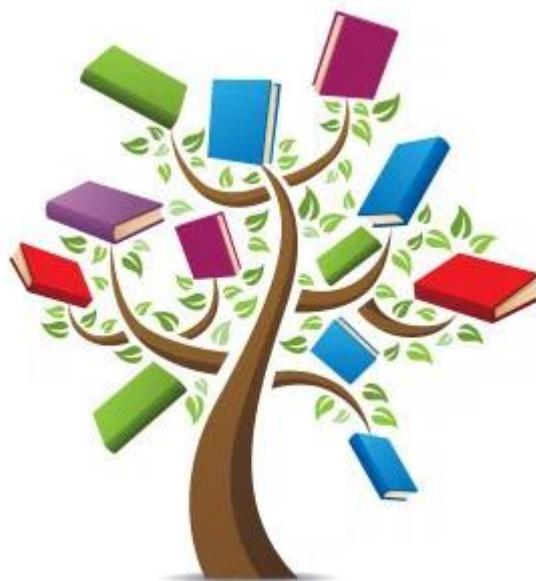


Writing Study: Lessons That Will Last A lifetime.



Introduction

This document is produced with the intention of being used alongside our **Real-World Literacy** approach to teaching writing. To find out more about to teach writing through this approach you can visit our website [here](#).

Talking About Writing: Writing Study

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Talking About Writing: Writing Study

Writing Study mini-lessons are a forum for demonstrating writing strategies that can last forever. Research into the teaching of writing (Graham & Perin, 2007, DfE, 2012, [Education Endowment Fund](#), 2017 & [Gadd, 2014](#)) consistently places [writing-strategy instruction as the single most effective strategy for improving writing outcomes](#). It is therefore right to spend time helping children deepen their understanding of writing and what is in it for them. Writing strategies are vital because ultimately, they save children time. They allow children to get down to the act of writing quickly and confidently. Children often know what they want to do but not how to do it. This is where Writing Study Lessons like the ones outlined in this document come in.

The sessions outlined below are about teaching the ‘generalities’ of writing. That is why we call them *Lessons That Last Forever*. They encourage children to be self-regulating when writing - a strategy which research shows is of huge benefit to children's writing outcomes - we have written about self-regulating writing techniques [here](#). These higher-level objectives all involves imparting to the students the kinds of competence that has previously been reserved for teachers or professional authors from a range of disciplines.

Children developing their writing in such ways is a major intellectual achievement. It is an achievement which requires more than just a rich diet of relatively unrestricted writing experiences. [Research also suggests](#) the following as additional elements that must be present for writing instruction to be successful:

- Children must be made aware of the full extent of the writing process and this why we have attached the common writing process in our pack.
- By having this process explicitly taught to them and by having it on display in all classrooms, children can work towards independence in managing this whole process.
- The thinking that is involved in generating an idea, drafting, revising, editing and publishing need to be modelled by the teacher - ideally a writing-teacher, who can thereby show the problem-solving and planning processes that children are often unaware of as apprentice writers.

Please note that what we suggest in our document are only suggestions. When thinking of what your pupils need, teachers should ask questions like: what are my children trying to do in their drafts? What is their image of good writing? What can I tell them in a minilesson that might help and be long-lasting? We hope you find the following lessons useful not only for your pupils but maybe for your own writing too!

As part of this pack, we give many strategies for generating original writing ideas - just the sorts of strategies real authors use. As teachers, it's important that we remind ourselves that mature writers are able to make writing tasks meaningful for themselves and that this is part of their competence. What we must do is consider how do they do it and how can we bring these sorts of practices into the classroom? Making a writing task meaningful for oneself is a matter of creating a learning goal which can take account of external requirements which my teacher needs to see me do but it also has the far more powerful goal of bringing personal significance to the writing for oneself too.

