapter all together?
8. How was/wasn't useful talking about the chapter with two-three classmates?
9. How was/wasn't useful comparing your summary to others'?
10. How was/wasn't useful discussing why characters did things (for example: Why Edmund went to the Witch)?
11. What do you think of the book and why?

#### **APPENDIX 4. Parental consent form**

Lugupeetud 7.klassi lapsevanem,

Mina olen Grete Lepa, Parksepa Keskkooli inglise keele õpetaja. Õpin hetkel Tartu Ülikoolis võõrkeeleõpetaja magistriõppes. Kirjutan oma magistritööd teemal „Developing Students’ Reading Skills Using Authentic Literature and Reading Journals” (Õpilaste lugemisoskuste arendamine autentse kirjanduse ja lugemispäevikute abil). Minu lõputöö eesmärgiks on kasutada autentset kirjandust, et arendada õpilaste lugemisoskust võõrkeeles ning toetada seda lugemispäeviku pidamisega. Töö käigus loeme läbi C. S. Lewis’e raamatu “The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe” (“Lõvi, nõid ja riidekapp”) üks peatükk nädalas, õpilased täidavad iga peatüki kohta lugemispäevikut ning vastavad küsimustikele enne, keset ja pärast projekti.

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Lugupidamisega

Grete Lepa

..... (JAH/EI)

..... (ALLKIRI)

## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Grete Lepa**

**Developing Students' Reading Skills Using Authentic Literature and Reading Journals  
[Õpilaste lugemisoskuste arendamine autentse kirjanduse ja lugemispäevikute abil]**

Magistritöö

2021

Lehekülgede arv: 68

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Märksõnad: inglise keel, lugemine, autentne kirjandus, lugemispäevik, tegevusuuring

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Grete Lepa

**17.05.2022**

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Grete Lepa

17.05.2022