

Writing with a purpose- our approach to developing writers

PUTTERIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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At Putteridge Primary, enabling children to become purposeful writers is something we value greatly. Rather than restricting the subject to the knowledge of the rudiments of writing (the rules of spelling and grammar), we focus on children being able to **use** the knowledge they have to produce purposeful, well-crafted, creative written work.

This document will draw together some of the important concepts behind our facilitation of developing writers as well as provide some examples of what the writing process looks like throughout the school.

What is writing?

*“Words matter because they create our world and ourselves.
Without words, thought is a meagre crumb.”* **Pie Corbett**

Central to our philosophy is that writing must be for a purpose, linked tightly to our thematic approach of teaching.

Writing is not only the physical act of making marks on the page or screen, but the way we can translate thoughts from our mind to others through the written word.

The model we follow is based on how ‘writers’ write:

Idea- the idea for the writing is thought about and discussed. What are we writing? Why are we writing?

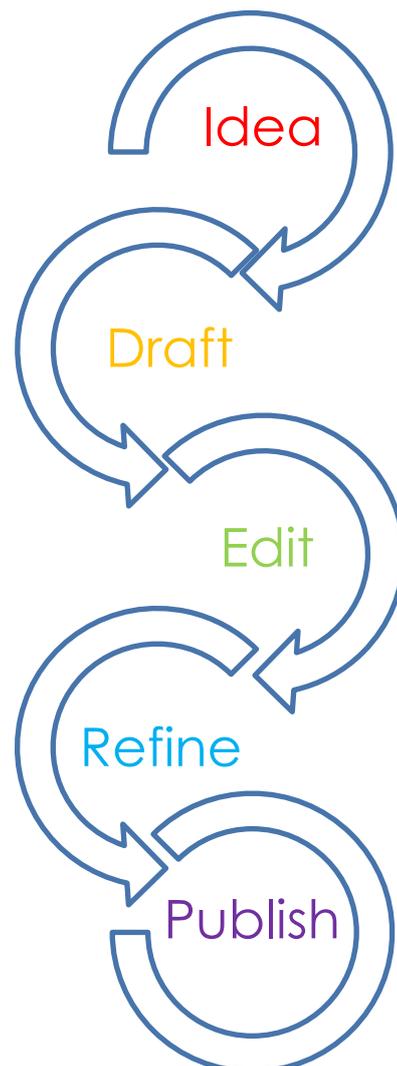
Draft- physically writing and showing the idea for others to read.

Edit- stop and read the writing. Is it doing the job we want it to? Is the idea being made clear for the reader?

Refine- rewrite and improve, use the ideas from the editing.

Publish- the writing is displayed in a way that allows the idea to be read by the readers.

NB: This is not always a one stop process and stages may be revisited.



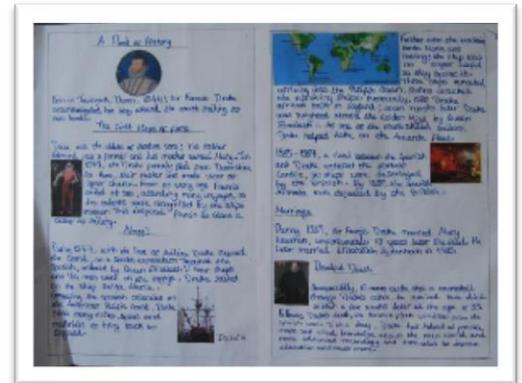
Idea

Getting the idea (or purpose for writing) is the primary stage of the writing process. At Putteridge, whilst teaching the elements of how to write, the **why** we write is closely linked to the termly theme.

e.g. An advert to sell a location to a seagull (linked to the seaside topic or a biography of a famous explorer)

Teachers spark imagination by giving pupils a real purpose for their writing.

Elements such as drama/role play, real experiences (school trips, mini beast hunts, pie making) and pictures are used to stimulate.



Amazing writing in Foundation Stage

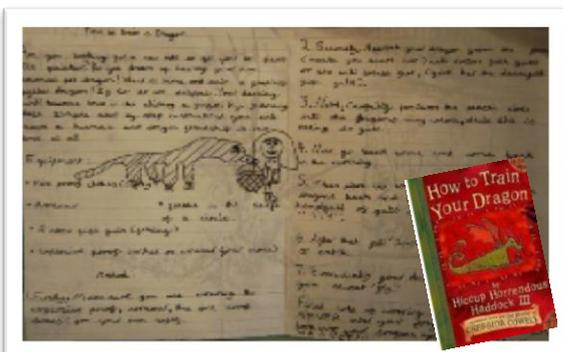
The children are inspired to write using a variety of stimuli in the Foundation stage. Writing is linked to a theme and the children are provided with opportunities to talk and discuss ideas, sentences and the construction of these. The children are provided with objects, pictures or video clips with which they are familiar, to inspire vocabulary and enable children to write about topics that are recognisable to them.



