



The teaching of writing in
Years One and Two

Talk for Writing

Information for Parents
September 2026

We will look at....

- The curriculum and what is expected in both Year 1 and Year 2
- Oral storytelling
- The importance of key writing skills and how this links to reading
- The teaching of vocabulary
- Writing in Reception
- Writing as we transition into Year 1
- Our approach – Talk for Writing
- Strategies and scaffolding
- Supporting your child to write at home
- Question time!

The Curriculum: Key Expectations in writing

YEAR ONE

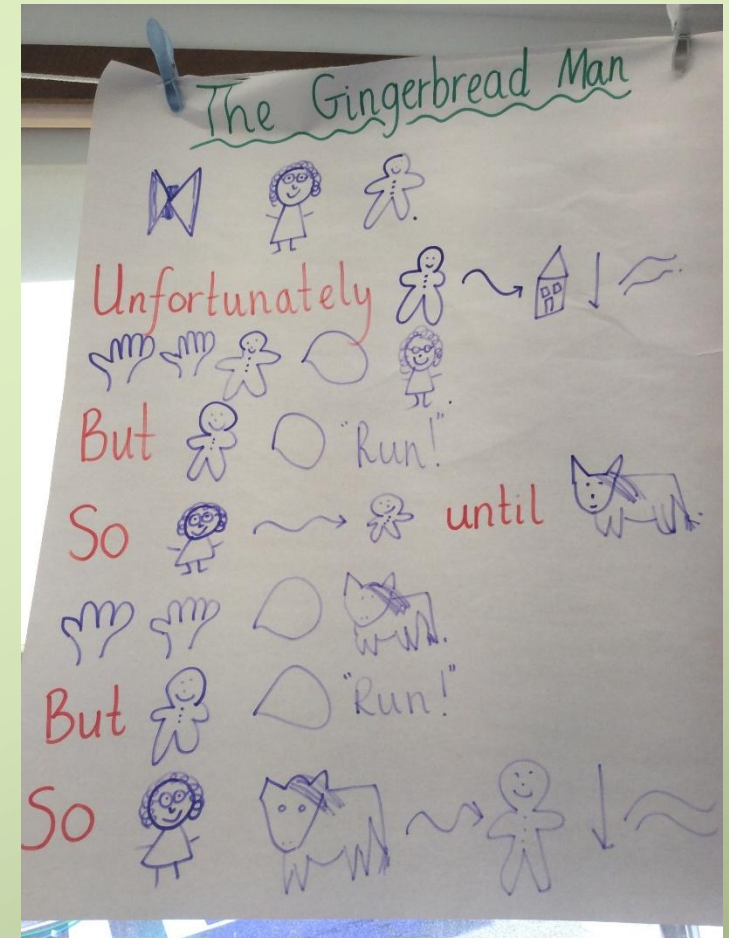
- Form all letters correctly
- Form all numbers correctly
- Sit all letters on the line
- Leave finger spaces between words
- Say what they are going to write
- Sequence sentences to retell a story
- Re-read their writing to check it makes sense
- Extend sentences using words like 'and', 'but', 'so', 'because'
- Spell all tricky words correctly
- Spell the days of the week and the months of the year correctly
- Use word ends correctly (ed, ing, er, est, es, s)
- Use capital letters to start a sentence and for names
- Use full stops, and begin to use question marks and exclamation marks in their writing

YEAR TWO

- Write simple, coherent narratives about personal experiences and those of others
- Demarcate sentences using capital letters, full stops and question marks
- Use present and past tense mostly correctly
- use co-ordination such as or, and, but, and
- Use some subordination such as when, if, that, because to join clauses
- Spell all the Year 1 and 2 common exception words
- Form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.
- Make simple additions, revisions and proof-reading corrections to their own writing
- Add suffixes to spell most words correctly in their writing (e.g. -ment, -ness, -ful, -less, -ly)