Ways Of Approaching Writing Topics

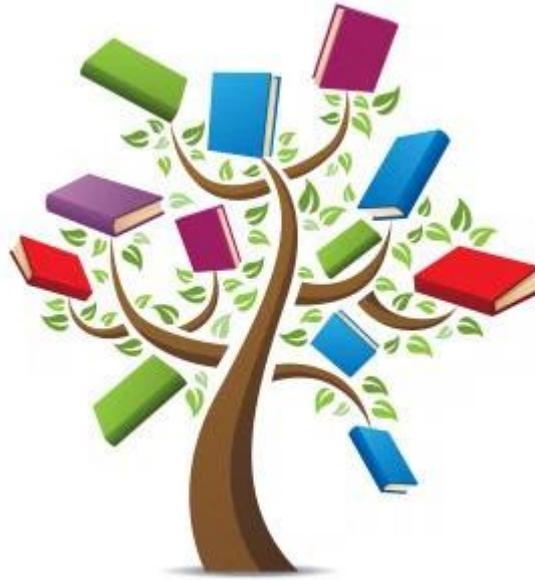
The Common Writing Processes

Establish Reason For Writing	Choose Genre & Plan	Write It	Re-Read	Publish
1) Generate an idea for writing. 2) Have a writing topic assigned to you.	Using a genre booklet, 'Box Up' your idea in keeping with the typical structures, intentions and linguistic features of the genre.	1) Focusing on what is it you want to say. 2) Regularly re-reading work for spellings which will need attention once writing is complete.	1) This includes revising the piece for improvements to sense and meaning. 2) Proof-reading the piece so it follows typical writing conventions that readers know and understand.	To your chosen audience.
 Move Between & Across Stages				

Ways To Approach Writing Topics

In Free-Writing Time			
In Writing Lessons		In Foundation Subject Lessons	
Idea Generation Strategy 	Study A Genre 	Acquire New Knowledge 	Study Subject Specific Genre 
Find Genre 	Idea Generation Strategy 	Find Genre 	Acquire New Knowledge 
Start Writing Process	Start Writing Process	Start Writing Process	Start Writing Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a class, teach and then try out an idea strategy. • As individuals, children try out idea strategies. • As a class, read or view a stimulus or prompt. Ask questions like: what does this remind me of from my life? Does it remind me of anything else I've seen or read? As a class, discover themes and possible ideas from writing. • Once an idea has been generated, choose a genre to suit the idea, purpose and audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about a genre and be inspired to place your own idea within it. • Once learnt, knowledge of the genre is 'banked' in child's consciousness and can (with resources) be used again in the future – when a need/desire is felt. • Once experienced enough in the genre, resources can be taken away and children encouraged to hybrid and re-imagine the genre for themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through reading or practical experience children gain 'new knowledge'. This new knowledge becomes writing: '<i>I found out something interesting and want to share it with others</i>'. • Writing to re-imagine new knowledge '<i>How can I see this knowledge from a different perspective?</i>' • Writing to learn '<i>What is my personal response to this new knowledge?</i>' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn a genre specific to a certain discipline (e.g. historians, geographers or scientists). • Undertake independent study within a topic or theme.. • Share this new knowledge through a typical genre from that discipline. • Writing to learn '<i>What is my personal response to this new knowledge?</i>' • Sharing knowledge through a genre-hybrid or through 'faction.'

Generating Ideas



When you write, ideas crazily spill from your head, tumble down your arm, into your pen and out along the crisp, white page.

To us, the only way to see ideas is scribbling them down – but ideas are more than just words on a page.

They are colourful, squirming, squiggly things that slide and slip through the nooks and crannies of your brain. Some of them crash against the walls of your head in roaring waves. Others come more slowly – each droplet of water a letter.

Once you gain control of the sea – the droplets make out your idea.

– Year 5 Child.

General

Ideas Heart

Create an 'ideas heart' and allow children to add to it throughout the year. This is a heart that you fill up with all the things you love and care about. These are often good ways to come up with writing ideas.

Use What You Already Got

Choose a piece of writing you have already done this year and see if you have any other ideas that arise from the topic. Can you write it in a different genre (poem, fiction, information, persuasion).

Use A 'Spark Line'

Take a line you like from a book you've read or are reading and turn it into something (poem, flash-fiction, information, memoir).

Question Time

Write a question to yourself, underline it and then answer underneath. Repeat until a writing idea comes.

Favourite Objects

Draw one of your favourite objects and think why it is important to you. You can then write it as an information text, convince others why it's an important object (persuasive text) or write a memoir moment about it.

