

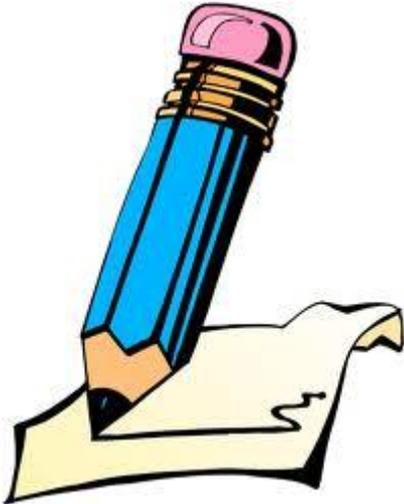
Writing Skills

A guide for parents



Literacy Guide for Parents

This guide is designed to help you understand how Swinton Queen Primary School teaches writing. It will also provide practical guidance on how you can support your child at home.



Levels explained

*By the end of Key Stage 1 (year 2) most children will be working at Y2 Secure or above

*By the end of Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 4) most children will be working at Year 4 Secure

*By the end of Key Stage 2 (year 6) most children will be working at a Year 6 Secure

Introduction

At Swinton Queen Primary School we believe the ability to write is one of the fundamental skills children will need for lifelong learning. We aim for our children to enjoy writing and to understand its purpose, as well as have a good knowledge of grammar, punctuation and sentence construction. From the time they enter Foundation stage, they are encouraged to write, as a means of recording, their thoughts and ideas. This will include emergent writing, which may not be recognisable or legible to an adult, but allows the child the chance to practise and start to develop the skills of writing. Teachers will help children to sound out words, using their knowledge of letters and sounds, and allow them to make plausible attempts at words. Teachers may correct key words or sounds that have been focused on in class. During the early stages of writing, children will be encouraged to have a go at and will not be criticised for not forming letters correctly, incorrect spellings or lack of punctuation. We will plan to guide them through our teaching, and develop letter formation and spelling strategies as the children progress through the school.

Across school, teachers allow plenty of opportunities for children to develop their understanding of a range of different writing. They will spend time learning what makes a good piece and will use success criteria to mark, edit and improve their own work. We place a high focus on training the children to identify the development needs in their own writing, with support and guidance from the teachers and support staff. This enables them to be more reflective learners and develop their life long skills.

Simple advice on helping your child enjoy writing

Children need to want to write in order to become successful writers. However, writing isn't easy and some children find it a chore rather than fun. So, how can we encourage children to write?

Follow your child's interests:

Does your child like football, dancing, wrestling, designing clothes, music or playing with make up? Whatever their interests, these can be great writing opportunities. Perhaps a football diary, for writing short reports on recent matches. Use postcards or fancy paper for writing a short message to Grandma - and make sure she writes back! Provide post it stickers and encourage them to write messages to everyone.

Talk comes first!

The standard of children's writing at school is not only based on how they form letters and how neat their handwriting is. They must be able to express their ideas clearly and appropriately. Can they put their thoughts in order and discuss what they want to say? Are they given the opportunity to hear the spoken language used correctly? Are they read to regularly so that they get to hear and learn new vocabulary? Talking to your children is vital, it encourages them to express themselves and listen and respond correctly.



Different types of Genres

Genres are the different types of writing styles in which the children learn to write.

There are 6 main non-fiction genres of writing plus narrative (story). These are:

- Recount e.g. a diary entry, or a retelling of a visit
- Report e.g. recorded facts about the Ancient Greeks
- Instructions e.g. How to make a pizza
- Explanations e.g. why do we have night and day?
- Persuasion e.g. a poster or leaflet encouraging people to come to Swinton Queen Primary School
- Discussion e.g. should school uniform be made compulsory?
- Narrative - a range of different types e.g. rags to riches, overcoming a monster, tragedy etc.

For each genre the children are taught to plan in a specific way. This enables them to get their ideas down on paper before they write and plan how they will set it out. These planning styles develop through school as their ability improves. The appropriate planning formats can be found at the end of this booklet.

In KS1, the children are taught three non-fiction genres; recount, report and instructions, plus the basic form of narrative

In LKS2, the children are taught the above genres plus explanation and narrative in more depth.

