

Guidance on the teaching of writing skills

INSET opportunities for teachers of all subjects across the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3



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- Audience** Teachers, literacy coordinators, headteachers and governing bodies of all maintained primary and secondary schools in Wales; institutes for teacher education and training, local authorities, teacher unions and school representative bodies; church diocesan authorities, national bodies in Wales and others with an interest in education.
- Overview** This publication provides INSET activities for teachers focusing on the teaching of writing in all subjects across the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3.
- Action required** To review policies and procedures to promote specific and effective teaching of writing across the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3.
- Further information** Enquiries about this document should be directed to:
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Or by visiting the Welsh Assembly Government's website
www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills
- Related documents** *Guidance on the teaching of higher-order reading skills: INSET opportunities for teachers of all subjects across the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010)
- This guidance is also available in Welsh.

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Introduction

Why is this document needed?

Evidence from recent reports from Estyn and others indicates that, although much effective teaching of writing skills goes on in schools, the following facts remain:

- Over a number of years, learners have attained higher standards in reading than in writing in Key Stages 2 and 3. There is less good and outstanding work in writing than in reading at both key stages. The gap between standards in reading and writing, evident in Key Stage 1, increases exponentially in Key Stages 2 and 3.
- Over the past 10 years, the gap between boys' and girls' performance has increased, with the widest gap in writing.
- The content of the writing of many learners of all abilities is often marred by inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Less-able learners often make slow progress in their learning because of their poor literacy skills.
- Only a small minority of schools provide more-able learners with writing tasks that test and challenge them.
- There are missed opportunities for developing learners' communication skills during their study across the whole curriculum.
- Important shortcomings in teaching include a lack of close attention to improving the quality and accuracy of learners' writing.
- Very few schools use assessment information to plan improvements in writing to the same extent as they use assessment information to improve reading.

These findings from *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* (Estyn, 2008) are consistent with those from moderation work in Welsh and English at Key Stage 3. It appears that there is often an assumption in schools that learners know how to write so that teachers do not explicitly teach writing skills or provide sufficient guidance on how to improve writing.

What are the characteristics of effective writing?

As learners develop as writers, they demonstrate that they can:

- engage their reader(s)
- adapt their writing to suit the audience and purpose of the piece
- use grammatical and stylistic features to ensure clarity, achieve the right tone and create particular effects
- use a range of sentence structures
- organise their writing, linking ideas coherently and using paragraphs effectively
- choose and use appropriate vocabulary
- use punctuation to clarify meaning
- use a range of strategies to enable them to spell correctly
- present their writing appropriately, either by hand or by using information and communication technology (ICT).

In order to make progress, learners need good teaching that includes the modelling of writing, regular opportunities to develop their skills, and effective assessment practice that leads them to understand how best to improve their work. The really effective writer will reach a stage when the mechanical aspects of writing, such as spelling and punctuation, become second nature to them and they are able to give all their attention to experimenting with language and form to engage and inform their readers.

What does this document aim to do?

The aim of this document is to provide guidance for teachers, and learning support assistants where appropriate, on ways to teach writing skills in order to help learners to become more effective writers.

This document is designed to raise awareness of the many individual skills that a learner has to grasp (including consideration of the content of their writing, the ideas, arguments or plot) when learning to write. Faced with such multiple challenges it is not surprising that young learners, or those identified by school data as underattaining in literacy, make many errors when they try to do all this at once. This document suggests, therefore, that attention needs to be paid to the explicit teaching of individual skills in a systematic way, and at the time(s) most appropriate for the individual learner. Teaching in this way will ensure that learners are well prepared for meeting the challenges of writing effectively:

- to develop ideas through writing
- to communicate with a range of audiences and for a variety of purposes
- to tackle the assessment tasks they will meet throughout their years at school, including the Year 5 Optional Skills Assessment Materials, GCSE and GCE examinations
- to cope with any other assessments and writing tasks they might encounter once they have left school.

It is crucial that the teaching of writing skills is carried out in a consistent way across the whole school. In a primary setting, this means that all teachers should have reached agreement on the messages about required structure and content that they will give to learners (for example about the layout of a particular genre of writing) so that learners are not confused when they move into a class taught by someone new. In a secondary setting, as learners move between different departments as part of their learning, this is particularly important. This means that writing skills need to be taught consistently, not only by designated language teachers in the Welsh, English and modern foreign languages (MFL) departments but also by teachers of all other subjects that provide a range of contexts for writing across the school. There is also a need for schools to share information between schools at transition so that secondary colleagues can build on what has been taught at primary level. Common expectations will reinforce messages and help learners to refine their skills in all the writing they undertake.

The *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) makes it clear that teachers need to respond to learners where they currently are in their learning, not where they think they ought to be according, for example, to their age. Effective assessment procedures (formative, diagnostic and summative) will provide teachers with the necessary evidence for them to tailor the specific teaching of writing skills to meet individual needs within the class. This teaching should take place, however, as a support for the writing of whole texts rather than as discrete lessons out of any context.

Learners need to be encouraged to see writing as a process that includes planning content, drafting, evaluating, revising and editing as stages that lead to the final product. It is not possible, of course, to go through this whole process in situations where a learner has to produce a piece of writing in a limited time, as in a test or examination. If, however, that learner has been used to working through the process as a matter of course, that process will be part of their thinking and they will be able to go through it mentally even if they have limited time to spend.

The activities in this document aim to outline the various stages in the teaching of writing that a teacher needs to consider. No-one would advocate giving a learner an empty sheet of paper and a title and telling them to write a story or a report, except in an examination for which they had been fully prepared. The fear of that empty page is very real to many learners who have no idea how to begin the process and feel they are devoid of ideas and expertise; they can become demoralised, lose confidence and be put off writing for life unless they are explicitly taught strategies to cope.

What does it contain?

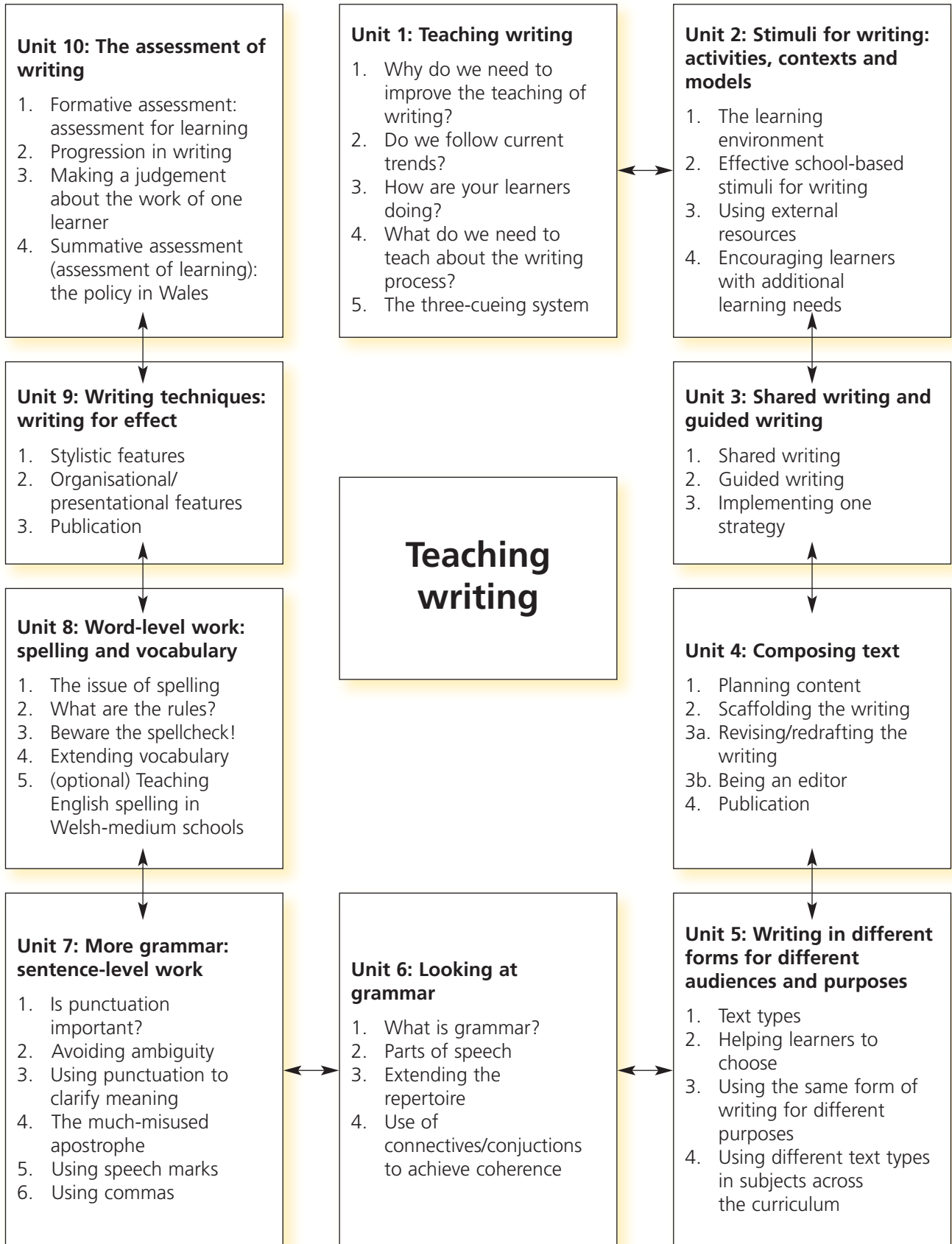
This document contains 10 units organised as in-service training (INSET) sessions, each of which can be used singly or as part of a continuing programme of work. Although the document is arranged in a logical sequence, it is not necessary to use the units in order. Each is designed to be free-standing and could be used alone to meet a particular need identified by teachers.