Writing takes place in a variety of forms, for example; letter formation in malleable materials; using wax crayons, chalks or pencils; to writing a card to a friend. The outcome of this is that our children see writing as a fun experience that is not simply limited to pen and paper, but an opportunity to try a range of forms.

Looking at published literature is another way we ignite ideas. Pupils are exposed to a range of fiction texts linked to themes. They are also given opportunities to respond creatively to these using nonfiction text types.

On the left is an example of this. The task was to write instructions about 'How to trap a dragon'. Such practice has proved to be engaging across the school.



Key to the ideas process, is the importance of the children understanding the function of different texts:

Why is an instruction text written in the way it is? How does someone persuade us to do something?

To help with this, pupils study real examples to 'unpick' the features. To support teachers with the appropriate conventions (including technical language), there is clear guidance on how each text type is structured (this information is on the server).

To maximise this learning, we have high expectations of children in the deciphering the structure of the text they are working with. They are not given a structure with headings to simply copy. Our research tells us that children are far more likely to remember the structures and features if they have been actively involved in investigating it. When this is managed correctly, pupils are able to master what each text type is for and how to structure it allowing them to focus on **what** is written.

Draft

Once the idea has been explored, the children will then start to gather their ideas to write.

Talk is key! In every class across the school, the start of all writing is in talking.

In Foundation stage; our youngest writers will discuss and share ideas before working with the teacher who models how to write a sentence (including the specific year focus on spelling, finger spaces and basic full stops). The same process can be seen in a Year 6 class, except with a different focus on the mechanics (grammar, spelling patterns and word choices). It is important to note, that whilst children should be given opportunities to write extended pieces the children should be given appropriate levels of support so that all abilities are enabled to succeed.

There are a range of effective methods to help children understand the writing process. To ensure a consistency of language, some key methods are highlighted below:

Shared writing:

Shared writing is when a teacher will use ideas from pupils to physically show the decision making process when composing high quality writing themselves. A child may have an idea about the content but the teacher models how it becomes a sentence.

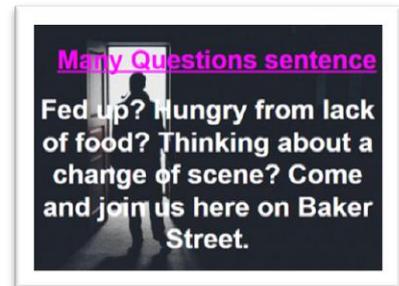
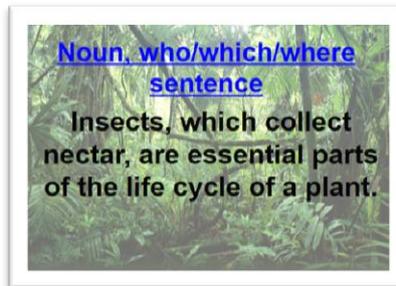
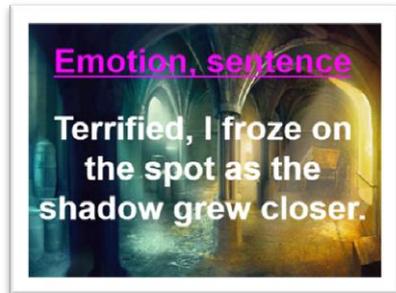
This is beneficial because we **learn by being actively involved with something and the modelling of writing to a class facilitates this.** This may be done as a whole class or in small groups.



Also, this enables the teacher to highlight when other rudiments of writing (such as spelling and grammar choices) are required.

use of these and explain the impact on the reader. Does it persuade? Explain? Inform? The key intention is that it serves the correct purpose. Again these are also linked to the non-fiction structures that are available to teachers on the school server.

Some examples are shown below. Teachers are also encouraged to provide examples of thematic sentence types within their classrooms.



Edit and Refine

Editing and refining at Putteridge are co-dependent with each other. Again, the focus in these stages is the impact on the reader linked to the purpose of the piece. Does it persuade? Explain? Inform? **The key question is does it do the right job? And if not, how can we improve this?** These influence any decisions about what needs to be done next to enhance the overall impact. Key to this is the effective and timely provision of feedback.

Verbal Feedback:

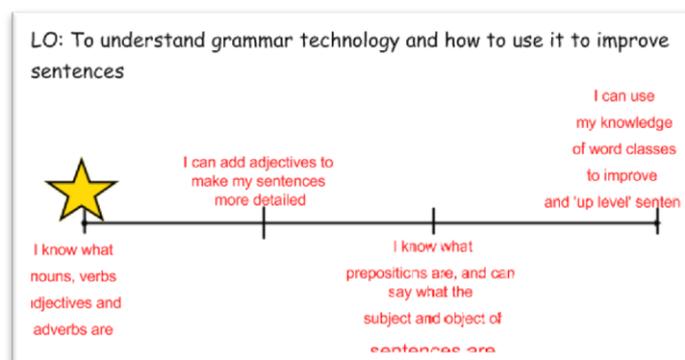
Effective feedback has been a huge driver in improving pupils writing. In all classes teachers and teaching assistants give pupils instant feedback for specific targets. By doing this it allows children to respond effectively to their writing instantly. Moreover, this means the child is able to refine and show progress within the piece of work.

