

Roade Primary School

Supporting writing at home

At Roade we aim to teach our children to write for different purposes and audiences using a variety of genres. Throughout their time at school the children will experience a range of fiction and non-fiction writing including poetry. They will also be encouraged to use ICT as a vehicle for their writing

Parents and carers can help their children in a variety of ways and the following booklet may provide helpful with structuring home support. The booklet looks at the main features of writing that are expected at each year group and splits these up into 4 areas, text structure and organisation; sentence structure; punctuation and effective language. This is progressive and so parents will have to look at the year groups above and below.

Writing emerges at different stages and times for different children. Here are some ideas for you to try along the way from emergent writing through to competent pen-smith! These can be used with preschool children to enable your child to be more independent.

Helping your child to write

In order for any child to write meaningfully, he or she must first build up their fine motor skills. Art projects, working with play dough, measuring and pouring sand and water, and practicing writing are excellent ways to improve fine motor skills.

The skills along the path to writing are:

- Scribbling with crayons.
Have plenty of paper and writing materials on hand for your child.
Place paper pads and pencils throughout the house.
Encourage all efforts to write.

- Making circles and other basic shapes.
Again, put plenty of paper and writing materials around the house.
Point out shapes in the house and try to draw them together (be encouraging).
Have stencils available for your child to trace.
Discuss your child's attempts with him/her in a positive way.
Encourage your child to look at and talk about their work.

- Gaining more control of small muscles through...
Squeezing activities.
Let them move water from bowl to bowl with a sponge.
Provide play dough.
Squeeze a small ball or bean bag.
Pinching activities.
Move water with an eye dropper.
Use tweezers to move beads from one dish to another.
Make collages together with materials you buy, collect, or find together.
Using scissors (with your supervision).
Cut pictures from magazines.
Cut play dough.
Cut plain paper or lined paper.

Cut collage pieces.

Lacing and stringing.

Lacing cards are available in toy departments.

Have them practice lacing and then tying shoes.

Use shoe laces to string beads or macaroni.

- Tracing activities.
Draw lines on a page and have them trace the lines.
Draw a simple path to help Goldilocks find her way home and have them trace the path (children seem to live activities like this).
Find a book with simple mazes for your child to trace.
Spray some shaving cream on your bathroom or kitchen counter and let your child play with it like finger paint. (It's fun and you'll have a clean counter, too.)
- Beginning to make drawings of real people, objects, and events.
Encourage all efforts (stick people are beautiful when your child draws them).
Ask your child about his/her work.
Keep samples and encourage your child to look at and talk about their work.
Hang your child's art in their room or on the refrigerator.
- Beginning to recognise letters.
Write your child's name on a card so they can look at it often.
Find the letters in their name in other words.
Encourage your child pick out letters they know.
Talk about the letters in your child's name.
Point out and talk about capital and lower case letters.
Play letter lotto (a Bingo type game using letters).
Read alphabet books.
- Beginning to recognise written names and some words.
Work with your child on picking out words they recognize in magazines and books.
Together, notice similarities and differences in words (bell & dell, wall & walk).
Make a word box with a word and a picture of that word when possible.
Encourage your child in their efforts.
- Realizing the permanency of words (r-u-n always spells run).
Write down a story your child tells you and reread it every day.
Read familiar books with only one or two lines on a page.
Notice word labels on boxes; reread them to reinforce their permanency.
Buy a first words dictionary and use it together.
- Beginning to imitate letters in writing.
Provide writing materials.
Have word and picture cards on hand.
Have letter cards and stencils on hand.
Encourage letter writing and hang up their paper.
Make shoe strings into letters with your child.

Use play dough to make letters.
Provide sandpaper for letter tracing (the feel of the letter helps you remember).
Provide chalk and a chalkboard.

Attempting to write their name.
Do not worry if the letters are out of order or backwards.
You write their name and encourage them to copy it.
When your child says they can write their name alone - let them.
Encourage all efforts.
Provide plenty of writing materials.

Beginning to write other words.
Encourage all writing.
Be ready to write words for them to copy when they ask you.
Show pride in their efforts.
Write stories with your child and put them with your child's other books.

Improving through practice and positive feedback.
Encourage children to write letters to family members, thank you notes, notes to their favourite character in a book.
Help them write rhymes.
Have them write reminder notes to you about anything they want you to remember.