Units summarise current thinking on the most effective ways to teach and to achieve progression in writing, using available research and resources to provide a comprehensive one-stop shop for teachers in Wales. Clearly, a document of this kind cannot provide much more than the main points relating to the issues. References, therefore, are provided for those who wish to pursue the subject further.

Welsh-medium and English-medium documents have been developed in parallel. Most of the units are identical in content and describe common, transferable skills. A few, where grammatical and linguistic practice differs between the two languages, have language-specific text.

Each unit is self-contained and includes tasks, supportive guidance and answers for the use of the group leader(s). The units can be used independently or, if a whole day is available for INSET, could be grouped so that three or four are chosen, as appropriate. The INSET might take place as a series of twilight sessions or as part of a non-pupil INSET day in individual schools, in a cluster of schools, or in a cross-phase working group.

Unit overview



Who is this document for?

This document is designed to be used in school or cluster-based INSET for national curriculum English and Welsh at Key Stages 2 and 3, or for promoting language and literacy across the curriculum in line with the *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). It could be used by:

- teachers of English and Welsh
- teachers of all other subjects in primary, special or secondary schools
- learning support assistants who work to improve writing skills
- literacy coordinators
- senior managers with responsibility for language and literacy across the curriculum
- local authority (LA) advisory officers
- initial teacher education and training (ITET) tutors.

Although the guidance may be of greatest importance to teachers/coordinators of English and Welsh, it is relevant to all teachers in primary, special and secondary schools and can be used to inform all teachers about ways to improve learners' writing, whatever their subject specialism. This work should be led by the school's literacy coordinator, supported by senior management, and, where necessary, by the expertise of language teachers. Such an initiative might help address the problem identified in *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* (Estyn, 2008) which states:

' . . . in around a third of schools, particularly secondary schools, work to develop pupils' communication skills across the curriculum remains underdeveloped.'

Most units will be appropriate for use with all teachers in primary, special and secondary schools where their subjects will support the application and reinforcement of the skills that are the unit's focus. The document might well be used, for example, if a school's self-evaluation process has indicated that the standard of learners' writing is a problem either in English, Welsh or in subjects across the curriculum. In a Welsh or bilingual school setting, it might be more useful to use the Welsh version of the document for the majority of units, looking at the English units where there are differences between both languages, for example Units 6 and 7 on grammar and Unit 8 on spelling.

Each unit is structured so that it can be delivered without the need for extensive preparation by the group leader. This might be the English and/or Welsh language coordinator of a primary or special school and/or the appropriate head(s) of department in a secondary school, a member of the school's senior management team (SMT) or the LA advisory team, or a tutor in initial teacher training.

The development of writing skills should be part of a whole-school strategy, led by a senior teacher, that involves every teacher in the school. The document aims to provide material that might form part of whole-school training as well as work in LAs and ITET. It is essential that a member of a school's, LA's or ITET institution's senior management team is responsible for monitoring the training and the subsequent evaluation of its impact.

Using the units for INSET

Before using any of these units, read through the whole unit carefully and consider the following points.

<p>Aims</p>	<p>What do you want to get out of the session? How does it answer identified needs? How will it help you to implement national curriculum English/Welsh and the skills framework and/or provide guidance for teachers of other subjects across the curriculum? What outcome will there be?</p> <p>Which of these (or other) success criteria are relevant to the unit in use?</p> <p>Teachers show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased understanding of the need to improve learners' writing • increased understanding of how writing demands can be adapted to suit the learning needs of individual learners • increased awareness of a range of strategies to teach writing • increased knowledge of key 'facts'/rules about writing at text, sentence and word level • increased confidence in using methodology that was previously unfamiliar to them.
<p>Time</p>	<p>How much time do you have available? Most of the units take between 1½ to 2 hours to complete. Some can be broken down into shorter sessions. Don't attempt to do too much in one session. Decide how much time you are going to allow for each of the tasks and stick to your decision as far as possible.</p>
<p>Place</p>	<p>Where would be the best place to carry out the INSET activity? Will there be a break? Do you have tea-/coffee-making facilities?</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>What do you need to have available? Specific resources are listed on each INSET unit. Do you have enough copies of the resources for all group members? Do you need paper, highlighter pens, flip charts, an overhead projector (OHP), a computer, projector or interactive whiteboard? Do you have enough copies of the relevant national curriculum Orders to hand in case group members wish to refer to them?</p>
<p>Which units will be used?</p>	<p>Which units are most relevant to different audiences? Decisions will need to be based on needs identified through self-evaluation in schools or cluster groups. For example, all teachers in a primary school or all members of English/Welsh departments in a secondary school might use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all units singly over a long period as twilight sessions • all units as the content of three or four non-pupil days • one or two units to meet an identified need, e.g. Unit 8.

	<p>A cross-phase cluster group might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus initially on Unit 10 as part of a cross-phase moderation exercise • use units such as Unit 3 or Unit 8 to ensure common pedagogy and consistent messages to learners across phases. <p>Teachers from subjects across the curriculum in a secondary school might use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 3 as a means of extending their own teaching methodology and helping learners to improve their writing skills • Units 5, 6, 7 and 8 to focus on the importance of choosing the appropriate text type, on accuracy in learners' writing and on strategies for teaching grammar, spelling and punctuation.
Introduction	<p>How will you start the INSET session? Do you need to remind people of the purpose of the session? Did you ask them to do anything in advance or to bring something to the meeting?</p>
Conclusion	<p>How will you bring the INSET session to a close? Do you need to summarise what has been learned or what decisions have been made? Do you have to distribute any information or resource sheets? Do you need to agree on a next step or to suggest a classroom activity to be carried out before the next session?</p>
Evaluation (at the end of the INSET period when outcomes are available)	<p>What are the benefits for teachers and, ultimately, the learners?</p> <p>To what extent do teachers show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased understanding of the need to improve learners' writing • an increased willingness and ability to evaluate their own practice • increased understanding of how writing demands can be adapted to suit the learning needs of individual learners • increased awareness of a range of strategies to teach writing • increased knowledge of key 'facts'/rules about writing at text, sentence and word level • increased confidence in using methodology that was previously unfamiliar to them? <p>To what extent have learners of all abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefited from exposure to a range of models of effective writing • become more familiar with the characteristics of different forms of writing, especially non-fiction writing • become more accurate in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation • achieved higher standards of writing performance overall • shown increased enthusiasm for writing?

During the INSET session, make sure that you keep to the allocated time. Keep your group members working on the task in hand (it is very easy to get sidetracked into lengthy discussions that are not relevant). Try to involve everyone in the tasks as well as the subsequent discussion, and focus on what can realistically be done.



Unit 1: Teaching writing

Unit 1

Teaching writing

Aim: To explain the rationale for this guidance and the need to **teach** writing rather than assume learners' competence.

Time: 1½ hours

Preparation: Read the whole of Unit 1.

Make sure you are familiar with the relevant Programme(s) of Study for Writing in the national curriculum Order for Welsh/English, and/or the writing requirements for other subjects of the curriculum and the *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

Find data relating to attainment in the three attainment targets for Welsh/English in your school/cluster/LA for the past two years, e.g. Data Exchange Wales initiative (DEWi) data, information from primary schools via the transition plan, gender-specific data and the national core data set information.

Find school data relating to learners identified for Basic Skills Quality Standards purposes as belonging to the target group for literacy support.

Ask teachers in the group to bring examples of writing over a term from one learner whose progress in writing has recently caused them concern.

Make necessary photocopies/slides or overhead transparencies (OHTs).

Resources: Copies of the national curriculum Orders for Welsh/English and/or other national curriculum subjects as appropriate.

Copies of the Estyn publications *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* (2008) and *Sharing good practice in developing pupils' literacy skills* (2009) which is only available on the website.

Copies of the appropriate Tables 1 to 6 from *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* on OHT/PowerPoint, for use with the group as a whole.

Copies of data on Sheet 1.2, updated as necessary.

School/Departmental standardisation portfolio of moderated Key Stage 3 work in Welsh/English and/or other subjects where appropriate.

Hard copies of school/cluster/LA data and/or this information on OHT/PowerPoint slide.

Copies of Sheets 1.1 to 1.5 for each member of the group.

Task summary

Task 1: Why do we need to improve the teaching of writing?

Task 2: Do we follow current trends?

Task 3: How are your learners doing?

Task 4: What do we need to teach about the writing process?

Task 5: The three-cueing system

Task 1

Why do we need to improve the teaching of writing?

Using the rationale from the Introduction (see Sheet 1.1) present the findings of the Estyn report, *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years*, to the group and discuss. Are these findings true of learners' performance in your school(s)?

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 2

Do we follow current trends?

Look at paragraphs 32 to 39 ('Standards in Welsh and English in key stage 2 and key stage 3') in *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years*. This provides the national picture in recent years using past test results where appropriate, as well as information gained from Estyn's inspection of schools.

Look also at national data on Sheet 1.2, updated as necessary. There is a wealth of data available but this is only useful if it is passed on to those who need to see it and use it. Senior managers should provide and share this with staff.

Note: Now that end-of-key stage assessment is in the hands of teachers at both key stages, it should be possible for schools to audit learners' performance in the three attainment targets from their own records.