In UKS2, the children are taught the above genres with the addition of persuasion and discussion and a range of narrative styles.

Narrative is taught specifically through the 'Talk 4 Writing' method. Information regarding this can be found at the back of this booklet.

The features of each genre.

As the children are taught each particular writing style, they have to learn the features of each one and which connectives are used to join the sentences and paragraphs together effectively. For example;

Recount

First person
Time connectives
Times or dates

Report

Third person
Facts/figures/times or dates

Instructions

Time connectives or numbers
Imperative (bossy) verbs e.g. Cut, Stick or Fold

Explanation

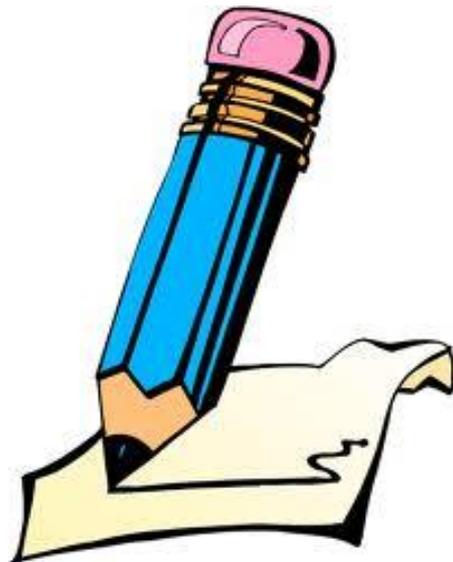
Causal connectives
Facts or figures

Persuasion

Snappy slogan
Exaggeration
Questions
Description
Word play
Benefits

Discussion

Opposing connectives
No opinion until the conclusion
Balanced argument



There is a large range of varying connectives which can be used but below are a few examples;

Time Connectives

First, next, then, after that, finally, a few minutes later, the following year

Causal connectives

If...then, but, so, because, therefore, although. Consequently. as a result of

Opposing connectives

Firstly, secondly, however, although, despite, also, moreover, in conclusion

It isn't easy to teach children to write, especially if they are reluctant. However, at Swinton Queen Primary we strive to provide the children with a variety of engaging stimuli and first hand opportunities in order for them to flourish and grow as writers.

If you require any more information on how we teach writing please feel free to speak to your child's class teacher.

Talk for Writing

About Talk for Writing

Talk for Writing - the key to raising attainment.

Talk for Writing, developed by Pie Corbett supported by Julia Strong, is powerful because it is based on the principles of how children learn.



Talk for Writing enables children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic orally before they try reading and analysing it. Through fun activities that help them rehearse the tune of the language they need, followed by shared writing to show them how to craft their writing, children are helped to write in the same style. Schools that have adopted the approach have not only increased their children's progress but have found that children and teachers alike love it. It not only works throughout primary schools from the early years to Year 6 but also in secondary schools where it is key to making literacy across the curriculum really work. This website has been developed by Pie and Julia to form a network of all those schools and teachers who are interested in developing the approach and keeping them informed of Pie's Talk4Writing conferences as well as possible training opportunities. We hope that you will want to join the free network today and help us make a real difference to the quality of education in our schools.

The method

Talk for Writing is powerful because it enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version. It builds on 3 key stages:

- Stage 1 - Imitation
- Stage 2 - Innovation
- Stage 3 - Independent Application



The Imitation stage

Once the teacher has established a creative context and an engaging start, a typical Talk-for-Writing unit would begin with some engaging activities warming up the tune of the text, as well as the topic focused on, to help children internalise the pattern of the language required. This is often followed by talking an exemplar text, supported visually by a text map and physical movements to help the children recall the story or non-fiction piece. In this way the children hear the text, say it for themselves and enjoy it before seeing it written down. Once they have internalised the language of the text, they are in a position to read the text and start to think about the key ingredients that help to make it work. This stage could include a range of reading as-a-reader and as-a-writer activities. Understanding the structure of the text is easy if you use the boxing-up technique and then help the children to analyse the features that have helped to make the text work. In this way the class starts to co-construct a toolkit for this type of text so that they can talk about the ingredients themselves - a key stage in internalising the toolkit in their heads.