Reception

Text structure and organisation

Retell a simple story putting pictures in the right order
Write a for a variety of purposes e.g. cards, invitations, lists, stories, information, recounts
Talk about ideas, feelings and events

Sentence structure

Say a sentence that begins with I
Say a sentence that begins another way e.g. he, she we, dad, mum, name, it, this

Punctuation

Leave spaces between words written
Write a sentence that begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop

Handwriting

Hold a pencil effectively and begin to form recognisable letters that are correctly formed

Ideas for supporting your child with writing at home

Practise writing own name with the correct letter formation
Play with malleable materials such as playdough, threading beads, etc
Read words in the environment, e.g. Tesco, on/off etc
Experience different types of writing, e.g. birthday cards, thank you letters, labels, captions, stories, rhymes.

Year one

Text structure and organisation

Write a sentence that begins with a character's name

E.g. *Cinderella wanted to go to the ball*

Write a sentence that begins with a story opener

E.g. *once upon a time, Jack went to the market to sell his cow*

Write recounts in the right order

Write instructions in the right order

Write four interesting facts about a topic

Write a short story with a beginning, middle and an end

Write labels and captions for pictures

Sentence structure

Write simple sentences joined with 'and', 'but', 'and then'

E.g. *I went to the park and I played on the swings*

We went for a walk but it was raining

We went for a walk and then had fish and chips

Punctuation

Write a sentence with a capital letter and full stop

Write a sentence with a question mark

Effective language

Use adjectives (describing words) in sentences to describe colour, size and feelings

E.g. *I played with the big, red ball at the park*

Identify verbs (doing words) in reading and begin to use these in writing

Handwriting

Most letters are correctly formed and orientated using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.

Spaces are left between words accurately

Ideas for supporting your child with writing at home

Involve your child with real writing at home, for example greetings cards, shopping lists, postcards, and party invitations

Encourage children to reply to requests and questions in full sentences. This will assist your child in improving their grammar and impact upon their writing.

E.g. *what would you like to do today?*

Child: *I would like to go to the park.*

Provide the children with opportunities to write about things that interest them.

E.g. *a visit to a football match or a trip to a dinosaur museum.*

Year two

Text structure and organisation

Group sentences about the same idea together

Start a new paragraph when introducing a new character or setting, in fiction writing

Start a new paragraph when introducing a new piece of information, in non-fiction writing

Use headings and sub headings

Sentence structure

Write sentences that are joined with if, so or because

Eg *we went into town on Saturday because we needed to buy a birthday present.*

Write sentences that begin with time connectives 'later', 'after a while', 'next'

Eg *after a while it stopped raining so that we could go out*

Vary the way that the sentences start, not always with he/she or the name

Punctuation

Write sentences with a list and use commas to spate items; progressing to remembering the final 'and'

Write sentences using exclamation marks and question marks

Effective language

Use a range of adjectives to describe speed, shape and texture

Use alternative words for said in writing eg shouted, cried, whispered, giggled

Eg *"what a great goal" he shouted*

Add adverbs (ly words) when using said

Eg *"what a great goal" he shouted loudly*

Handwriting

Write legibly using upper and lower case letters appropriately, and observing correct spacing between words. Start to join letters together

Ideas for supporting your child with writing at home

Model and encourage the use of complete and complex sentences when talking

Put the weekly spelling words into sentences do this as both a verbal and written exercise

Play word association games

Play word games, give children a simple sentence, can they change the noun, add an adjective, add a connective?

Encourage writing for real purposes, e.g. letters or emails to friends and relatives, thank you letters and party invitations

Write about exciting events to bring in and share at school

Keep diaries of special events or holidays

Take an interest, e.g. a football match, or film and write a report or facts about it.

Year three and four

Text structure and organisation

Start to organise groups of sentences into paragraphs

Write openings to a story that will hook the reader eg starting with an action sequence or speech

In a story, include a problem that needs to be solved

Include a solution to the problem

Recap on the main parts of the topic in non fiction writing

Use concluding words and phrases e.g. in conclusion.... finally.....

Sentence structure

Write sentences that begin with ambitious connectives eg before, as well as, although

E.g. *Although we were already running late, we stopped at the park for a quick game of football.*

Write sentences that begin with ambitious 'ly' starters, eg amazingly gently

E.g. *cautiously we crept up the stairs after the mysterious cat*

Punctuation

Use speech marks in the right place for dialogue and put other punctuation inside the speech marks

E.g. *"Do you think we should open the box?" stuttered Fred.*

Use commas accurately in complex sentences

E.g. *He stepped cautiously downwards slowly, one stuttering step at a time softly, softly, step by step.*

Effective language

Use different words for said eg shouted, screamed, whispered

Use adverbs to describe words

Eg *ran quickly, flew gracefully*

Use adverbial phrases to describe when and where things happen

Eg *at the top of the green hill, a small boy was starting his journey.*

Just as the clock struck twelve, Cinderella had to leave

Handwriting

Write with consistency in the size and proportion of letters and spacing within and between words, using correct formation of handwriting joins

Ideas for supporting your child with writing at home

Write a diary or blog using ICT

In new environments ask your children about their senses eg what can you see, hear, smell, touch and taste?