With the whole group, present data about learners' performance in your school(s)/LA over the past two years in terms of individual attainment targets. Discuss:

- what this tells you about the relationship between reading and writing performance
- whether or not this matches the findings reported in the Estyn report, *Best practice in the teaching of reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14* and the national standards
- how you can redress the balance in your school(s).

Take about 30 minutes.

Task 3

How are your learners doing?

In pairs, look at learners' work, brought by teachers, and identify whether:

- there is a range of writing forms
- the writer shows a sense of knowing the audience and purpose of the piece
- writing is of an appropriate length for the task
- work is unfinished or poorly finished
- the work is spoiled by careless mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar
- the teacher's previous comments and corrections have been noted and had an effect
- the writing has shown overall improvement over time.

Take about 10 minutes.

Discuss what this tells you about the teaching of writing in your school(s).

Look at Sheet 1.3 and discuss whether the statements there make sense to the group.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 4

What do we need to teach about the writing process?

- Writing skills need to be explicitly taught.
- We cannot assume that learners instinctively know how to write.

In pairs, briefly discuss these statements and decide what you think are the five most important individual strategies that a learner needs to be taught in order to become an effective writer.

Take about 10 minutes.

Discuss findings with whole group and produce a list on a flip chart or similar. Compare with Sheet 1.4. This does not claim to be a comprehensive list and may not contain all the ideas put forward, but the strategies listed here and the process described are important. This is very much a starter activity. Later units will return to these strategies and explore them in more detail.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 5

The three-cueing system

Refer to Sheet 1.5.

This puts forward a general statement about what knowledge we need to become effective writers: knowledge about the world, about grammar and about words.

Give copies to group members and ask them to consider the statement in terms of their own teaching.

Sheet 1.1

Evidence from recent reports from Estyn and others indicates that, although much effective teaching of writing skills goes on in schools, the following facts remain:

- Over a number of years, learners have attained higher standards in reading than in writing in Key Stages 2 and 3. There is less good and outstanding work in writing than in reading at both key stages. The gap between standards in reading and writing, evident in Key Stage 1, increases exponentially in Key Stages 2 and 3.
- Over the past 10 years, the gap between boys' and girls' performance has increased, with the widest gap in writing.
- The content of the writing of many learners of all abilities is often marred by inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Less-able learners often make slow progress in their learning because of their poor literacy skills.
- Only a small minority of schools provide more-able learners with writing tasks that test and challenge them.
- There are missed opportunities for developing learners' communication skills during their study across the whole curriculum.
- An important shortcoming in teaching is a lack of close attention to improving the quality and accuracy of learners' writing.
- Very few schools use assessment information to plan improvements in writing to the same extent as they use assessment information to improve reading.

These findings from *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* (Estyn, 2008) are consistent with those from moderation work in Welsh and English at Key Stage 3. It appears that there is often an assumption in schools that learners know how to write, so that teachers do not explicitly teach writing skills or provide sufficient guidance on how to improve writing.

In addition, teachers need to ensure that writing demands in all subjects take account of learners' existing skills.

Sheet 1.2

Key Stage 2 results by subject and attainment target, 2000–2009 – percentage of pupils attaining Level 4

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Subject										
English	69.4	73.3	75.8	76.1	76.6	79.3	78.6	78.6	79.8	81.0
English – Oracy							79.1	79.1	80.6	81.8
English – Reading							78.4	78.5	79.9	80.8
English – Writing							73.3	72.5	73.2	74.2
Welsh	66.4	69.6	73.6	75.6	76.7	76.3	75.5	72.8	77.0	79.9
Welsh – Oracy							79.4	76.0	79.9	82.8
Welsh – Reading							76.0	73.4	77.0	80.1
Welsh – Writing							65.1	64.1	67.7	70.8

Key Stage 3 results by subject and attainment target, 2000–2009 – percentage of pupils attaining Level 5

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Subject										
English	62.6	63.2	64.1	64.7	66.8	67.2	67.8	68.6	69.5	70.6
English – Oracy									69.5	70.8
English – Reading									69.0	69.7
English – Writing									65.5	65.3
Welsh (First language)	71.8	70.5	71.6	73.7	73.1	74.9	71.9	72.6	72.3	75.1
Welsh – Oracy									73.6	78.0
Welsh – Reading									70.5	73.1
Welsh – Writing									68.2	68.2

Note: In subsequent years, it will be necessary to update this data – see www.statswales.wales.gov.uk

Sheet 1.3

The national curriculum Order provides a model of the writing process. Pupils should be given opportunities to *plan, draft, revise, proofread and prepare a final copy of their writing*.

Each of the elements is important in the production of a finished piece of writing.

There is, however, a danger that the teaching of writing can easily be reduced to **teaching by correction** – teaching after the event – instead of **teaching at the point of writing** which focuses on demonstrating and exploring the decisions writers make as the writing happens. It is necessary for teachers to guide learners through the whole process (modelling the way a writer thinks through shared and guided writing sessions) so that the process becomes familiar and fully understood by all learners.

Effective teaching will often focus on particular aspects of the writing process (e.g. planning an explanation, instructional writing, an argument or a story, or revising a draft to change and improve it). However, at regular intervals all learners should have the experience of developing a piece of writing through the whole process. It is particularly important that learners with additional learning needs (ALN) are included in the process, with support and scaffolding as necessary, so that they too have a holistic experience and not a repetition of certain parts of the process because they are considered as 'not ready' to move on.

Very often, a teaching sequence will be as follows:

- Reading, in shared reading time and through other subjects (for example history).
- Discussion about the topic for the writing (providing ideas).
- Building up a word bank.
- Independent writing, with the teacher supporting as children work.
- Work handed in and marked by the teacher, who identifies some spelling errors and makes helpful and encouraging comments on work.
- Work returned to the child.

Sheet 1.3 (continued)

However, many learners find independent writing difficult because they have to think about so many things at once: they have to plan the content, think of the right words and sentence constructions, work out the spelling and punctuation and transcribe it all on to the page. Often, most of their attention is taken up by spelling and scribing, leaving little mental space to think about the compositional aspects of their writing. Teachers need to be creative in involving all learners, including underattainers and those with dyslexia or specific learning difficulties, providing appropriate feedback and support so that learners can engage with the whole writing process and be motivated to write.

Often, when examining a learner's work over a period of time, several things become clear:

- there is a high proportion of brief, unfinished or poorly finished work
- the teacher's comments and corrections seem to have had very little effect
- the writing does not seem to have improved much.

Much teaching, quite properly, has focused on stimulating ideas and preparing for writing but when left to write (to draft and revise, to work alone) the learner has problems. No teacher is able to provide detailed support for every member of the class as they write so that, unless independence in writing is encouraged in other ways, many learners will make little progress.

Sheet 1.4

The writing process: strategies for writing

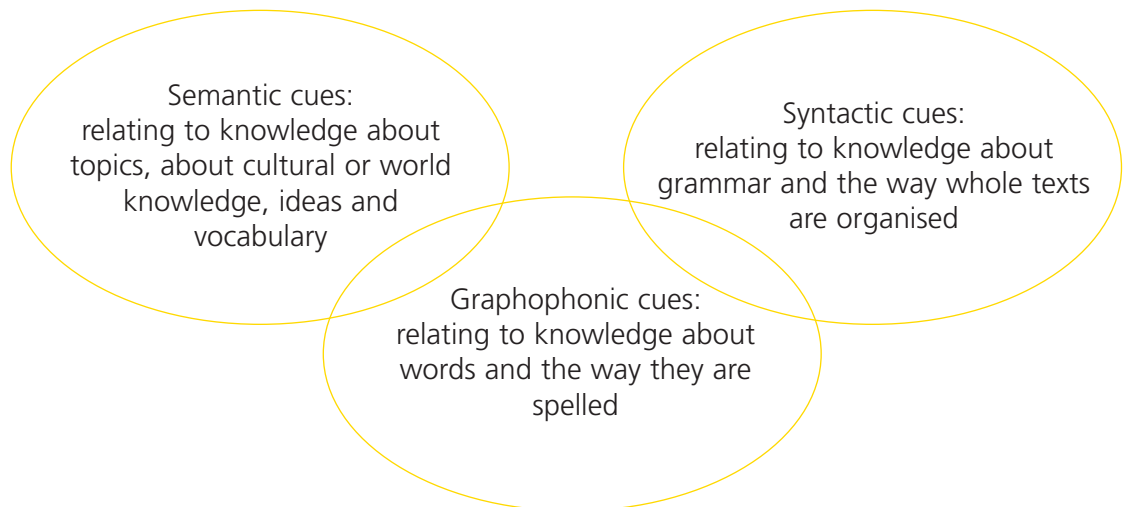
Process	Strategies
Self-questioning	<p>Asking themselves questions about their writing to establish audience and purpose in their own minds, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why am I writing this text? • Who am I writing for? • What kind of language do I need to use? • What do I need to tell them? • How will I organise my work?
Planning content	<p>Thinking about plot, theme, information content, etc., to suit the task through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brainstorming ideas, alone or with others • researching the topic in books or on-screen, and making notes • using other resources to stimulate and/or inform.
Sounding out	<p>Rehearsing what is to be written orally prior to writing in small groups or with talk partners and experimenting until it sounds right. 'If they can't think it, they can't write it.'</p>
Writing first draft	<p>Getting something down on paper or on-screen. Focusing on the sequence of ideas/content. 'Having a go' at problematic spelling at this stage using spelling strategies specifically taught. This is especially important for underattaining learners and dyslexics/learners with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) who should not be allowed to become demotivated by errors or poor handwriting.</p>
Revising the text	<p>Reading what has been written aloud to a partner or to self. This highlights omissions, grammatical inconsistencies, etc., that might not be apparent if the work is read silently since the writer will often 'read' what should be there rather than what is actually on the page. Reviewing the text and identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether or not the text makes sense • whether or not it needs further detail to support the plot, add to description or provide missing information • whether or not the tone is appropriate for the audience • whether or not anything needs to be omitted because it is repetitive or irrelevant, etc. <p>and making revisions on paper or on-screen.</p>
Editing	<p>Checking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisation/sequencing of ideas/events/paragraphs to ensure writing is coherent • spelling, punctuation and grammar.
Preparing final copy	<p>Producing a final copy suitable for 'publication', preferably for a real audience, paying attention to presentation either in legible handwriting or through using ICT.</p>