Learning Journeys:

Every lesson has a learning objective, this makes up part of the **Learning Journey**. The 'steps' in a journey are used to help the pupils self-evaluate during editing/questioning:



Where am I on this journey? and most importantly, **What is the next step?**



Checklists:

Following evaluation of progress between groups of pupils in the school, research was carried out to help close the gap between girls and boys writing. National research from the 'Sutton Trust' indicated that high impact could be generated from children being able to self-assess their own writing. This resulted in the formulation and trialling of pupil checklists in the Editing and Refining stage. The positive impact this had on standards was high.

	C	T
Balanced Argument CHECK LIST		
Structure 0 – No clear structure 1 – Arguments for and against but not clearly organised e.g. not in the same paragraph 2 – Introduction not clearly linked, arguments for and against 3 – Introduction linked to title, arguments for and against with same balance and personal view		
Arguments 0 – no arguments with no reasons 1 – Arguments included with a reason to support. 2 – Clearly organised arguments supported with more than one reason.		
Sentence starts 0 – All sentences start in a similar way 1 – Some varied openers including connectives with some indication of view being stated. 2 – Starters indicate viewpoint and strength of argument, including rhetorical questions e.g. the more, the more; no doubt, consequences sentence, not only...		
Punctuation 0 – there is not any punctuation 1 – Correct use of commas in lists, capitals and full stops 2 – Clauses marked with commas, commas, colon (:) or semi-colon (;) used in lists.		
Spellings- after you say finished 0- an adult has to correct more than 3 spellings 1- an adult has to correct less than 3 spellings 2- an adult does not correct any spellings.		
Total Score		

The checklists enabled the children to be more evaluative about their writing. They were empowered to judge their own writing in relation to differing rudiments. As well as enhancing the writing standards of boys, the girls also responded well to it. Scored checklists have now proved successful across the school. An added advantage is that teachers are able to focus the checklist to meet the learning intentions.

Checklists can obviously be adapted to any aspect of writing, but they are especially useful when supporting the structure of a piece of writing.

The children benefit from the increased 'responsibility' and ownership that is placed on them on to them. The requirement to check that the writing is doing what it should ensures that

editing and refining techniques are valued.

Publish

Once pupils have spent time editing and revising their work, the children are able to recognise that it is now appropriate to publish. At all stages, the children must recognise the fact that the children will have an opportunity to share their work with a wide audience. This, in itself, creates real purpose for their efforts.

There are a number of forums available for the sharing of work. These may be quite local (topic books/ classroom display) to more 'far-ranging' opportunities (the school website). It is important to recognise the potential for each piece of work in respect of audience as well as longevity. Each child completes a thematic book of work and writing is a key part of each one. The children value these highly and they ensure a long lasting record of achievement as well as progress for each child.

It is important to note that the function of the text may require additional visual features such as diagrams or illustrations. Appropriate time will be given to the children to ensure that the overall piece is high quality both in written and visual form. The writing may be handwritten or word processed but it is important that children are given opportunities in the use of different media. Depending on the age of the child, the amount of structure/ time given for publishing will vary. To highlight this, the older children become, the more expectation will be placed on them.

Impact

There are many ways to view the outcomes of our approach at Putteridge Primary. As well as the range of books and displays, the website shares the high standards that the children have achieved.

The following comments from the children also express the value of all that we do to support writing:

What happens in school to help you with your writing?

Lilly- James, Year 2

"I like writing sentences when we do it together, then we go off by ourselves with more ideas."

Paige, Year 3

"I like it when you use a checklist, so you can make your writing the best and start to be more independent."

Chloe, Year 4

"They (the teacher) have their own books to write in. It shows me what to do."

Katie, Year 5

"When we do shared writing with everybody, it helps me think how I can start."

Oliver, Year 5

"Writing the first lines with partners helps us get ideas from each other."

How do you feel about your writing in your Topic book?

Oliver, Year 2

"When I show my parents my writing in my topic book, I feel proud."

Joe, Year 3

"The handwriting looks neat and the words are great."

Gracie, Year 4

"Writing up means we make our books the best we can."

Katie, Year 5

"If we didn't have a topic book my work would stay in my literacy book. Everyone has one of them, my topic book is unique to me and the best it can be."

Oliver, Year 5

"I write my best because I know my parents will read it."

Emma Cosby

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