Oral Story telling

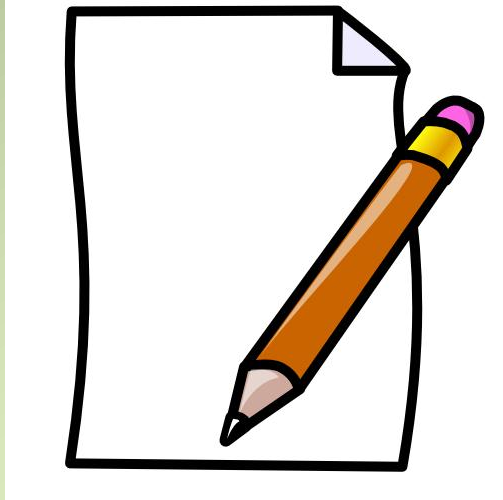
- Text mapping and learning a model text.
- A model text maybe a story or a non-fiction text.
- This supports language development and the understanding of vocabulary.
- It provides a good model on which writing can be built.
- This is one of the techniques used as we teach writing in the form of text maps, actions and developing story language.



The importance of Writing

- **Writing is complex**
- It is a vital form of communication.
- For most children this will build on their reading skills, allowing them to apply both the language they have read and the phonics they have learnt in a creative way.
- Writing places significant demands on pupils' working memory so it is vital to teach it in a sequenced way that helps to manage those demands.
- We focus on quality over quantity.
- There are two main aspects to writing – transcriptional skills and composition skills.

Transcriptional Skills - HOW



- This is the mechanics of writing
- It includes handwriting, spelling and later grammar
- Aiming for automaticity in these skills to reduce cognitive overload
- Where possible, children are not asked to write beyond the phonics that have been taught
- Handwriting and phonics are taught separately (however additional handwriting is part of the phonics lesson)
- When focussing on transcription dictated sentences and group writing are used
- Ready to write routines are taught e.g. posture, grip and slanting the paper
- The development and construction of sentences is also taught.

Compositional Skills - WHAT

- This is the creative element and the what we are going to write.
- This will include oral story telling, shared reading, repetition and innovation of rhymes, poems and songs.
- Through text maps and oral discussions ideas are generated to support this at the start of every writing session.
- Sentence starters and structures are modelled and practised.
- An important part of this is the teaching of vocabulary.



The teaching of vocabulary

- This happens during all lessons and story times. In English it is planned for and taught. Key words are defined and practised to further extend the vocabulary of all children.
- Word banks are generated together to support writing.

Figure 2: An illustration of the three tiers of vocabulary

Tier 3

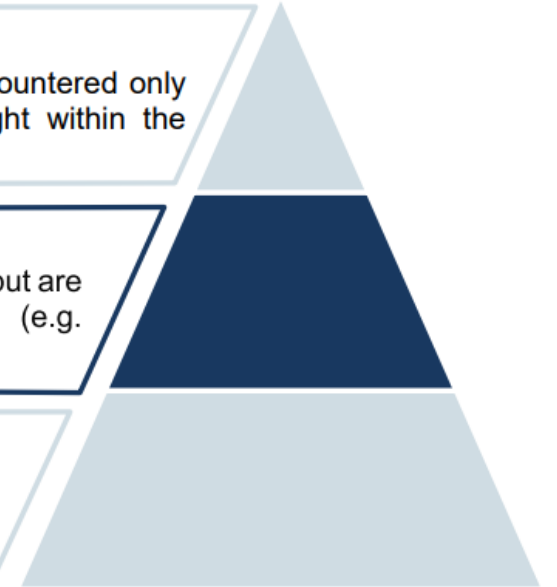
Less common, subject specific words that are encountered only when studying the specific subject and are taught within the subject domain (e.g. photosynthesis)