Sheet 1.5

We are familiar with the idea that effective readers draw upon a range of information sources as they search for meaning in texts. These are summarised in the three-cueing system put forward by David Pearson as long ago as 1976, and involve:

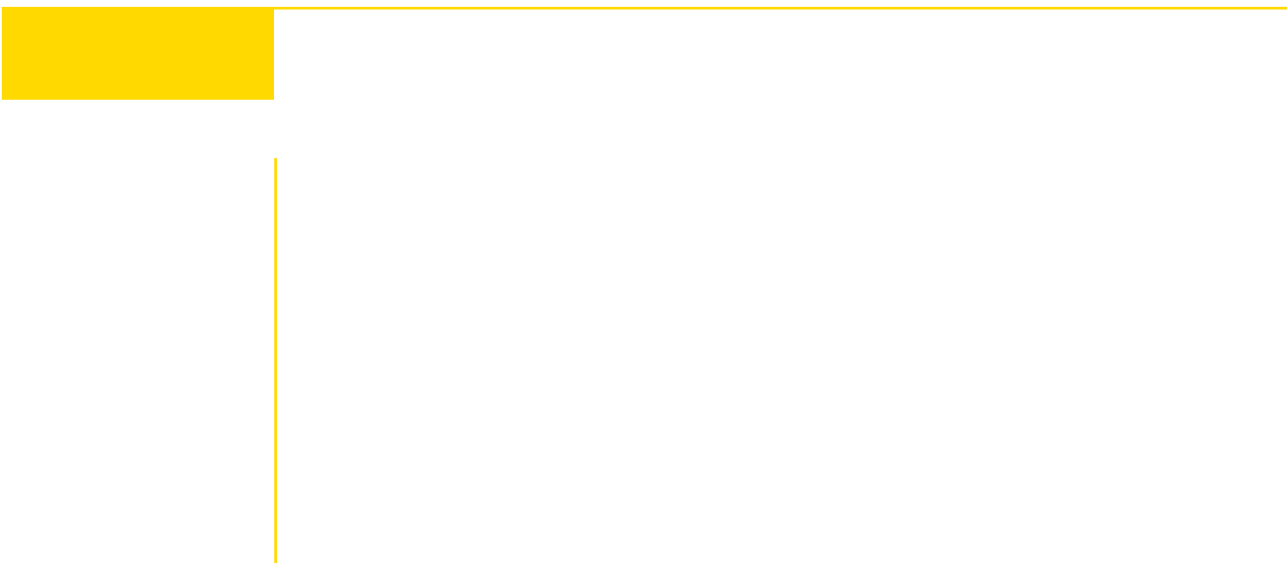
- semantic cues – relating to knowledge about topics, about cultural or world knowledge, ideas and vocabulary
- syntactic cues – relating to knowledge about grammar and the way whole texts are organized
- graphophonic cues – relating to knowledge about words and the way they are spelled.

The same system is used by effective writers as they compose texts. Collectively, the three cues make up a learner's prior knowledge and learners draw on this knowledge as they write.



It is crucial that, from an early age, learners have opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills within each cue if they are to write effectively. This means that teachers (and parents/carers) need to provide opportunities for them to:

- expand their knowledge of topics, people, places and ideas through questioning and discussion, through reading as wide a range of texts as possible, through engagement in practical activities such as role-play and the use of ICT, and through exposure to an increasing range of experience through visits and other experiences outside school
- build their vocabulary
- develop their understanding of grammar
- understand how paragraphs in different kinds of writing tend to be constructed
- focus on the language features of different kinds of writing/text types
- understand words and word parts
- explore the relationships between sounds and the symbols that are the alphabet, as well as develop strategies to improve their spelling.

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Unit 2: Stimuli for writing: activities, contexts and models

Unit 2

Stimuli for writing: activities, contexts and models

Aim: To consider ways of stimulating ideas prior to writing and helping learners to enjoy and improve their work.

Time: 1½ to 2 hours

Preparation: Read the whole of Unit 2, taking particular notice of your role in the activities.

Audit the school environment in terms of writing. Does it mirror the suggestions on Sheet 2.1?

Familiarise yourself with the way Writers on Tour works, what a writer's visit might cost, etc.

Find out where the nearest Young People's Writing Squad is based. Is there one organised by your LA?

Familiarise yourself with any current writing competitions for learners.

Resources: Photocopies of Sheets 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 for each group member.

Copy of latest Writers on Tour booklet and information about Young People's Writing Squads – available from the Academi at www.writingsquads.org

Copies of any information about current writing competitions

Copies of Case Studies 2 and 12 from the Estyn report, *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* (Estyn, 2008).

After the session:

- Ensure that every group member has a copy of the suggestions made about the learning environment as soon as possible.
- If appropriate, share the ideas put forward with SMT/other teachers/Heads of Department as part of a whole-school approach.
- Request a regular 'sharing session' of lessons that work at every future staff/departmental meeting.
- If appropriate, ask whoever agreed to follow up the issue of Young People's Writing Squads to do so and to report back to the next session.

Task summary

Task 1: The learning environment

Task 2: Effective school-based stimuli for writing

Task 3: Using external resources

Task 4: Encouraging learners with additional learning needs

Task 1

The learning environment

Ask group members to consider what characterises an environment that encourages learners to write. This will vary according to the phase of schooling and the age and abilities of the classes taught. In a primary school, it will be age-related to some extent but will have to support learners of all abilities within that class, whether it is a single year group or a mixed-age class. In a secondary school, the environment will need to support learners of all ages and abilities as the classroom will be used by a range of classes. In this case, there will need to be both generic material and class-specific space for the display of learners' work from all classes taught. In each case, the environment should include models and guidance appropriate to different stages of writing development, including key vocabulary, model responses for reading and writing, and success criteria.

Take about 10 minutes to discuss.

Then, ask group members (initially in pairs and then as a group) to consider, in the light of the previous discussion:

- i) their own classrooms
- ii) the school as a whole
- iii) what improvements could be made in the short-term? In the long-term?
- iv) whether or not group members are prepared to commit themselves to making such improvements.

Make a list of suggestions (perhaps initially on a flip chart or board) and agree on some actions that could/should be implemented and that are considered to be manageable. Refer to Sheet 2.1 and compare. You will not want/be able to implement all the suggestions there but might choose two or three that coincide with your list as a starting point. It will be helpful if you concentrate on pupil-generated materials where possible.

Decide who will have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of these improvements and how this will be carried out without causing controversy or increased workload.

Take about 20 minutes.

After the session:

- ensure that every group member has a copy of the agreed list as soon as possible
- if appropriate, share the ideas put forward with SMT/other teachers/heads of department as part of a whole-school approach.

Task 2

Effective school-based stimuli for writing

In pairs or small groups, ask group members to list what they consider to be the most effective school-based stimuli for writing. Pairs to report back to whole group after about 15 minutes to stimulate whole-group discussion.

Compare findings with the list on Sheet 2.2 and discuss any differences, omissions or additions.

Ask each member of the group to recommend one stimulus that has worked particularly well for them and their learners. As a group, consider these ideas and encourage teachers to try something new in the next week.

Suggest further sharing of effective practice/resources/ideas as a regular part of future staff/departmental meetings.

Take about 20 minutes, or more if ideas are flowing. As group leader you will have to gauge how much time this activity needs.

Task 3

Using external resources

The location of your school will determine, to a certain extent, the nature of the external resources you might use to stimulate ideas for writing across the curriculum. People, places and things can all be inspirational and you will know what or who is available in your area.

Either in pairs or as a whole-group activity, list:

- local people who might either visit the school or invite your learners to their base to talk to them about their particular interest/history/organisation (e.g. police, fire fighters, church officials, nurses, shopkeepers, members of local history societies, etc.)
- interesting areas of your town, village or immediate neighbourhood that you might visit with your learners
- collections of art, craft, artefacts in local museums, galleries or historic buildings
- opportunities for drama in performance through visits to theatres or venues with role-play activities
- opportunities for product evaluation – comparing different foods, taste tests, etc., linked to local produce and production
- opportunities offered by your local library or the school library service
- professional writers whose work is popular with your learners and, ideally, who might have been recommended to you by colleagues in another school. These might be writers of books about the local area, for example, or writers of fiction
- anything else peculiar to your area that could inspire good writing.

Take about 20 minutes.

Task 4

Encouraging learners with additional learning needs

All learners need to be encouraged and supported to improve their writing skills; those with additional learning needs will need extra encouragement and support. It is essential that teachers ensure that they meet the needs of all learners in their classes.

As a group, consider how the following learners are supported in your school(s):

- those with special educational needs, including dyslexia
- those who are cognitively able but in need of technical support, for example those learners with physical disabilities or those on the autistic spectrum with some motor difficulties
- those who are underattaining
- those with Welsh/English as an additional language
- those who are able and talented.