Write About What You're Most Afraid Of

What do you think about when you are taking a walk? What keeps you awake at night? What really gets on your nerves? What do you try to avoid thinking about? Donald Barthelme said '*write about what you're most afraid of*'.

'What if....?'

Write a list of 'What if...' questions down. Roald Dahl famously came up with the idea for Charlie And The Chocolate Factory by simply writing this what if... question '*What if a crazy man ran a chocolate factory?*'

'When I Was Younger...'

Write a list of 'When I was younger...' sentences down.

'Imagine A Day When...' sentences

Jot For A Week – Write It The Next Week.

Jot down any writing ideas that come to you during the week as a homework – after a week bring your jottings in and turn one of them into a published piece.

Powerful Writing

Choose an issue and use it powerfully in a genre (poverty, peace, war, racism, sexism, animal rights, environmental rights, injustice, families, injustice)

Use Newspapers & Magazines!

Scan the newspapers in the class library for interesting topics you could write in a genre (information, persuasive, poem, flash-fiction).

Free-Writing

Our minds are never blank. Write what comes in and out of your mind as you sit quietly for a while. Use this list to come up with a writing topic.

Give A Voice Where None Can Be Heard

What would the wind say? An abandoned dog? A tube train going down the dark tunnel? A soldier in the mists of D-day? Who would they want to talk to? What would their voices sound like? And what would they need us to know?

Their Topic – Your Idea

Ask your teacher to give you a general topic and find *your* idea within it.

Have You Ever Wondered About...?

Choose a subject you're interested in and talk directly to your reader about it. Once written, think how can you use these notes in a genre?

Stories

Idea Map

When drawing an **Idea Maps** take: two characters from a book you've read, two settings and two problems and see if you can connect them to make a new story idea.

Read A Moment

Re-read a moment from a text you have loved this year and look for a moment in it you would like to have a go at writing for yourself.

Fan Fiction

Write a flash-fiction in the style of your favourite author. Write a flash-fiction using one of your favourite characters. Write a flash-fiction using a favourite setting you've read.

Stories About People

Stories often involve: a person against themselves, a person vs another person, a person vs nature or a person against society. Write down a list of ideas that could work under these categories.

20 Words

Write a story using only 20-words then turn it into a Flash-Fiction.

Write A Fairy-Tale

Write a fairy-tale for the Year 3 book stock.

Re-Write A Fairy Tale

Change a fairy-tale and turn it on its head. Consider having your hero be a girl/woman or a person of colour because this too often doesn't happen in published stories.

Re-Write A Shakespeare Play

Write your own version of one of your favourite Shakespeare plays.

Create A Character

Draw a character. Write about their: wants, needs, likes, dislikes, problems and a description. Finally place them in a flash-fiction moment.

That's me! I wish that was me! That's the worst of me!

Find and use characters from the books you've read and loved. In your own story, use a character the reminds you of you. Alternatively use a character that you wish you could be more like or use a character to write about the darkest and worst of yourself. This is exactly what real authors do when developing and writing characters.

Parallel Stories

Think of two main characters. Box up one character's experience of the story. Box-up what will happen to the second character next to it. Draft it.

Comb Your Reading Book

Spend a writing study session reading your book and 'comb' it for interesting vocabulary or sentences that you might like to use in your own writing. Put them in the back of your Writing Tricks Book.

Writing A Conversation

Write a conversation between two or three people for 10 minutes. Once finished, think about how you can turn it into a story or memoir.

Memoir

Important People:

Make a list of the most important people in your life. Then make a list of memories you have with that person. Choose one and write the memory as a memoir or poem.

Memories With Strong Feelings.

Write a list of strong feelings (happy, worried, scared, sad and angry). Then write down a moment when you have felt like that. Turn that moment into a memoir or a poem.

Favourite Places

Describe the smells/sights/sounds of your home/favourite place. Jot down what it's like there. Use all the senses, thinking about the emotions it brings up for you and what might be important about the place. Turn it into a memoir or poem.

Something Different Happened This Time

Write down a list of 'always times' things that happen again and again. Things that repeat year after year. Routines you do every day. Now, think of a time that stands out because it was different to always. Turn it into a memoir.

A Picture Speaks A 1000 Words

Ask children to bring in photographs from home and write them up as memoirs.