Tier 2

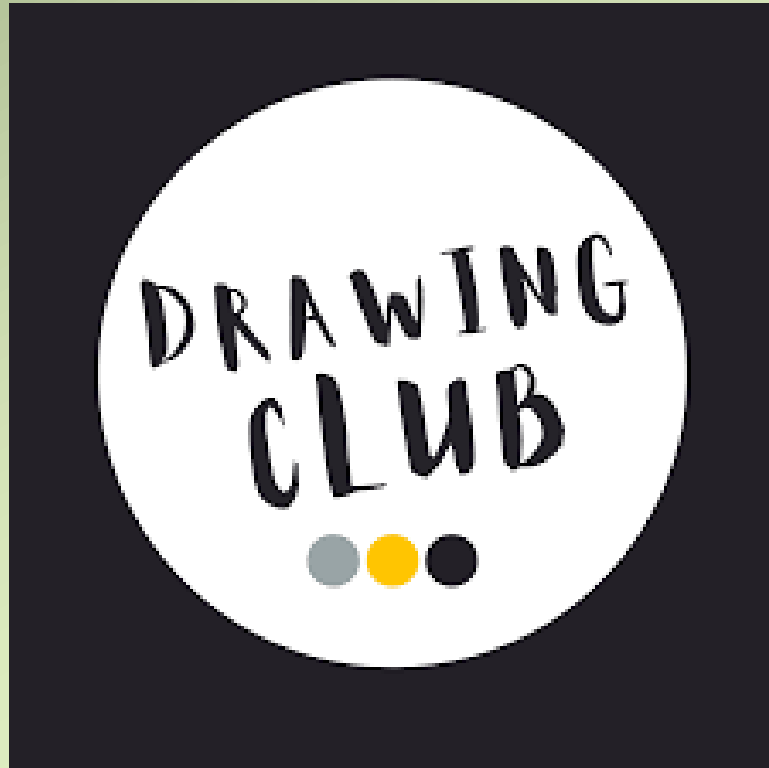
Words that appear frequently across several topics but are unlikely to be heard in everyday conversation (e.g. grinned, enormous, ponder, influence, notion)

Tier 1

Everyday words that are familiar to most children and can be acquired easily through speech (e.g. cat, walk, run, happy)



Writing in Reception



- In play and provision to enable children to practise and apply transcriptional skills
- Planned writing lessons – Drawing Club
- As you may remember this focuses on a text per week looking at the story, the characters, the setting and an adventure question.
- The children are motivated to write, use a secret code and pictures to share their ideas.
- They first draw a picture and then write a short caption at the beginning of the year, which develops in length and complexity as their writing skills develop.

Writing as we transition into Year 1

- In Year 1 and 2 we use Talk for Writing as our approach to teaching writing.
- Alongside this the children still:
 - Regular handwriting sessions
 - Daily phonics lessons
 - Reading practice sessions 3 times per week
 - Phonics intervention where needed
 - Take part in Adventure Club – answering an adventure question to encourage independence
 - Write in other areas of the curriculum and in play provision



Our approach – Talk for Writing

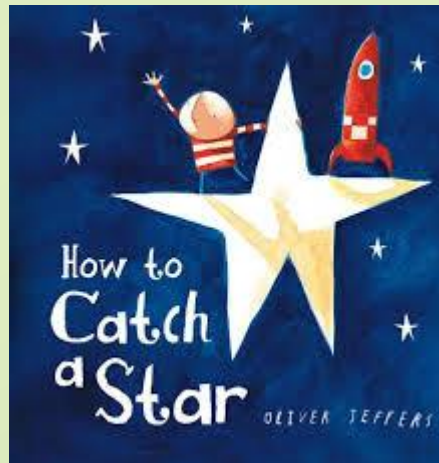
- Created by Pi Corbett.
- Aims to create a love of reading and writing by developing language and storytelling, followed by writing skills both transcriptional and composition
- It strongly links to our love of stories, generating enthusiasm and aims to maximise progress.
- Opportunities to internalise language through more active learning – Learning phrases e.g. Once upon a time who ...
- Provides opportunities to write each day and practise different skills, building on those learnt previously.
- Scaffolds and practises different skills in writing before applying this to their own writing.

Key Texts

These are used for several weeks. The model texts are mapped and internalised and carefully planned activities help us to consolidate and develop new skills along the writing journey.