What strategies could be used to help these learners to improve their writing skills?

Look at Sheet 2.3 and consider the comments there.

Take about 15 minutes.

Appendix 2 provides some useful references.

The learning environment

A classroom that aims to motivate learners to create a community of writers will be rich in writing of all kinds and will have the following.

A wide range of texts that can be used as models to illustrate the characteristics of different forms of writing, such as:

- information leaflets – tourist information, health education, travel brochures, etc.
- instructional writing – recipes, instruction manuals, etc.
- advertisements
- charity appeals
- newspapers, magazines, comics, graphic novels and articles
- reference books – dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, telephone directories, 'topic' books
- ICT resources – websites, e-mail messages, blogs
- novels, short stories, myths and legends
- poetry – classic, contemporary, funny, in a range of forms
- drama texts appropriate to the age group
- resources from different cultures for learners with English as an additional language (EAL)
- models of writing from across the curriculum, appropriate to different subjects, with key structures, features and vocabulary highlighted.

Learner-generated collections of, for example:

- recipes
- reports
- information leaflets
- words that follow particular spelling patterns
- words instead of... (synonyms for 'nice', 'said', etc.)
- short stories
- effective story openings
- effective descriptions.

Display that celebrates learners' best work, changed at regular intervals.

Curriculum support on display that is regularly used and referred to by teachers. For example, learner-generated posters outlining:

- how to be a good response partner
- questions to ask before writing
- characteristics of various text types.

Sheet 2.1 (continued)

Stimulus material relating to current topic or task:

- pictures
- artefacts
- presentations on interactive whiteboard
- audio-visual equipment with appropriate CDs, DVDs, etc.
- word walls.

Sufficient ICT resources to allow learners to create texts, combining print, images and sounds, including:

- computers
- software
- interactive whiteboard
- digital camera
- radio/CD players
- internet access.

Classroom organisation that allows for different groupings related to a range of tasks. This will include:

- whole-class work for activities such as shared writing
- group work with teacher input, such as sessions of guided writing
- pair work, as an opportunity to share and refine ideas, confirm understanding, provide examples, etc.
- small-group work to discuss issues prior to writing about them, the grouping often dictated by the teacher
- friendship groups to discuss and plan, for example an enterprise project that will involve some written material
- one-to-one work with support, perhaps from a learning support assistant.

Effective school-based stimuli for writing

The list on Sheet 2.1 has already provided many ideas for classroom resources but some of these will have significant financial implications for school budgets. It will be necessary to plan carefully so that, over time, a good range of resources can be provided in each classroom of your school(s). Many of the resources, however, do not need to cost too much. These include:

- learner-generated books and collections
- displays of best work
- curriculum support material
- collections of texts brought in by learners or teachers from the world outside school, including leaflets, newspapers, magazines, programmes, etc. These can be collected in a suitable container (a tub of texts) for use when appropriate
- catalogues, brochures, Yellow Pages
- the internet.

If learners are involved in collecting such resources, they will be more likely to show interest in the writing that surrounds them in the world outside school and to use it as a support for their own writing.

People in school

Utilising the expertise and curriculum planning of other subject specialists

- Specialists in history, geography, music, art and design, design and technology, drama and other subjects will be a source of good ideas for appropriate stimulus material relating to a particular topic, atmosphere or period.
- It will be useful for English and/or Welsh teachers to know the curriculum focus in each other's subjects as well as other subjects for a particular group of learners, so that linked work can be planned – perhaps by considering the form, range or type of writing learners could use to show their learning in other subjects (see Unit 5). This will not be a problem in a primary school but will need more planned collaboration between departments in a secondary school, as encouraged in *Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).
- The school librarian will be able to provide important support and resources.

Visitors to schools who might help include:

- Theatre in Education companies
- visiting experts or representatives of organisations
- parents, grandparents, former pupils
- visiting writers (as part of the Academi Writers on Tour scheme)
- visiting sportsmen or women, or local celebrities
- local business or entrepreneurship links, including organisations such as Careers Wales
- scientists from local industry.

Encouraging learners with additional needs

Learners with dyslexia/specific learning difficulties

Such learners may need to be encouraged to write, working through areas of strength to overcome difficulties. With sensitive teaching, writing activities can be used to reinforce learning related to the processing of sound, visual discrimination and grammar/syntax, tackling selected areas systematically to avoid overwhelming the learner. Some learners may have difficulties with working memory so that it will be helpful to provide visual support for planning, sequencing and organising tasks and ideas. Handwriting may be slow and inaccurate, with possible difficulties with directionality. Learners should not generally be asked to copy text, and oral options should be offered where appropriate. Buddy/peer support may help when learners are required to read back their work, etc. Learners should be encouraged to develop strategies for independent working, taking into account their own preferences for layout, colour, contrast, etc. Technology is increasingly used to support a range of activities, including the production of written work in attractive formats. A list of useful software can be found on the websites of the British Dyslexia Association and the Professional association of teachers of students with specific learning difficulties (Patoss) – see Appendix 2.

Learners with Welsh or English as an additional language

In Wales, 98 languages are spoken by at least 8,000 children alongside Welsh and English and we need to take full advantage of this fact. There is a significant body of research evidence to show that learners who speak more than one language have an increased ability to use and learn language in general. Supporting the development of a learner's use of the home language in addition to Welsh and/or English brings many benefits and can improve literacy and understanding. Schools need to draw on learners' cultural and linguistic diversity so that the experience of all learners across the curriculum is enriched.

There are, however, some issues that teachers need to consider:

- learners who have learned to read/write in another language may be familiar with a different sound–symbol relationship and may therefore struggle to differentiate between sounds. This may have an impact on spelling, though it is not indicative of hearing or speech difficulties
- punctuation in writing indicates intonation, pauses, etc., so understanding partly depends on the development of speech patterns in English or Welsh
- genres are culturally determined. Learners from other cultural backgrounds need help with structure, organisation, order, grammatical features, etc.

Sheet 2.3 (continued i)

Note: Bilingual learners in Wales have the same advantages as those described above. If they learn a skill through the medium of one language they can, in most cases, transfer that skill to their second language and can certainly talk about it in both languages. Many learners show prodigious skills when they read in one language, translate mentally and use their second language to talk or write in response – a common occurrence in Welsh-medium/bilingual schools where resources are often in English. Such skills need to be acknowledged and built upon. Further discussion of these issues can be found in *Developing Dual Literacy: An Estyn discussion paper* (Estyn, 2002).

Learners with low attainment

Over recent years, some successful intervention programmes supported by Basic Skills Cymru, the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities have helped learners develop their reading and spelling skills. These include Reading Recovery and Catch-Up programmes. There are, however, fewer support programmes to help learners improve their wider writing skills, and yet insecurity in writing can affect a learner's access to learning and limit his or her performance across all areas of the curriculum. Low attainers, particularly boys, can become demoralised because of technical and organisational errors in written work that they do not know how to correct. It is essential that such learners have opportunities to:

- use talk to develop ideas orally
- rehearse and organise their ideas before writing using talk frameworks, talk partners, etc.
- receive explicit support linked to their individual needs
- undertake structured and purposeful writing tasks that are explained clearly
- focus systematically on areas such as spelling, identifying their own areas of weakness and being helped to understand how to improve
- use technology as motivation and to encourage a desire to communicate with others in relevant contexts.

An extensive range of materials to support learners with low attainment is available from Basic Skills Cymru. See Appendix 2 for details.

More-able and talented learners

In many schools, there is a tendency for teachers to be content if learners are reaching the expected level for their age. This means, however, that some more-able and talented learners are not being sufficiently stretched, and are coasting along rather than meeting their potential. Such learners need enrichment and extended learning experiences on a day-to-day basis, and these experiences will often include or culminate in writing.

Sheet 2.3 (continued ii)

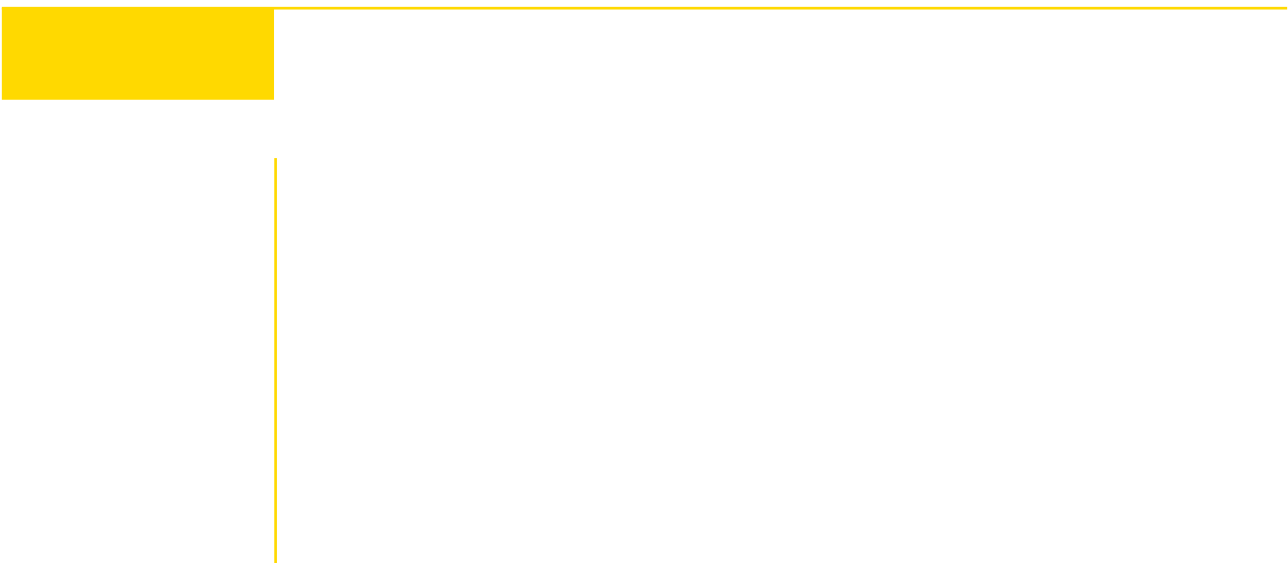
The recently published *Supporting learners' higher-order literacy skills* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009) (and comparable document for Welsh, *Cefnogi uwch sgiliau llythrennedd dysgwyr*) illustrating learners' reading and writing at Levels 7, 8 and Exceptional Performance (EP), aims to bring this situation to the attention of teachers in secondary schools, to raise expectations and to encourage the specific targeting of able learners to raise their attainment. A similar publication focusing on higher-order literacy across the curriculum has been sent to schools. Appendix 2 provides other relevant references and websites, including that of the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) which publishes guidance materials relating to the more-able learner.