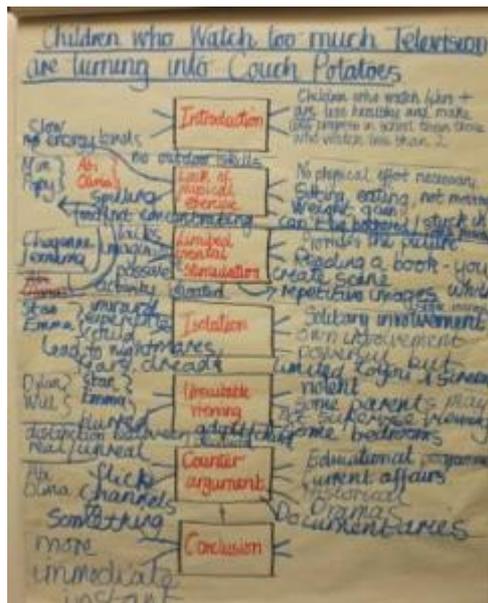
The Innovation stage



Once the children have internalised the text, they are then ready to start innovating on the pattern of the text. This could begin with more advanced activities to warm up the key words and phrases of the type of text focused on so the children can magpie ideas. Younger children and less confident writers alter their text maps and orally rehearse what they want to say, creating their own version. The key activity in this stage is shared writing, helping the children to write their own by "doing one together" first. This could begin with using a boxed-up grid (innovating on the exemplar plan) to show how to plan the text and then turning the plan into writing. This allows the children to see how you can innovate on the exemplar text and select words and phrases that really work. Demonstrating how to regularly read your work aloud to see if it works is important here. This process enables the children to write their own versions through developing their ability to generate good words and phrases and also, hopefully, develops the inner judge when they start to decide why one word or phrase is best. If, during this process a teaching assistant (or in KS2 an able child) flip-charts up words and phrases suggested, these can be put on the washing line alongside the shared writing so when the children come to write they have models and words and phrases to support them. Throughout the shared writing, the children should be strengthening the toolkit so they start to understand the type of ingredients that may help. Once they have finished their own paragraph/s children should be encouraged to swap their work with a response partner. Then

with the aid of a visualiser, the whole class can also discuss some of the more successful work. Time now needs to be found to enable the children to give their own work a polish in the light of these discussions and perhaps to begin the dialogue about what works by writing their own comment on their work for the teacher to comment on.

The invention/independent application stage



The teacher now has the opportunity to assess the children's work and to adapt their planning in the light of what the children can actually do. This stage could begin with some activities focused on helping the children understand aspects that they were having difficulty with and should include time for the children to have a go at altering their work in the light of what they have just learnt so that they start to make progress. This stage will continue to focus on the next steps needed to support progress so the children can become independent speakers and writers of this type of text. Perhaps some more examples of the text are compared followed by more shared writing on a related topic and then the children can have a go themselves on a related topic of their own choosing. Typically, teachers work with the children to set 'tickable targets' which focus on aspects that they need to attend to. Again this section will end with response partner and whole class discussion about what features really worked, followed by an opportunity to polish your work. This process

also helps the children internalise the toolkit for such writing so that it becomes a practical flexible toolkit in the head rather than a list to be looked at and blindly followed. At the end of the unit, the children's work should be published or displayed. The teacher will now have a good picture of what features to focus on in the next unit to move the children forward. It is important to provide children with a purpose for their writing so classroom display or some sort of publishing is useful.

What the primary teachers say about Talk for Writing

"Previously we did lots of speaking and listening but it didn't seem to emerge in the writing. The 'talk for writing' techniques really motivated the children. Now they automatically read what they have written and discuss whether it sounds good. It has transformed the way they write." - Leading teacher from Primary National Strategy 'Talk for Writing' project



"I've had such a great time in the last year doing 'talk for writing' with my class that I really want to share this. The effects were extraordinary. I could see the effect in all the subjects and the evidence in the books is amazing. When you watch the children write, now you can see them thinking about how to compose." - Shona Thomson, teacher showcasing impact of the approach at the non-fiction Lewisham conference

"Having done a lot of oral storytelling with KS1 children, I was a little sceptical about getting Year 5 children to stand up and get really involved in expressive oral re-telling. How wrong was I!" - Maria Wheeler, teacher on Lewisham non-fiction project.