YEAR ONE

- The Three Billy Goats Gruff
- How to catch a star
- Beegu
- Handas Surprise
- The Storm Whale
- No-bot the Robot



YEAR TWO

Supertato

Meerkat Mail

Bob's best friend

Non-fiction: Titanic

The Owl who was afraid of the dark

George and the dragon

Tell me a dragon

Why dragons are afraid of mice

Explanation: How to make bread



Our approach – Talk for Writing

Our planning of every unit follow the same format:

- Hook day and introduction
- Learning the text - Imitation
- Exploring language and developing new key skills and knowledge through discussions and short burst writing
- Innovation – changing the model text – as class and then independently
- Applying what we have learnt to our independent writing

Talk for Writing – Imitation and learning the model text

- A new carefully selected story or text is introduced and discussed.
- The story is internalized through active learning – using a text map and actions as you have seen in action!
- Whilst time is spent learning the text, language is explored, grammar is taught and sentence patterns are applied to our own thinking.
- Short burst writing happens in each lesson, focusing on key aspect of the story e.g. settings, grammar, sentence patterns, character description.
- Sometimes activities are planned linking to a different theme and the learning is then applied back to the text.

Talk for Writing – Innovation

- Creating own version and is Teacher Led.
- The original text will be split up / boxed up so each section can be innovated / changed as needed.
- The depth of the innovate will depend on the age of the children.
- Changes are planned for by the teacher as this is modelled and discussed together as a class.
- The new story is told before it is written. More detail can be added at this stage to apply the skills we have learnt.

Talk for Writing – Application

In Year 1 this will begin orally as they adapt the original text, using language patterns and ideas, to create their own story. One section of the story may then be written.

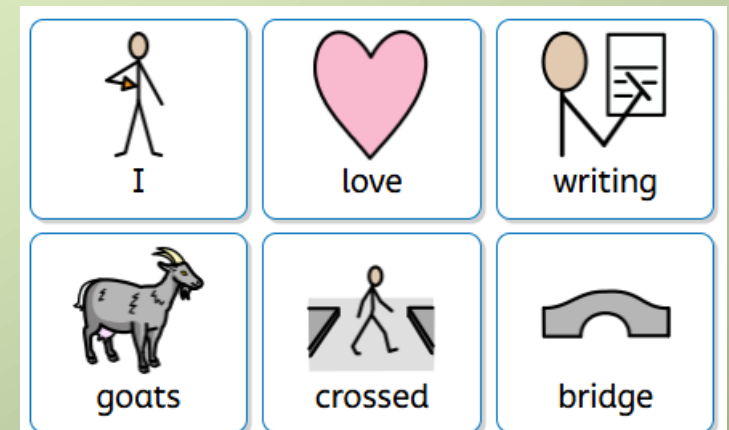
Text maps will be used for the children to plan their own version prior to writing. They also have all the scaffolding and ideas we have already explored to support their own writing.

In Year 2 children also begin orally and then use a range of ways to plan their independent writing, therefore building on the learning from the previous year.



Strategies and Scaffolding

- Visual scaffolding – text maps, images, video clips, music etc.
- Idea generating and modelling – whole class discussions to compose model sentences, ideas and word banks (composition support)
- Modelling - Modelled writing (I do), Shared writing (we do) – particularly to support struggling writers, Guided writing – targeted group, Independent writing (you do)
- Dictated sentences (focus on transcriptional skills to reduce the cognitive overload)
- Word banks, tricky word mats, phonic cards
- Widgits for independence
- Handwriting lines are used in Year 1



Supporting your child at home

- Continue to read at home as often as possible (little and often is the best!)
- Practise Little Wandle Phonics weekly
- Encourage children to write for different purposes e.g. a letter for granny, a shopping list (please remember this will be spelt phonetically initially and doesn't need to be correct e.g. chocolet)
- When writing, model the correct formation using capital letters only for names and at the start of a sentence
- Practise writing tricky words from memory
- Develop fine motor skills through games and play – e.g. Lego, spaghetti through a colander, using pegs
- Make it fun
- Our termly newsletters provide many further examples to develop writing

