

# Telling it like it is (or, in the case of history, like it was)

### Writing Flier 7

### Non-chronological report



There are many occasions across the primary curriculum when children need to learn about the characteristics of something – what it is (or was) like.

These include:

- **history**, e.g. aspects of daily life in any historical period
- **science**, e.g. characteristics, general life patterns and habitats of plants and animals
- **geography**, e.g. descriptions of localities and geographical features.

The problem with such information is that it does not always have an immediately obvious organisational structure, like the chronological sequence of a story. Before they can talk or write about the topic succinctly, pupils must find ways of organising the facts logically and coherently.

A note-making 'skeleton', like the spidergram on page 2, can help pupils organise their thoughts logically and so clarify understanding of what they have learned. Organising notes in this way helps pupils see how facts can be clustered. This also suggests how best to divide their writing into sections and/or paragraphs when they write up their notes into a non-chronological report.

In the Literacy Hour pupils can learn about the structure and language features of reports. They can bring their notes, made in different subjects, to the Hour to provide the content for purposeful writing.

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OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

*Making pictures, models or artefacts is a valuable means of recording understanding. Speaking and listening activities allow children to display their own learning and gain from others. All these activities are also valuable precursors to writing.*

| NLS Non-Fiction Fliers |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                        | 5: Recount                  |
|                        | 6: Instructions             |
|                        | 7: Non-chronological report |
|                        | 8: Explanation              |
|                        | 9: Persuasion               |
|                        | 10: Discussion              |

### Find out more about non-chronological reports



Further case studies (Y1-Y6) can be found on the NLS website:  
[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy)  
See also pages 154-155, *Grammar for writing* and *Developing early writing*.

For a history project, pairs of Y5 children are asked to choose and research one topic from a spidergram of Ancient Greece.



The purpose of the research is to

- prepare an illustrated talk for the class
- write a section for a class book.

**2**

The teacher demonstrates how to research the topic of 'buildings':

- reading and browsing around the subject
- brainstorming information to decide on categories for a spidergram
- reading more carefully, to make notes on the spidergram.

Pupils follow the teacher's model to produce spidergram notes on their own topics. These are used as notes for their prepared talks.

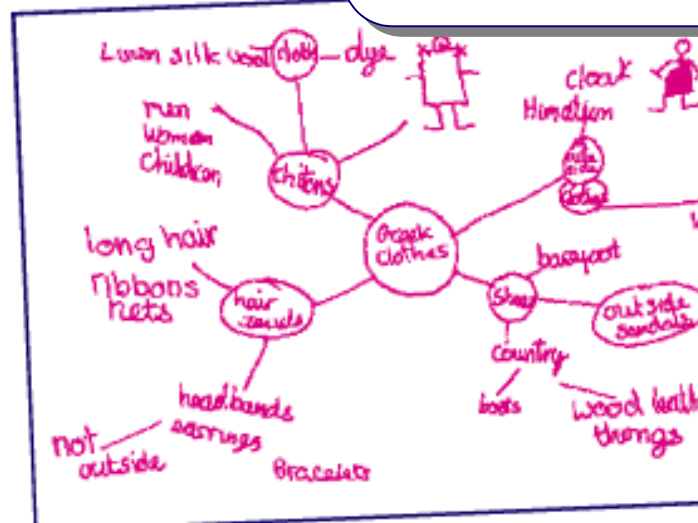


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**3**

In the Literacy Hour, the class studies samples of report text, with particular attention to

- layout, especially headings, sub-headings and captions
- language features, especially impersonal and formal language constructions.

In shared writing, the teacher demonstrates how to expand her notes into pages for a class book, drawing particular attention to the layout and language features they have covered.

Children in pairs then produce their own pages for the class book.  
They record the sources they used in their research.

# GREEK CLOTHES

Greece is a hot country so the Ancient Greeks did not need many clothes. Also clothes were expensive and hard to keep clean.

## Chitons

The main Greek clothing was called a Chiton. It was like a tube of cloth pinned on top of your shoulders. Then you tied a belt round the middle. It was made of linen, silk or thin wool. Rich people dyed them in deep colours.

Men and children wore short knee length Chitons. Women wore long ones because they did not work or run. In winter they might wear two chitons on top of each other.

## Outside clothes

Out of the house, people wore a cloak called a himation. It went over one shoulder and under the other arm.

