PRE-READING ACTIVITIES (See *The Black Cat Guide to Graded Readers*) - **R. Hill**
AIMS
1 To elicit or pre-teach vocabulary that will be important (that learners might not know).
2 To activate learners' schemata (that is, what learners already know about the subject)**.**
3 To encourage learners to predict what might happen. (This is my favourite aim!)
    Good readers are readers who make predictions about what they are going to read.
    Everyone agrees on this, although some don't approve of encouraging mere "guesswork".

PLACES TO ENCOURAGE PREDICTION
a) The title.
The title of today's story is: ***The Legend of King Labraidh***
(N.b. A good *after reading* activity is to invent another title for the story.)

b) The first sentence(s).
The first sentence of today's story: 'Long ago there was a king in Ireland called Labraidh.'
The next sentences are: 'He had a lot of red hair. It looked like a red bush.'
A connected activity is to play the first paragraph(s) of the **recording** (with books closed).
Simply ask learners to say as much as they can remember, and then ask follow-up questions.

c) Any significant sentence(s).
Extract a significant sentence (or more) from the text and ask 'What do you think happens to lead up to this?' The sentence chosen can even be the last sentence of the text.
E.g. The last sentences of the first half of today's story are:
'You're free, Brian!' said the king, 'But you must never tell anyone about my secret – No one! Do you promise'?' 'Yes, Your majesty,' said Brian, 'I promise.'

d) Scrambled significant sentences.
Extract some significant sentences from the text (from 3 to 6), write them up in scrambled order, & ask the class to suggest the order in which they will occur (this will make learners think about plot).
E.g. Some sentences from the first half of today's story are: (Put 1, 2, 3, 4 in the square brackets.)
(a) **[ ]** When he finished cutting the king's hair, the king's men came and took poor Brian to prison.
(b) **[ ]** No one wanted to cut the king's hair.
(c) **[ ]** 'Start cutting my hair,' said the king, 'but be very careful.'
(d) **[ ]** The king's men found a young barber named Brian.

e) Significant 'key' words or phrases.
Write up some key words. Learners predict how and why they might occur (e.g. in relation to what possible event, or to what kind of character). E.g. Some phrases from the first half of today's story:
    a king   a young barber   the king's ears   prison   a secret

f) A gapped passage.
Extract a passage and eliminate some of the words or phrases (gap-filling procedure). This is a prediction activity, not a language test, so eliminate words to do with plot / character. Learners fill in the gaps & then check their ideas when they read. E.g. from the first half of today's story:
'Yes, I have ears like a _____ ,' said the king. 'Now finish your work. Then my men will take you away because you know my _____ .'

g) Illustration(s).
'Walk' through the book, or show just one picture. (N.b. also show it as a 'flash' or 'slow reveal').
You can always ask questions such as: *Who can you see?   What are they doing?   What do you think has just happened?   How are they feeling?   What do you think they are saying?*

USING SUMMARIES (See also *The Black Cat Guide to Graded Readers*) - ROBERT HILL

A king of Ireland, called Labraidh, had a lot of thick red hair. It was like a red bush. But his hair covered a secret: his ears were like horse's ears! For this reason he only had a haircut once a year. After cutting his hair, the barbers were sent away to an island far away because they knew the king's secret, and the king didn't want his people to laugh at him. One year, a young man called Brian cut his hair. When he had finished, the king's men took him to prison, before sending him away. But Brian's mother, a widow, begged the king not to send him away. The king agreed, but Brian had to promise to never tell anyone about the king's ears.

Brian became ill keeping the secret, so a doctor suggested he told the secret to an old willow tree, which he did. He felt a lot better after! One day, the king's musician needed wood for a new harp. He cut the wood from this tree. But that night, at court, when he started playing, the music said "The king has horse's ears". Everyone laughed and the king was angry. But then he decided to laugh with his people. He set all the barbers free, and became a great king, loved by everyone.
(220 words)

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(40 words indicated to cut)

1 Modified Cloze Procedure / 2 Put the sentences in order ! 3 Correct the mistakes!
4 Rub out / 5 Dictogloss / 6 Cut it down by (e.g. 20) words. Then cut more words.
7 Build it up by (e.g. 20) words. Then add more words.
8 Rewrite it to change the tone (e.g. make it happier, sadder, comic, darker…), or rewrite from the point of view of a character, or an external person (journalist, policeman, friend…)