

Writing in Key Stage 2 (Y3 – 6)

When teaching writing, there are three things that must happen every day:

- Children need to learn something about writing.
- Children need to write in an environment that brings the whole class pleasure.
- Children need an opportunity to share and talk about their writing.

It's as simple as that. This routine is what's called the contemporary writing workshop approach (Young & Ferguson [2020](#)).

Writing Workshop
Mini Lesson 10 - 15 minutes
Writing Time 30 – 40 minutes
Class sharing & Author's chair 15 – 20 minutes

Mini-Lessons

Research shows that children enjoy writing when they know what to do and how to do it. Therefore, they need world-class daily writing instruction. This is best done through mini-lessons which precede daily writing time. Why? Because children know they are going to learn about something that is going to be useful to them that day. We separate our mini-lessons into two categories:

- writing study lessons.
- functional grammar lessons.

Writing study is, as the name suggests, where children are taught the craft knowledge on an aspect of writing technique or process. Functional grammar lessons are an opportunity to examine and teach why writers use certain grammatical or linguistic features.

Writing Time

Children only get better at writing if they are given ample daily time in which to write. They need purposeful, extensive and repeated practice in the craft of writing. Children write independently and have access to resources that can help them be more independent.

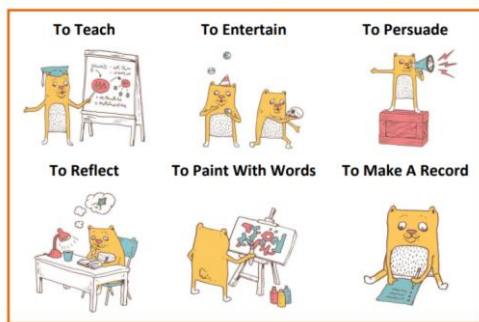
Pupil Conferencing

The adult has a brief conversation with individual children about how their writing is going. They give additional responsive instruction, advice, praise, hints and tips.

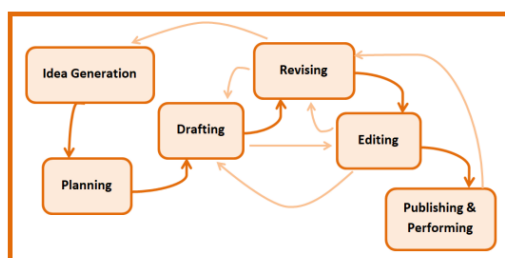
Class Sharing & Author's Chair

Writing sessions end with an opportunity for children to share and discuss their writing with their peers. This can be in groups at their tables or with the whole class during 'Author's Chair'. Author's Chair is the simple idea that a few children, at the end of each writing session, sit down to share: how their writing is going, an extract, how they've applied a particular technique or how they achieved a particular product goal. Their peers give them praise and advice on their developing piece.

The Writing Process



Writing involves applying many different processes, procedures, techniques and skills at different times on the way towards publication or performance. There is no single agreed upon 'writing process'. As you can see in the diagram below, writing is a recursive process



Generating Ideas

After the purpose and audience for the class writing project has been established and the product goals have been identified, children can begin to generate ideas!

The children choose what to write about, as research shows that children produce better texts when they write about the things they are most interested in, motivated by, and knowledgeable about.

Planning

The children choose how to plan their writing from ideas such as dabbling, drawing, story mapping, webbing and story arcs, that been shared by their teacher during mini lessons. As Winston Churchill said: plans are of little importance, but planning is essential.

Drafting

It's while drafting that children discover, perhaps for the first time, what it is exactly they want to write. They are having to organise and take schemas (packages of images and information inside their brain) and translate them into written language. This is very demanding. In fact it's one of the most demanding things we can ask children to do. Therefore, at this stage, we shouldn't burden them with additional cognitive demands, such as success criteria. They already know what the product goals for the writing project are because you've discussed them, and they are on the working wall. Children draft freely, fluently and quickly.

Revising

If drafting is finding out what it is we want to write; revising is working on how best to write it. Revising is about re-seeing, re-thinking, reviewing and otherwise transforming drafted writing. It's

not editing. It's not about error hunting nor is it all about correcting bad writing. Instead, it involves children regularly rereading, discovering new insights, 'uplevelling' and otherwise improving their compositions. It's at this point, once children have something in front of them to work with, that they have the cognitive space to consider more carefully the identified product goals for the project.

The children may use the revision checklists in their Genre-Booklets to help them to improve the compositional aspects of their writing.

The children craft their writing using a double page. The left-hand side is for drafting and their right-hand page is their 'revision and trying things out page'. It's here that children can try out the suggestions on the revision checklist before deciding for themselves whether they will make any changes in their final piece.

It also allows the children to try things out and show their ability to write using items from the writing curriculum without compromising the integrity of their piece.

Editing

Editing (also known as proof-reading) is about the writer considering their transcriptional accuracy and attention to conventions prior to publication. It's a highly demanding task and it is foolish to expect children to deal with editing whilst also drafting or revising. It needs its own dedicated time and explicit attention.

The children use the Editing Checklist which follows the CUPS procedure. Children should only attend to one category on the checklist in a single writing session. Children may work with a partner during this process.

Publishing & Performing

The process of publishing or performing their writing is extremely important to children and is a time for celebration. All their hard work has paid off and it's something they look forward to throughout the project. Published pieces should be more than merely 'neat copies' of a first draft hidden away in literacy books.

Establishing the distant goal at the beginning of the project, ensures the children know that their writing is serving a legitimate purpose and reaching real audiences. For this reason, publishing is a really intelligent instructional decision. It increases students' motivation and interest in revising and editing their compositions, and results in better writing performance. It's also a great opportunity to practise typing and handwriting skills.

The finished pieces can take myriad forms, from big books that circulate in the classroom or school library, to audio recordings published as a podcast, items printed in the school newspaper, or selections published in a class magazine or posted on the internet.