One strategy that has proved popular and effective in Wales over past years has been the setting up of Young People's Writing Squads in some LAs. These allow talented writers to meet and work with similarly talented learners, guided by a professional writer (in the same way that those talented in sports will meet for extra coaching from an expert). The scheme is organised by the Academi in Cardiff and details can be found by navigating through the Young People's Writing Squads section at www.academi.org

Discuss whether such a group exists in your LA. (You, as group leader, will have done some research and can guide the group.) If so, are your learners involved? If not, might it be possible/desirable/practical to join an already established scheme or set one up? Try to come to some decision about the way forward. If you need, for example, to contact your LA adviser, make sure that someone agrees to do so and to take the matter further.

Such out-of-hours work, however, should not be seen as a substitute for the enrichment and extension of learning experiences. These need to occur in schools on a day-to-day basis to extend the breadth and depth of the work for more-able and talented learners, as well as to provide opportunities for independent learning.



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Unit 3: Shared writing and guided writing

Unit 3

Shared writing and guided writing

Aim: To teach at the point of writing, focusing on demonstrating and exploring the decisions writers make in the process of composition rather than teaching by correction.

Time: 1½ to 2 hours

Preparation: Read the whole of Unit 3 and familiarise yourself with the processes described.

Choose an appropriate subject for the shared writing session with your colleagues. Decide the practicalities of carrying this out (e.g. on a board, OHT, interactive whiteboard or other means) and make sure the equipment is available and working.

Use Sheet 3.2 as the subject of the guided writing session. Ideally this should be placed on a large sheet of paper, at least A3 in size, so that annotations can be made to identify ways to improve the work. Prepare sufficient examples for at least one copy between two people; preferably a copy each.

Make copies of Sheets 3.1 and 3.3.

Resources: Chosen equipment for shared writing session.

Copies of writing for guided writing session.

Copies of Sheets 3.1 and 3.3 for each group member.

Task summary

Task 1: Shared writing

Task 2: Guided writing

Task 3: Implementing one strategy

Introduction

The two strategies described here are the best ways to model the writing process with learners. They involve teaching at the point of writing, focusing on demonstrating and exploring the decisions writers make in the process of composition. This is much more positive and effective than the commonly used teaching by correction.

If the self-questioning that is at the heart of these strategies becomes established in the minds of learners through regular exposure to shared and guided writing, it is highly likely that the learners themselves, when writing independently, will adopt the same approaches and go through them mentally as they compose and improve their own writing.

Task 1

Shared writing

Make sure the group members are seated so that they can see the equipment you have chosen to use for the shared writing session.

Explain that shared writing is a strategy that slows down the writing process and demonstrates and models for learners the way a writer needs to think. It comes after initial decisions have been made about the topic of the writing. It can be done in one of two ways: initially, through teacher demonstration, and subsequently with teacher as scribe writing down suggestions from the class, once they have become familiar with the process.

For class use, the two processes should be used separately, especially with young learners or those with less secure literacy skills who will have a particular need for the demonstration element. However, in this situation, with a group of teachers, it is sensible to combine the two processes, beginning with demonstration but gradually allowing the group to join in while you act as scribe.

Announce the topic/title of your intended writing and carry out the session. You will need to perform as though you have a class in front of you.

Begin by demonstrating: start writing, questioning yourself aloud about what you are doing and making the thinking process explicit. For example, if you choose a story, you might ask yourself and answer aloud before writing something down:

- Who am I writing for?
- Why am I writing?
- What sort of writing will this be?
- What tone do I want to create?
- Who or what will be the subject of my writing?
- How will it begin in order to gain the reader's attention?

...and so on.

If you choose a report (for example on learners' attitudes to school dinners) you might ask:

- Who will read the report?
- What is its aim?
- What sort of language will be appropriate to use?
- How will the report be structured?

As the group becomes involved, allow them to make suggestions – consider them and make decisions about which ones to adopt, acting now as scribe for the class though still guiding the process and content. Ask group members to draft the writing orally by rehearsing sentences and inviting the others to 'improve' them before you write them down. Experiment with different sentence structures and different connectives. Carry on building up the writing, demonstrating the drafting process as you go by rereading each section as you progress, asking whether it can be improved – with a more appropriate word, with added descriptive detail, with reorganised word order, with the addition of direct speech, with an account of evidence collected, etc.

Carry on until you have established the process. Beware: it is very enjoyable and you must be aware of the time taken (ideally no more than 20 minutes).

Discuss this strategy as a group, whether group members are already using it or whether they might agree to do so in future. If some teachers are doing so, they presumably find it useful so ask them to share their experience of the strategy with the group.

Consider together the comments on Sheet 3.1.

Take about 25 minutes (i.e. 45 minutes in total on shared writing).

Task 2

Guided writing

Distribute copies of Sheet 3.2 on A3 sheets. The errors in this piece are very obvious but should nevertheless produce an interesting discussion about the best ways to move this learner on. Depending on the size of the group, ask group members to work in groups of five or six. One member must take the role of the group leader/the teacher.

The group members are simulating small group work in a classroom where the teacher is working with a maximum of five learners either on the same piece of work or, with more experienced writers, on a separate piece brought by each group member. This kind of work fits well with the whole philosophy relating to assessment for learning (that is, sharing with a writer the ways that a piece of work can be improved) and is a valuable way to consolidate that thinking.

Follow this sequence:

- Read the whole work aloud to the group.
- Consider each sentence/paragraph and discuss how it could be improved in order to clarify the meaning, in the same way as was discussed in the section on shared writing. Try to encourage each group member to contribute to the discussions.
- Look at the piece as a whole – is it coherent? Are the ideas/events/paragraphs sequenced appropriately? Would any reordering make the meaning clearer?
- As a second step, consider the accuracy of the piece in terms of spelling and punctuation.
- Make annotations on the A3 sheet to record the things that you have discussed and have agreed will improve the writing.

Having 'improved' the piece of writing, discuss as a group the advantages and possible disadvantages of this strategy, and consider the comments on Sheet 3.3.

Take about 45 minutes in total.

Task 3

Implementing one strategy

The two strategies considered during this session, shared and guided writing, are important elements of the active and specific teaching of writing that is often absent from our classrooms. These strategies are relevant to writers of all abilities and should form part of every teacher's repertoire of teaching approaches. They can easily be adapted to suit all learners across Key Stages 2 and 3 and beyond.

Encourage teachers to consider:

- Will these strategies help my learners?
- In what ways will they benefit?
- How often should I use these strategies?
- When might I begin to use shared writing?
- How will I organise my class in order to carry out guided writing?

Make it clear that the processes need to be embedded as part of normal practice but that success will not necessarily happen overnight, and that teachers and learners will improve their techniques with practice.

Take whatever time is required/available. Encourage teachers to commit themselves to trying at least one of these strategies – preferably shared writing – before you next meet.

Shared writing

Shared writing refers to whole-class composition. Because writing is a private and personal act, it is challenging to find a teaching strategy that intervenes at the point of writing, but shared writing does just this. It makes the invisible processes used by good writers visible to those who write less well. It also counters the belief that writing is about a hundred metre dash. It requires thought and revision.

There are four broad teaching techniques that can be used during a shared writing session to help learners move towards greater independence, though you have only taken part in two of them during the session. Those four techniques are:

- teacher demonstration
- teacher scribing
- supported composition, using individual whiteboards and focusing sharply on the specific objective of the lesson. Children may work individually or in pairs, showing their decisions on their whiteboards so that the class can choose the most appropriate suggestion to add to the class composition. Encourage learners to explain why they prefer one suggestion over another
- the teacher using a 'no hands up' policy and directing questions appropriate to the learning needs of individual learners to ensure learners of all abilities engage with the discussion.

Working in this way enables the teacher to see that all learners are participating and to judge who needs further support, individually or through a subsequent group session of guided writing.

