



Teaching Writing at Oak Cottage Primary School

Main principles

Texts

Any texts used should be of a high quality.

- Level of challenge. Ideally the text will challenge even the highest ability in the group, whether in terms of vocabulary, grammar use, structuring the contents or otherwise. Which one of these is the most appropriate will depend on which writing skill you are focusing your teaching on.
- Extend vocabulary. This may be linked to the level of difficulty, or might link in with cross curricular work that you are doing which fits with your text but you should try to ensure that children are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary in both fiction and non-fiction. Where these new or unfamiliar words appear they should be addressed in an appropriate way (see Teaching).
- Where possible, examine texts for how often the words from the spelling list for your year group appear. If they are not present at all it does not mean that you shouldn't use the text but be aware of how else you are covering your key vocabulary from the curriculum.
- Novels might be approximately 120-150 pages long. Articles and shorter pieces / extracts may be shorter, or may be supported with diagrams in non-fiction, but should still present an appropriate challenge to the reader.

Frequency

Writing needs to be taught frequently in order to rehearse and maintain the widest variety of skills. However, there is no set number of sessions that need to be covered in the short term. This will be best planned when balancing the competing demands of writing and other areas of English that you wish / need to cover. There may also be overlap between them.

Teaching

Writing as an adult is only 'easy' because we have built a number of strategies, gathered often extensive prior knowledge, have a wide vocabulary and know different structures for different writing purposes. These are the skills that we need to teach children through modelling and exposure followed by rehearsal and independent use. As a rule, if you 'do' something in your head while modelling writing to a class, share and explain what you did and why along with the outcome of it.

Structuring a writing lesson

The following is a structure to use for planning a writing session or series of sessions. It may be adjusted from time to time but as a principle most sessions or sequence of sessions will contain the following order and take account of the suggestions and explanation in the right hand column.

<u>Stage of session</u>	<u>Elaboration</u>	
Teacher introduces the purpose of the writing	• Purpose of writing identified • Examples of writing type explored • Key features identified • Vocabulary choices reasoned and definitions of unfamiliar words given	
Grammar feature taught or recapped if previously taught independently	• Key grammar focus to be drawn out and taught • Teacher to model how grammar feature is to be included in writing • In-between the teacher modelling the children should have opportunities to apply the grammar skill themselves to ensure all children remain engaged and to identify those that may need more support • SEN children should remain with their class • Model good writing habits – that is, as an adult what decisions and thinking are taking place in your head to make vocabulary choices, structure sentences and order writing	
Activity • First stages of children working independently • First opportunity to gather assessment observations. • Next stage of children working independently or supported on the text/skill	KS2 Planning to come up with ideas and set goals to refer back to during the writing process. Explain the strategy, such as writing frames, and how and when to use it. Model the strategy to pupils encouraging their involvement in the process. Have pupils use the strategy independently - whiteboards are key for identifying those who need further input. Drafting to note down key ideas and set out a logical order. For example, using writing frames. Sharing their ideas and drafts for feedback. For example, in pairs, listening and reading along as the author reads aloud. Evaluating to see if they're achieving their writing goals by re-reading their writing so far, or using feedback from teachers and peers. For example, self-monitoring through questions like 'Have I used the right vocabulary?' Revising by making changes based on feedback and self-evaluation.	KS1 Pre-writing activities help pupils to think of ideas and organise them, such as finding out about a topic they're not familiar with, or arranging their ideas visually using a planning tool. Provide children with a 'hook'; this links to the book/text being shared and builds towards something real. The hook might include a drama activity, video, object, letter, photograph, or experience—anything the children would be excited and motivated to write about. The 'excellence model' is introduced by the teacher to exemplify the finished piece that the children are aiming to produce. Drafting to note down key ideas and set out a logical order. As the children begin their drafts, provide on the spot feedback. The focus at this stage is very much about recording ideas in a way that supports the sequencing of the piece. To develop resilience, chunk the drafting process into manageable sections with each part building towards the final piece. Model turning a plan/pre-writing activity into a piece of writing based on the key features identified, breaking the plan into small sections. Whilst writing, the children are encouraged to use word banks, sentence stems, and scaffolds to support ambitious choices and

	For example, coming up with synonyms for repeated words Editing to make sure their work is accurate and coherent. For example, checking spelling using a dictionary Publishing or presenting the finished piece to others. For example, displaying pupils' work. Encourage pupils to take more responsibility for using the above writing components themselves as they progress. Follow these steps: 1. Explain the strategy, such as writing frames, and how and when to use it 2. Model the strategy to pupils 3. Use the strategy together 4. Do guided practice, gradually releasing responsibility to pupils 5. Have pupils use the strategy independently	sequencing in their work. Revising and Editing Having produced their first draft, children are shown examples that highlight lots of revisions and edits; children are encouraged to understand writing as an iterative process. Exemplify what a 'strong' model is and compare to a 'weak' model. This supports discussion about the components of the stronger model and how they could be included in the children's own work. Model revising the 'weaker' piece before children apply similar strategies to their own writing. Whilst undertaking this, the children could be provided with a selection of ideas which they can choose from to revise their piece. They are also asked to return to the ideas and word banks generated in the pre-writing phase and to integrate them where appropriate. Feedback, including peer marking, supports the editing process. Peer marking and sharing of work is used to improve ideas. Sharing or presenting the finished piece to others. Having completed the writing, children are encouraged to share their work with the audience identified at the beginning of the process. This may include presenting it on an online platform or taking a photocopy home to share with family.
	Activities should be differentiated, as LA writers may not be able to engage with the text at the same level as AA writers. This can be done by activity, success criteria etc The teacher might position themselves with a focus group previously identified or that has become apparent during the session for part, or on occasion most, of the writing process.	

Additional support:

[Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1](#) – Education Endowment Foundation

[Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2](#) – Education Endowment Foundation