If children are doing any writing at home or any home learning encourage effective language and consistent punctuation.

Year five

Text structure and organisation

Use paragraphs and group similar ideas together consistently

Use words that make the ideas in one paragraph flow into the next

Include two points of view on an issue

Invite a response from a reader by using different devices, e.g. emotive language, questions and challenge

E.g. *have you ever heard of a dog so large?*

Sentence structure

Write complex sentences starting in a variety of ways eg *ly, ing, ed*

Eg *slowly the hands of the clock ticked around and I knew I needed to think of a plan, quickly!*

Move parts of a sentence around and add further connectives

Eg because *there were so many people, I had to stand on a box so that I could be seen*

Punctuation

Use speech marks in the right place for dialogue and capital letters and the appropriate punctuation inside the speech marks

Eg *"look out!" shouted the man.*

"What time is it?" asked the girl.

Effective language

Use adverbial phrases to describe how, when or where something is happening

E.g. *she looked at me in a strange way*

The flowers were growing on the top of the hill

Use interesting vocabulary

Use the same tense in writing

Write about why things happen

Handwriting

Adapt handwriting for specific purposes, for example printing, use of italics

Ideas for supporting your child with writing at home

Keep diaries or journals, especially after special trips and events

Write reports/information about topics of interest

Encourage writing letters or emails to family or friends

Write book/film/game reviews

Ask for complex sentences using the weekly spellings

Year six

Text structure and organisation

Always use paragraphs consistently in a range of texts

Make links between the paragraphs

Keep narrative interesting by solving the problem in an interesting way

Write fluently so one idea leads to another

Write a conclusion, for non fiction writing, which is to the point and acts as a summary

Vary paragraph order depending on the text type and purpose

Sentence structure

Use a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences, varying the position of the main clause

Vary the sentence openings

Use and embedded clause

Punctuation

Use a full range of punctuation to create certain effects eg brackets, ellipses, colons, semi colons

Effective language

Use vocabulary in a precise way for desired effect

Make writing more powerful by using similes and metaphors to create imagery

Use alliteration to make writing flow

Onomatopoeia for dramatic effect

Handwriting

Use different styles of handwriting for different purposes with a range of media, developing a consistent and personal legible style

Ideas for supporting your child with writing at home

Encourage children to keep a diary or a journal

Get the children involved in real life letter writing, e.g. letters of complaint

Encourage the children to write a variety of postcards, letters or emails

Play verbal games to build descriptions of objects

Verbalise sentence starters

Read from a range of fiction and non-fiction

Encourage the use of interesting vocabulary

Ask for complex sentences using the weekly spellings

How to Help Your Child with Writing

Writing is an acquired skill and the sooner a child can develop a love for it the better. Children who are struggling writers or who resist writing are usually the ones whose written skills haven't been nurtured by daily practice or they see it as a puzzle they can't solve. What most people forget - parents, teachers and students - is that as long as a child has a story inside her, she is special. If he has ideas, wonders about his world then he is able to write. So how do you bring out your child's inner writer?

Instructions

1

Read -- Anyone who reads a lot will have a better sense of how to write properly. Plus it opens up a whole world of wonder for your child. Make it a fun exercise; take your son for a day at the library. Make a big deal of him choosing books and checking them out.

2

If your child is old enough, give her a journal, somewhere to write things down and get her creativity going. For younger children to write, encourage them to draw pictures and then label or caption them. The trick is just to make writing fun.

3

Set aside time for writing every day. It will help establish a routine very early for your child. It's a common practice for most famous writers.

4

Allow your child to free-write. Often, free-writing leads to bigger ideas and helps your child to empty out whatever is in her head.

5

Read and write with your child. Any activity a child gets to do with mum and dad is always fun. It also demystifies writing and reading into habits that are normal rather than obscure.

6

Praise your child. This is by far the most important rule. Be there and be active in your child's writing. Take the time to spell-check and suggest ways to improve with their school assignments, and when they do well, show it off, put it on the fridge!