Key features of shared writing

During shared writing it is important to:

- agree with the class how the **audience and purpose** of the writing task will determine the structure, style, tone, grammatical features and content
- use **specific objectives** from the text, sentence- or word-level work that is the focus of the lesson, e.g. descriptive writing, sentence expansion, use of commas, use of the past tense in a report
- **rehearse sentences** before writing them down. The link with oracy is very important as learners are more likely to learn how to compose in sentences if they say the words aloud first. This habit can also help them to get it right first time, as sentences are being orally revised before being committed to the page
- encourage the **automatic** use of basic punctuation
- **constantly and cumulatively reread** to gain a flow from one sentence into another, as well as to check for possible improvements or errors

Sheet 3.1 (continued)

- **discuss and explain** why one decision might be preferable to another
- pause during the writing to focus discussion on the specific objective but, otherwise, move the rest of the composition on quickly so that attention is not lost
- take suggestions from pupils who will make effective contributions, but also ask questions of pupils who may struggle in order to **check misconceptions** and provide further opportunities for explanation. Check up on these pupils also when they are using small whiteboards on which to write suggestions. Where a small group remains uncertain, they may be targeted later as a guided group that needs to go over the objective again
- make the occasional **deliberate error** to hold pupils' attention and to focus on common errors or an error related to the specific objective being taught.

Time constraints prevent guided writing sessions always being able to be used as the next stepping stone to independent writing. However, most children should be able to manage the transition from shared writing to independent writing as long as the shared writing is carefully planned to provide the necessary support. The focus of the work in shared writing should be continued into purposeful writing tasks through which children apply their new learning both in Welsh and English lessons, and in lessons in other subjects.

Shared writing can be used to scaffold independent writing in a number of ways in addition to writing a piece from scratch as demonstrated during the session. It can also be effective when, for example, providing:

- a worked-out plan for children to follow. This might be a plan for one of the six main text types, with subject matter relating to work in subjects across the curriculum, or for a story or poem
- writing tasks for children to complete or 'infill' in a partially worked text
- an outline in note form or as a flow chart for children to expand in full prose
- a basic text to be elaborated by vocabulary changes and the addition of appropriate phrases, for example to create anticipation and interest for the reader
- a series of statements or sentences to be joined into a cohesive whole text
- a text to change, by altering its purpose or audience; e.g. changing a recount to a procedure, altering a first-person diary to a third-person narrative or changing the tense of a text from the present to the past
- a clear narrative ending or punch line, with known steps towards it, to be retold to create tension or surprise.

Sheet 3.2

21 First Street
Pentref
North Wales

Pentref Town Council
Pentref
North Wales

20th September 2009

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to ask you to reopen the town youth club. It was closed over the summer and so the young people and children at home in the holidays couldn't find anything to do.

They were rude to the people in the town because they were bored and fed up. If the youth club was open then they would have something to do! It is cruel of the council to close the youth club.

If you want to improve the community and stop trouble outside the shops you should open the youth club before it's too late and something bad happens. There is already too much graffiti and rubbish around.

I think it is your job to do something about this problem! Get it sorted!

Yours sincerely

Robert Joseph

Guided writing

Guided writing is a bridge between whole-class composition and individual independent writing. It involves teaching a small group of learners at a similar level of ability or with a similar need, identified through school assessment data. It provides an opportunity to focus on a group of learners who missed a key point in learning (during a shared writing session or in their work) or to secure skills that are still uncertain. It can also be used to challenge more able and confident writers.

It enables a teacher to:

- supervise and intervene in the writing process as it happens, whether the learners are beginning a piece of writing, revising something they have already written or receiving comments from the teacher who is responding to their written work
- discuss and exemplify alternatives, in conjunction with the rest of the group
- take part in a more constructive approach to marking and redrafting, taking away the need to 'correct' when the learner is not present
- encourage an active approach to improvement by the learners
- allow learners to gain self-confidence through working in a small group of similar ability to themselves
- focus on needs and ability
- make good use of time.

However, it also demands:

- preparation
- good group-management skills, including how to draw out and steer discussion
- that the rest of the class are trained in the routine of working independently.

As in shared writing, the teacher needs to pose questions about the process, making the necessary thinking concrete.

If learners are preparing to write, the teacher might ask:

- Why are we writing this?
- Who is it for?
- What do we want to say?
- Which ideas shall we use?
- How can we link the ideas together?
- How could we start?
- How will we end?

Sheet 3.3 (continued)

If they are revising a piece of writing, the teacher might ask:

- Does this make sense?
- Is the language right for the audience?
- Have you missed anything out?
- What did you mean here?
- Who is this about?
- Can you make the sentences start in a different way?

If learners are responding to the teacher's comments, the teacher might comment:

- What are you pleased with?
- Are there any parts you aren't sure about?
- What sounds wrong?
- How could this be spelled?
- How can we improve that part?
- Can we add some details?
- Do you have any ideas?
- Could we say...?
- You could try...

The teaching here reflects much of what is discussed in Unit 10, the formative assessment of writing leading to learners' increased understanding of how to improve their work. Unit 4 also provides a further range of strategies for responding to learners' work and helping them to identify areas for improvement.





Unit 4: Composing text

Unit 4

Composing text

- Aim:** To consider the various stages of the composition process – planning content, drafting, revising and editing, evaluating and sharing writing with others – as stages that lead to the final ‘published’ product.
- Time:** 1½ to 2 hours
- Preparation:** Read through the whole of Unit 4 and familiarise yourself with its content.
- Resources:** Copies of Sheets 4.1 to 4.4.

Task summary

- Task 1: Planning content
- Task 2: Scaffolding the writing
- Task 3a: Revising/redrafting the writing
- Task 3b: Being an editor
- Task 4: Publication

Introduction

The national curriculum Order provides a model of the writing process. Pupils should be given opportunities to *plan, draft, revise, proof-read* and *prepare a final copy* of their writing.

Each of the elements is important in the production of a finished piece of writing.

The process echoes the 'Plan, Develop, Reflect' sequence of the Developing thinking progression in the *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) and, to be fully effective, requires learners initially to identify appropriate success criteria for their work and then to evaluate the outcome against those criteria.

There will, of course, be occasions when a learner is required to write something without going through the whole writing process. We have already mentioned test or examination situations when time is limited. There will also be other times when the writing has to be done quickly and once only. If, however, a learner has been used to going through the writing process regularly throughout their school years, the process will become second nature to them and they will go through it silently (mentally and probably subconsciously) whenever they write. Moreover, if a learner has been exposed to a range of interesting, well-written and challenging texts, including fiction, non-fiction and those that are specific to different subject areas as part of the reading curriculum in all subjects, the language and patterns of those texts will be echoed in the learner's writing.

Task 1

Planning content

There are many ways to plan for writing, including putting into action the self-questioning discussed in the previous unit that should help learners to establish the audience and purpose of their writing, and to help them consider the necessary choices of language and tone that might be made.

An effective writer will not always pre-plan formally, especially when writing such things as a personal letter or a greeting card, but larger or more formal texts will usually involve some level of planning and thinking before starting on the first draft. A less than effective writer will probably need to do some planning whatever the task to be undertaken.

Ask the group members to list and discuss the different planning devices that their learners have found effective.

Compare findings with the list on Sheet 4.1 and add to it as appropriate.

Take about 20 minutes.

Task 2

Scaffolding the writing

Learners need models to show them how to write. These can often come from their reading, where the shared reading and analysis of a particular text can provide pointers as to how to tackle a similar writing task. It is therefore crucial that learners are exposed to a wide range of written material (non-literary texts in as wide a range as possible, as well as stories, myths and legends, poetry and drama scripts) and that they analyse these texts, with support, in a way appropriate to their age and ability. Strategies for reading in this way are discussed in the partner publication to this document *Guidance on the teaching of higher-order reading skills: INSET opportunities for teachers of all subjects of the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010).

Talk is also an important starting point for work that leads to writing. The organisation of talk partners is an effective way to allow learners to explore the topic of their writing, as well as to practise using unfamiliar language structures and vocabulary before actually putting pen to paper or finger to computer. Some thoughts about talk partners are provided on Sheet 4.2, thoughts that could be turned into a supportive poster for classroom display. Through talk, learners

can articulate what they want to write, revise it orally until it is exactly right, practise using appropriate terminology and vocabulary, and gain confidence in putting their ideas into words. This approach will help to indicate any misconceptions which can be challenged and modified before they are 'fixed' on paper or screen.

A popular teaching strategy is to encourage the use of writing frames. These provide a framework for the writing, giving starters for paragraphs and a suggested structure, and are undoubtedly useful as a support for the young or less-able writer. They can bring confidence and remove the fear of the empty page for those who do not know where or how to start, but they will not, on their own, enable the less able to make progress towards independence. Moreover, they come with a warning that they should not be used for too long. In fact, prescriptive frameworks can actually restrict the more-able writer who has the ability to experiment independently with the structure and organisation of text.

Writing frames are staging posts in the writing process and their use should be decreased as learners become more confident in their writing. A way to create a bridge between the regular use of writing frames and independence is to require learners to develop their own frames for particular pieces of writing – first as a shared writing activity with the whole class, and then as individuals.

Discuss with the group the strategies they use to ensure that learners actually begin to write when required to do so and do not waste time as a means of avoiding the task. A list of suggestions is provided on Sheet 4.3.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 3a

Revising/redrafting the writing

Redrafting writing can be time-consuming and it is often difficult for teachers to provide adequate time for learners to go through the whole writing process in this way. The process is even more arduous for learners with poor literacy skills who will just give up unless a carefully differentiated approach is used by teachers.

Redrafting can also be considered to be boring and unnecessary by learners unless, from an early age, they have been shown that few people are able to write exactly what they want at the first attempt. Learners need to understand that it is necessary and advisable to go back and revise what has been written, especially when that writing is to be presented to an external audience. This point is often made by visiting writers describing their own working practice. It can also be illustrated by showing copies of a writer's actual working draft, for example a piece of word-processed work that shows tracked changes, or the drafts of some of Wilfred Owen's poetry (which are readily available).