Questions For Memoirists

Answer the questions at the back of the memoir Genre-Booklet to jog your memories for potential memoir ideas.

Scrapbook Your Life

Collect items, photographs and anecdotes of what you have done so that you can return to them later and write about them as a memoir.

Special Moments

Make a list of: first times... last times... when something changed...times when you conquered something...

When I Was Younger...

Write down lots of endings to this sentence until a writing idea appears.

Poetry

Inspired By... Poems

Take a poem you like from the class-book-stock and use it to write your own poem.

Poetry From Your Reading Book

Choose a sentence or two from your reading book and turn it into a poem.

Special Object

Bring in a special object from home. Describe what you see – using all the senses. Describe how it makes you feel. Turn it into a poem or a memoir.

A Tour Of Your Home

Give a tour of your home – guide the reader through a slow tour of your home. Add detail about what you see and what memories each spot brings up for you. Turn it into a poem or maybe a memoir.

Seeing Things Differently

Compare an everyday thing to something abstract.
Compare two people that you know.

Where Poetry Hides

Run around the house and make a list of the things in it you'd like to write a poem about.

Important People

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Peripheral Vision

Follow these steps to create a pretty good poem. Write down:

- An observation (As I sit and see...)
- Wonder something (I wonder...)
- Second observation (I notice...)
- Memory (Think of a time this moment reminds you of...)
- Big Idea (Share what you think this poem might be about with your reader).

Information

I'm An Expert In...

Write a 'I'm an expert in...' list and turn your passion into an information text.

Write About Our Topic Lessons

Use what you are learning in other subjects to write.

Read – Sketch – Write

Read to learn some information on a topic you are interested in. As you read, sketch and label what you are learning about. Once you feel you have enough information, start writing.

Have You Ever Wondered About...?

Choose a subject you're interested in and talk directly to your reader about it. Once written think how can you use these notes in a genre?

Letter Of Appreciation

Write a letter to someone or something explaining why you appreciate and admire them so much for what they are doing/ have done.

Persuasive Writing

What Really Gets On Your Nerves?

Donald Murray said 'problems make good subjects for writing'

What Itch Needs Scratching ?

Make a list of: problems, situations, issues that need solving, correcting or explaining. Topics that make you furious or confused.

Make A Change!

Write about something you want to see happen or something you want to change. Then think who has the power to change it and write to them.

What Do You Believe In? What's Important?

Tell someone about a belief you have or a conviction you have. Convince them it's important.

Be A Reporter

Ask someone you know if you can help them solve something –can they think of something they wish was different? Something they'd like to change? Go out there and change it for them.

Be Outrageous

Start with an outrageous claim and try to defend yourself.

Generating Ideas From Exemplar Texts / Books

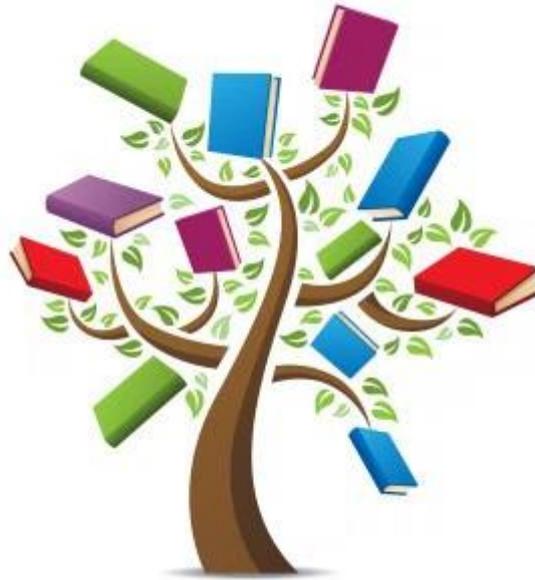
Michael Rosen's Three Questions

After you have read an exemplar text, answer these three questions: what does this text remind *you* of? Does this text remind you of anything else you have read or seen? If you could meet the author, what would you ask them? From answer the first question you will often find your own 'pebble moment' that you could write about. This is an 'inspired by...' piece of writing.

Reading With Two Lenses

Write down these two headings: What did you learn? What did you notice that will help your writing? (images, words, sentences, ideas) Answer these questions and generate your own idea.