It was made of wool. Women put a veil over their heads and faces so men could not see them.

## Hair and Jewels

Greeks had long hair. Women tied it up with ribbons or a net. Inside they had silver and gold headbands and bracelets, but not outside because they might get mugged.

## Shoes

People did not wear shoes inside. Outside they wore strappy sandals with cork soles. In the countryside, rich people wore leather boots. Poor people just had bits of wood tied under their feet with leather thongs.

Sources: MRS Jacob's lesson. The Greeks by Roy Burrell. Women in Ancient Greece by Fiona McDonald.

## Making notes for report writing

The **spidergram** is a suitable skeleton for organising information for a simple descriptive report.

A **characteristics grid** is more appropriate for reports involving comparison.

|        |       |          |         |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| school | games | who went | writing |
| now    |       |          |         |
| then   |       |          |         |

Other types of subject matter might be better represented by a **Venn diagram**, a **labeled picture**, **plan** or **map**, or a **tree diagram**.

Notes on Post-its can be arranged and rearranged to find the best organisation.

## PLANNING PROGRESSION in writing report text

### Year 2 Term 3 T21

**Objective:** Write non-chronological reports based on structure of known texts, using appropriate language to present, sequence, categorise ideas.

*Example*

**Shared writing:** A page for a class book.

**Individual/guided work:** Pupils write own page of same book using formatted page or writing frame.

### Year 3 Term 1 T22

**Objective:** Write simple non-chronological reports from known information for known audience, using notes made to organise and present ideas.

*Example*

**Shared writing:** Teacher models how to make brief notes on a skeleton to organise ideas. Shared writing of a page for a class book based on notes.

**Individual/guided work:** Pupils write own notes on similar skeleton framework, then write own page for same book based on teacher's model.

### Year 4 Term 1 T27

**Objective:** Write non-chronological reports using organisational devices (e.g. numbered lists, headings), generalizing details, deleting unimportant detail.

*Example*

**Shared work:** Teacher demonstrates how to plan a poster, based on known subject matter, showing how to (1) brainstorm for information; (2) select and categorise facts. Shared writing of skeleton notes and poster.

**Individual/guided work:** Pupils plan and write own posters, using the same technique.

### Year 5 Term 2 T22, 23

**Objective:** Plan, compose, edit and refine short non-chronological reports, using reading as a source, focusing on clarity, conciseness, impersonal style and recording sources used.

*Example*

**Shared work:** Teacher demonstrates how to research and plan a page for a reference book on one aspect of a class topic. Shared note-making and writing of the page.

**Individual/guided work:** Pupils research, plan and write their own pages for the reference book.

### Year 6 Term 1 T17

**Objective:** Write non-chronological reports linked to other subjects.

*Example*

**Shared work:** Shared research, planning and writing parts of an information leaflet on a subject which will provide a model for pupils' individual work.

**Individual/guided work:** Pupils research, plan and write own information leaflets, linked to work in another curricular area.

### Year 6 Term 3 T22

**Objective:** Select appropriate style and form to suit a specific purpose and audience, drawing on knowledge of different non-fiction text types.

*Example*

**Shared work:** Teacher (1) models how to select appropriate non-fiction text type for a piece of writing; (2) revises how to plan and write that text type, depending upon purpose and audience.

**Individual/guided work:** Pupils, given audience and purpose, select style and form for a range of pieces of writing, and plan and write one piece.

### National Curriculum and NLS Objectives

The NLS objectives link with and support work in the rest of the curriculum in several ways. We can:

- Bring content knowledge and reading/writing activities from the curriculum into the Literacy Hour. Work in the Literacy Hour is then linked to real purposes for reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Teach language and literacy in both the Literacy Hour and other subjects, weaving the work in subjects and the Literacy Hour explicitly together.
- Apply and practise the skills learned in the literacy hour in new contexts in the rest of the curriculum.
- Use language work done in other subjects to access children's English abilities.

### Linking QCA Units of Work and NLS Writing Objectives

In order to help with planning, links have been mapped between NLS objectives and existing writing activities within QCA schemes of work for history, geography, science, religious education and design and technology.

Visit the QCA website:



[www.qca.org.uk/ca/subjects/english/literacy](http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/subjects/english/literacy)

With thanks to staff and children of Hyde Park Junior School, Plymouth.