



## Learning to cope

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For teachers of learners with special educational needs

**T**HE brain's ability to interpret information received via the senses is called perception. Good visual and auditory discrimination skills are important for learning to read, spell and write.

### Visual discrimination problems

Children with visual discrimination problems will:

- Not notice small differences in numbers — eg, the difference between "6" and "9";
- Not notice small differences in words or pictures — eg, the difference between "pin" or "pen";
- Find it hard to sort, match, or compare information; and
- Not pay attention to detail.

### How teachers can help:

- Provide learners with opportunities to match and compare things using games and puzzles. You can also use exercises like the one on the right, where learners must identify the two cows that are exactly the same.
- Draw learners' attention to the important details in pictures by asking them questions like: "Are all the noses the same?"
- Encourage learners to talk about their observations.

### Auditory discrimination problems

Children with auditory discrimination problems will:

- Not notice small differences in sounds — eg, the difference between "d" and "b"; "n" and "m" and "strong" and "wrong";
- Not notice sound patterns — eg, in the list "far", "car", "fat", they will not be able to identify which word is the odd one out;
- Find it hard to hear the difference between long and short

# Looks like, sounds like ...



vowels — eg, the difference between "rot" and "root" and between "at" and "ate".

- Not notice the difference between a statement and a question from the tone of voice used.

### How teachers can help:

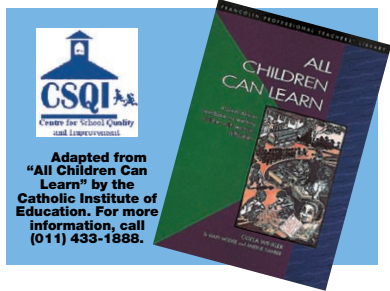
- Ask children to close their eyes and listen to different sounds in the environment.
- Use musical instruments to make long and short sounds and ask learners to tell the difference.
- Show learners different

words and ask them to look at the sounds that are different. Then get them to say the words.

- Ask children to close their eyes and listen to words that sound similar, then say if they are the same or different — eg, "shut" and "shout"; "card" and "cart"; "ride" and "write"; "sit" and "set"; "pig" and "peg"; "dog" and "log".
- Say the same sentence but use your tone of voice to express different moods — eg, say the sentence in a happy voice, a sad voice, an angry voice, and so on.

Problems with listening skills and auditory perception are very common in South Africa. There are two reasons for this:

- Untreated ear infections can make it difficult for children to hear well.
- There are more vowel sounds in English than in the Sotho or Nguni languages. As a result, many children struggle to hear and say the difference between vowels (for example the difference between "pig" and "peg") and also struggle with spelling.



# The thorny issue of discrimination

## Dear Teachers

*Horns Only* is a story with a strong social message. Zebra and Monkey love dancing together and want to attend a party, but only animals with horns are invited. Use this story to highlight issues of discrimination and to encourage tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

This story can also be used to coincide with World Refugee Day on Friday 20 June. Explain that "refugees" are people who have fled from some danger or problem, especially political persecution.

South Africa is host to refugees from across Africa and many schools host refugee learners. Educators should encourage attitudes of acceptance and tolerance in all their learners while being sensitive to the refugee children in their class. Refugee children have experienced great trauma and they may not be able to share their experiences for fear of discrimination.

### Pre-reading preparation:

- Make up the booklet according to the instructions on the right.
- Collect newspaper articles that highlight issues of discrimination, especially stories concerning refugees.
- Make a display to celebrate diversity — eg, different abilities, races, religions, cultural practices and so on.

- Ask learners to bring hand-held mirrors to class, if possible.

### Language:

Ask your learners to look at themselves in the mirrors, then draw pictures of their faces. Display these pictures on your bulletin board. Look at the display and ask the learners to describe their similarities and differences. Discuss other differences: the way they sound, their likes and dislikes, and even their experiences. Talk about how differences make us unique and special.

### Speaking and writing:

Encourage learners to look for positive attributes in their classmates. Ask them to write their names on separate strips of paper and put these into a box. Let each learner draw a name from the box. He or she can then share with the class something special about the person whose name they have drawn. Older learners can write a letter to the person, listing all the things that make him or her special. These letters can be read aloud at the end of the lesson.

### Life Orientation:

Show learners the cover of the booklet and read the title. Look at each pic-

ture in turn and ask them to "tell" the story. As learners look at and name the animals, draw attention to the animals' expressions. Ask learners how they think the animals are feeling, and why.

Read the story and ask your learners to comment on how Monkey and Zebra feel when they are told they cannot go to the party, when they are included and when they are thrown out of the party. Discuss how the other animals feel at each of these times.

Ask learners to share how they feel when they are left out of games or parties. Discuss whether it is fair to exclude people from events simply because they look or sound different. Find examples of where this happens in real life — eg, refugees. Ask the learners to suggest reasons why people behave in this way — eg, fear or misunderstanding.

Ask older learners to find out the meaning of the word "refuge". They can then investigate:

- Why people become refugees;
- The problems faced by refugees in their home countries;
- Problems faced by refugees in South Africa (and other destination countries); and
- The rights of refugees.

Examine ways in which young people can make their governments and citizens more tolerant towards refugees. Also brainstorm ideas for encouraging tolerance and respect.

### Social Sciences: History:

Learners can investigate people who were forced to flee South Africa under the apartheid government.

The Huguenots, who settled in South Africa during the 1600s, were refugees from Europe. They were persecuted for their religious beliefs. In researching the

Huguenots, learners can investigate surnames like De Villiers, Le Roux, Malherbe and Rossoux (some learners may discover that they have Huguenot roots!). They can also look at Huguenot architecture, including the famous Cape Dutch homesteads found on wine estates.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Language: LO 2&3
  - Speaking and Writing: LO 2&4
  - Life Orientation: LO 2
  - Social Sciences: History: LO 1
- Nadia O'Brien



## How to make your storybook



**THIS week we publish an eight-page abridged storybook, 'Horns Only', for you to cut out and keep. Follow the instructions below.**

**Step 1:** Tear pages 4 and 5 out of today's ReadRight and cut around the thick border.

**Step 2:** Fold the sheet in half, so that pages 3 and 6 of ReadRight are touching. Page 4 of ReadRight should be facing you.

**Step 3:** Fold the sheet in half again, so that pages 2, 3, 6 and 7 of the storybook touch. Pages 1 and 8 of the storybook should now be facing you.

**Step 4:** Once again, fold the sheet in half. Pages 4 and 5 of the storybook will now be touching.

**Step 5:** Staple along the spine of the book, then carefully separate the pages using scissors. Happy reading!

*Horns Only* is part of the Stars of Africa English reading series, which has a range of readers to suit children from pre-school to Grade 7. For more information, contact Maskew Miller Longman's customer services department on (021) 531-7750.