Planning



Focus On A Pebble Not All The Pebbles

Think of writing ideas as pebbles on a beach – your job as a writer is to focus on a single pebble on the beach and make it shine. Don't try to write about all the pebbles on the beach because your writing won't be nearly as good.

General To Specific. Universal To Personal.

Write about specific people, things, animals, moments or places. Don't talk about general things. E.g. write about *that* autumn day not all autumn days. Write about *that* starry-night not all nights. Write about *your* dog not all dogs.

Thoughts & Feelings

They/I thought about...

They/I wondered if...

They/I hated it when...

They/I loved it when...

They/I noticed...

They/I realised...

They/I couldn't understand...

They/I couldn't believe...

They/I was surprised by...

They/I considered whether...

They/I was upset when...

They/I didn't see why...

They/I imagined...

They/I wished...

They/I wanted...

They/I didn't want...

They/I remembered...

They/I began to feel...

They/I was worried about...

They/I didn't care about...

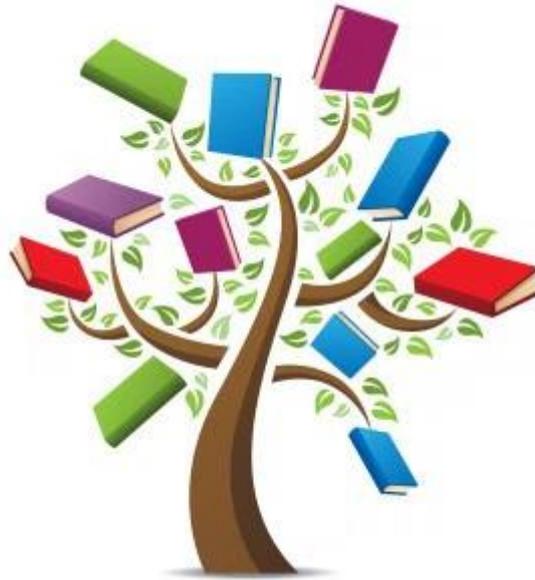
They/I decided...

They/I hoped...

They/I was afraid...

They/I was (angry, embarrassed, delighted, sorry, excited) because...

Drafting



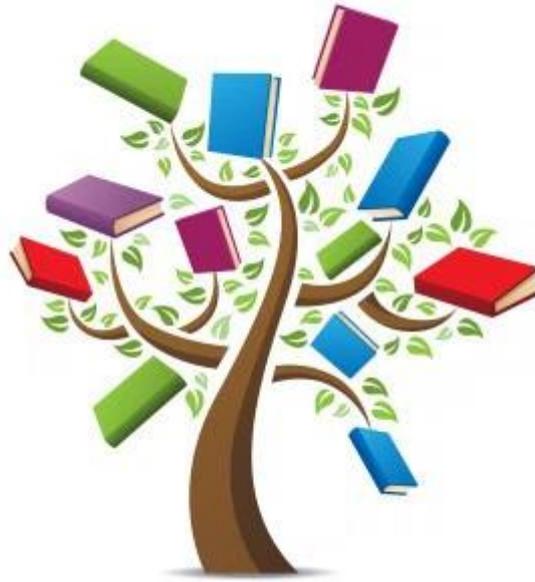
Don't Start Too Far Up Stream.

Author Ralph Fletcher uses the metaphor of a waterfall to discuss the theme of creating a good opening. He says that most young authors start their piece 'too far up stream', away from the roar of the waterfall. Too far away from the action! Always **start at the roar of the waterfall.**

Try On Lots Of Openings/Endings

Recommend that children **create several opening sentences** and try them out in different ways before deciding on one. As they write these leads, they gain valuable knowledge about how to manipulate language and how to vary viewpoint or sequence their writing. It also makes them amenable to revision from the very start. These are the types of opening commonly used by authors (**Ask A Question, Dialogue, Description, Straight Into Action, Flashback, Shock/Surprise**)

Revision



Find The Pebble Moment

After you have drafted your piece for the first time, read through it and try to find that one moment that 'one pebble' amongst the beach – take it out of your piece and re-write it. That's where the heart of the piece can be found - the juicy bit.

Write The Title Last

Only ever write your final title once you have finished your draft. Make a list of potential titles and check with a friend which one is most engaging and going to draw a reader in.

The Best Line

Underline the best line in your piece and think about why you like it so much. Can you turn that sentence into a paragraph?

Write 'Off The Page'

Take a piece of your draft that isn't working and re-write it on your revision page.

Use The Senses

Either you or your teacher write a list at the top of your draft with at least three of the seven writer's senses - seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, imagining, and remembering. Go back through your writing and expand areas that bring these senses into play.

Lead Your Reader To The Facts

When writing an opening for your information text – start off with a short story, a scene painting – descriptive or personalise by speaking straight to the reader.

Building Atmosphere – Suspense – Tension

Find where the main event in your story happens. Re-read the part just before it. This is where you can create suspense. Story tell this part – tiny little actions characters do, setting description, share what your character might be thinking, show how your character is feeling don't tell.

Moving Quickly And Slowly In A Story

Always slow down at: the climax of story, when you introduce a new character and setting. Highlight your plan pink where you need to slow down.

Move quickly at less important parts: when moving the story on or giving background information. Highlight your plan green where you need to speed up.

See People, Emotions, Objects, Weather And Settings Like A Poet.

Write down all the features of the thing you want to describe. Now compare those features to something else. Now describe your subject using those comparisons.

'Cracking Open' Boring Words

Find some of the most boring words you have used in your piece and turn them into more interesting alternatives.

'Cracking Open' Boring Nouns

With nouns, find the boring ones and write them 'longer' (expanded noun phrase).

'Cracking Open' Boring Verbs

Find some verbs that are incredibly boring 'said', 'went' and replace them with a description of what happened.

Show Don't Tell

When we tell our readers something we often use the following words: *is was have had did*. Replace them and you'll find yourself showing your reader rather than telling them. Readers like this.

Show Don't Tell (Settings)

Don't tell your reader where the setting is – show them where it is by using all the senses.

Show Don't Tell (Emotions)

Don't name the emotion you or your character is feeling – show your reader by describing it.

Introducing A New Character Or Setting? You Need To Describe Them To Your Reader.

Read through your draft and highlight where you introduce a new setting or character. You now need to add some description here for your reader.

Characters: Use Who You Know

When creating characters and describing them, use a character that you've read in a book.

Body Language That Tells Us About Your Character

What gestures, movements and facial expression will your character use that will tell us what they are really like?

How Does Your Character Talk?

- What is their tone of voice? What do they sound like?
- Do they speak in short or long sentences?
- Do they have an accent?
- Do they use slang?

Five Alive!

Take a sentence from your piece and re-write it in at least five different ways. Choose your favourite.

Mark Your Own Work

After you have finished your draft, use post-it notes in the margin to be your own harshest critic. What do you think you could have done better?

Non-Fiction

Support The Facts

Read your draft and highlight where you have shared a fact. Then consider helping your reader by doing one of these three things:

- Give them a definition. Tell your reader what something is.
- Give an example.
- Use a story to help explain your fact.

Find The 'How'

Read through your draft and make sure you have not just focused on 'what' something or someone does but 'how'.

Unlike

Compare your subject to its opposite. Begin your sentence with 'unlike.....,'.

Too Fast

(you, a friend or your teacher) Highlight part of your draft where you think you have gone through the action too fast – slow it down and give detail.

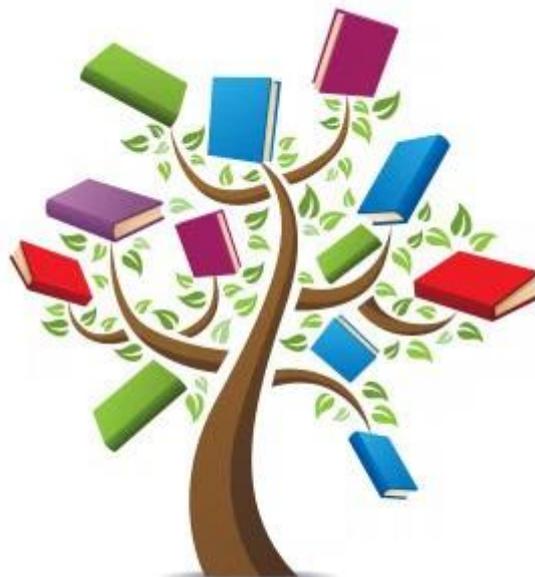
Making Information Texts Come Alive

Picture what you've decided to write about and describe it. Use description, actions, personification and use a real-life situation. Ask your teacher to write you an example.

Use An Anecdote To Explain Your Point

When making a point in a non-fiction text, use an anecdote (a personal story) as an example of the point you're trying to make.

Editing



Early Writers / SEN

Long Or Short Word?

Say the word. Is it a long or short one? If it's long put a lot of letters in it – even if you don't know exactly which ones it is for sure. If it's short – don't use too many.

Talk Like A Turtle

Don't know how to spell a word? Say it slowly – like a turtle and write down on the sounds as you hear them.

All Writers

Clap The Syllables

Clap out the syllables – write down the spelling for each syllable.

Consult The Alphabetic Code

Say the word you want to write. If you don't know what letters make the sound – check your alphabetic code in your Writing Tricks Book.

I'm A Sentence Stacker: Write – Read – Write – Read – Repeat.

Write down a sentence – read it back and check it for Editing. If you think you might forget to do this, ask your teacher to make a reminder for your table.

I'm A Paragraph Piler: Write – Read – Write – Read – Repeat.

Write a paragraph – read it back and check it for Editing. If you think you might forget to do this, ask your teacher to make a reminder for your table.

Capitalisation Table Poster

Write and draw a poster showing: *Darcy went to the British Library in London. I went with her. It was fun. Stick it on your table to remind you that: names, places, 'I' and the beginning of sentences need capital letters.*

Write Word Wall Words In A BOOM!

If you are using a word that is on the word wall, check you've spelt it right and put a 'boom' around it.



Read **Your Writing Backwards (You'll See Spelling Mistakes)**

Start at the end and read word-by-word. Fix your mistakes.

Making It Plural

Can you say the word without an extra syllable? Yes? Use 'S'. No? Use 'es'. PS. Don't add an apostrophe to make things plural!

Do You Need The And?

Find the 'ands'. Keep it or cut it.

Does My Sentence Make Sense?

Say 'Guess what!' Read your sentence. If it makes sense, it's fine. If it doesn't, you'll need to re-write it.

Colons

The drum-roll of punctuation. Use it to introduce a list. Set up a surprise. For a dramatic pause or to direct your reader to pay attention to what's next.

New Paragraph?

New paragraphs are needed when: a new character is introduced, a new event happens, the setting changes, a new person is speaking, time moves, the 'camera' moves.

Check For Complex Sentences

Adverbial Opener , **sentence**
sent , **Relative Clause** , **ence.**
Sentence, **Closer.**

Play With Your Pauses

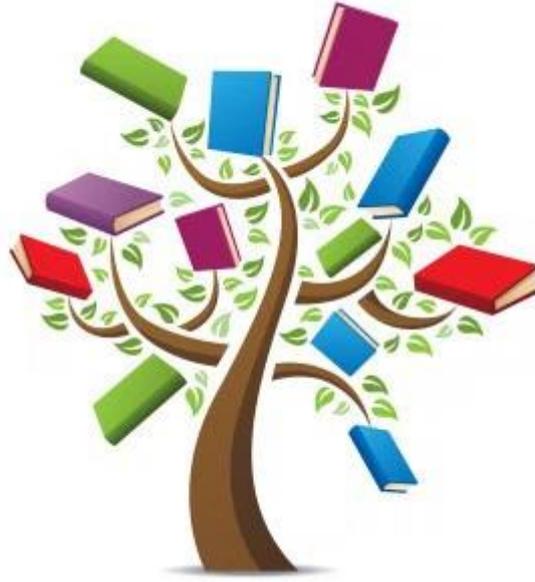
For some variety, you can choose between () , : - ...

Replacing *and* With A ; For Variety

When you have two sentences you can separate them with a semi-colon instead of an and.

sentence ; **sentence.**

Publishing



Publishing Checklist:

1. Have you checked all the spellings you and your teacher have circled?
2. Begin with the date, the title of your piece and your name.
3. Copy carefully. Note each punctuation mark, every new paragraph.
4. Use your best handwriting.
5. Proofread it once you have written it – moving your lips with a pencil in your hand.