There is no need for every piece of a learner's handwritten work to be rewritten as a 'fair copy'. The essential activity is the improvement of the writing, and it is perfectly acceptable to leave some writing in its 'workshop' form with words crossed out and replaced, word order changed and sequences of ideas revised. In work that is redrafted on a computer, the same problems do not arise.

The crucial thing is for the teacher and the learner to come to a decision about what kinds of writing need to be (or would benefit from being) shared with a real audience and which, therefore, can be redrafted and then 'published' for a real purpose.

Learners need to recognise that the ability to develop their writing in all subjects of the curriculum is crucial to their future success. Virtually all pre-16 examinations require some writing to be undertaken – not always a great deal but nevertheless requiring clarity of expression and technical accuracy – and advanced post-16 courses such as AS/A levels require much more. Preparation for undertaking extended work in structuring text and achieving automatic accuracy in aspects such as spelling and punctuation needs to happen systematically throughout Key Stages 2 and 3 in all subjects.

In Unit 3, the processes of shared and guided writing provided two ways in which teachers can help learners to think like a writer and improve text. You now need to think about ways in which learners themselves can go about this process.

In pairs, and then in the group as a whole, discuss teachers' most effective ways of encouraging redrafting.

Look at Sheet 4.4 where response partners and the author's chair are discussed as two possible and active ways to make the process interesting. Discuss and add the group's suggestions to make a list for future reference. Sheet 4.5 provides more suggestions.

Take about 20 minutes.

Task 3b

Being an editor

The task of the professional editor is twofold:

- i) to improve the organisation of ideas and events in a text and to highlight anything that is ungrammatical, in the same way as the class might help an author in the author's chair (see Task 3a)
- ii) to correct errors of spelling, punctuation and layout in the writing, that is 'the copy'; hence the terms copy-editing or proofreading.

All writers need to be aware of each of these processes.

Discuss with teachers how they can help the copy-editing process. What do learners need to support them? How can you encourage learners to leave the correction of problem spellings and the refining of punctuation till after they have recorded their initial ideas on paper or screen?

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 4

Publication

One of the most persuasive ways to encourage learners to 'get it right' is to ensure that their writing has a real purpose and will be shared with a real audience. If the only person to read what has been written is the teacher, there is little incentive for many learners to try to make a good impression because nothing happens as a result of their writing. This is particularly true of some learners, for example those who show little motivation for tasks that, in their view, are pointless and boring.

Ask half the group to discuss literary writing and the other half to discuss non-literary writing, and to identify purposes and audiences that can be used to give focus to writing tasks. Bring the groups together and share the findings.

Sheet 4.6 provides a partial list but there will be other things that are school or area-specific that you will be able to use. See also Unit 9 where the practicalities of publication are discussed and decisions about which organisational and presentational features to use are explored.

Take about 20 minutes.

Sheet 4.1

Planning devices

1. Keeping a writing or ideas journal is a useful way for learners to record their thoughts, feelings, observations and preferences regarding issues, authors, stories, interesting words, phrases or facts, etc. This can become an ongoing planning document and may be used as the stimulus for future writing.
2. Part of planning is the identification of appropriate **success criteria** for the piece of work. These will be linked to the purpose, audience, expected length and accuracy of the work. The success criteria should be discussed by learners as part of their planning.

For example, they might include:

- producing writing that makes sense
- keeping the interest of the reader(s)
- using language that can be understood by the intended reader (for example a younger learner in the Foundation Phase)
- using the correct punctuation marks
- using correct spelling
- writing clearly and legibly/presenting the work effectively using information and communication technology (ICT).

For non-fiction writing, the success criteria will be linked to the task in the same way.

There are, however, generic success criteria that a learner should consider for each piece of written work undertaken, in both primary and secondary phases. These are outlined below.

After completing all pieces of work check that I have:

- used full stops and capital letters
- used legible handwriting
- presented my work appropriately
- read the success criteria.

A reminder such as this might helpfully be part of classroom display.

Success criteria for Writing – check that I have:

- written in sentences
- used full stops and capital letters
- not mixed capital letters and lower-case letters
- used words that are appropriate for the purpose and audience
- used a range of sentence structures where appropriate
- used speech marks if people are talking in my article/advertisement/story.

Sheet 4.1 (continued)

3. Planning devices will inevitably reflect the age of the learners. Early in Key Stage 2, for example, they might include:

- lucky dip – three boxes that include, on separate cards, a collection of people, a collection of places and a collection of events. Learners take one item from each box and use them to form the basis of a story
- roll the dice – make a paper dice with relevant questions or statements on each face. Learners roll the dice and respond to what comes up; then repeat the process until each face has been used. They can then sequence the information they have collected to form their piece of writing
- storyboards (with or without illustrations) where key events in a story or a process are noted in sequence. Each section might then become a paragraph and learners should identify what will be the main or topic sentence within it
- writing frames, discussed and generated as a shared class activity or provided by the teacher
- speaking frames, as above
- prompt cards with a question or statement, or alternatively an image or artefact related to subjects such as history or science, that would prompt discussion (group or whole class) or writing. Questions might include: 'What could be in the parcel/box?' 'Where did it come from?' 'Look at this path, who made it and where does it go?' 'If you were to travel back to any time or place in history where would you go and why?'

At later stages, learners might:

- brainstorm ideas, probably as a group activity; linking these ideas and organising them in a logical sequence to match the purpose of the intended writing
- explore ideas through drama-based activities, e.g. role-play, tableaux or freeze-frame
- hot seat an appropriate character when preparing to put forward a point of view
- use graphic organisers such as spider or tree diagrams, or mindmaps, where the main idea is central and subsidiary ideas radiate out
- produce timelines, flow charts or maps showing the sequence of what happens so that they have to think their subject through and consider the overview
- work with a talk partner to discuss ideas and practise language use.

A range of booklets looking at talk/speaking frames and other strategies linked to specific subjects of the curriculum has been published by Basic Skills Cymru – see Appendix 2 for details.

Sheet 4.2

Talking partners

How to be a good talking partner	How NOT to be a talking partner
Make sure your comments are constructive and help your partner to improve his/her work.	Make unconstructive/silly comments about your partner's work.
Let your partner express his or her views.	Don't listen to what your partner is saying.
Think about what your partner is saying.	Keep interrupting.
Look at your partner when your partner is talking.	Avoid making eye contact.
Show an interest in your partner's ideas/work.	Show a lack of interest, e.g. by looking bored.
Don't let other people/things distract you.	Fidget and distract others.
Stay focused and keep on task.	Distract your partner, e.g. by talking about other things or making silly comments/jokes that encourage you both to go off task.
If you think your partner's ideas are more interesting, be prepared to 'let go' of some of your own ideas.	Pretend to listen and then 'butt in' when there's a gap so you can say what you want.
Try to be clear about what you mean when you speak.	Let your ideas just come out in a rambling way without thinking them through.
Say more than one or two words.	Say only one or two words.
Be ready to adapt, compromise or constructively persuade your partner.	Boss or bully your partner into just accepting your answers.

Starting to write

Teachers are well aware that some learners are reluctant to begin writing and will find many reasons to justify their delay so that time is wasted and little is produced. Once the necessary planning has taken place and learners have established clearly the purpose and audience for their work, it is essential that some actual writing takes place on screen or on paper quickly and at an appropriate pace. Teachers must emphasise that ideas and content are the priority and that, unless something is written, it is impossible to improve the work. They should not provide correct spellings on demand but encourage learners to have a go at this time and get on with the main thrust of the writing. Revising and editing (with its focus on improving organisation, spelling and punctuation) comes later, even in an examination setting where candidates are always advised to spend a few minutes checking their work for obvious errors.

This sort of training has become even more essential now that GCSE qualifications are to contain controlled assessments, work that has to be completed under supervision in a limited time.

The following strategies can be used to support learners.

Collecting effective writing starters

Learners generally enjoy collecting things, so teachers can take advantage of this fact and organise a collection of effective starters – for texts of all kinds. When learners are actively involved in putting together such a collection, they will take more interest than they would if they were merely given examples. The following list provides some ideas about the kind of starters that are used in writing:

- Posing a question – ‘Have you ever wondered ...?’
- Giving a strong opinion – ‘The waste of good food in our society is a crime.’
- Offering an interesting fact or statistic – ‘Children in Wales speak 98 different languages.’
- Using a famous quotation – ‘I have a dream.’
- Stating an alarming fact – ‘In the next few weeks, hundreds of children will be injured on the roads.’
- Showing an action – ‘The bonfire blazed. Fireworks screamed through the air. The crowd gasped in amazement. It was November 5 and we were enjoying the spectacle.’
- Presenting a short retelling – ‘The boy slipped on the ice, went head over heels and ended up on the grass.’
- Addressing the reader directly – ‘Imagine standing at the edge of a high diving board.’

Sheet 4.3 (continued)

- Providing a vivid description – ‘He was red-faced, angry and shaking his fist violently.’
- Starting with direct speech – “You will do as I say,” he said, “or you will regret it.”

See also the suggestions for prompting writing on Sheet 4.1.

Encouraging the use of ICT

For many learners, this will motivate them to write as they have so many options regarding font type, style, colour and layout. It also takes away the fear of poor handwriting and presentation skills. For less-able and low-attaining learners in particular, ICT is invaluable as a tool with which to carry out the initial writing task – often a laborious process – and, later on, to redraft and refine it. More-able and high-attaining learners will take full advantage of the features offered by the software to produce and refine their work, combining information from research and generating new information to produce work that matches the needs of the audience.

Giving a precise timescale

Allow an appropriate period for everyone to produce, for example, an opening paragraph. This could be displayed on a whiteboard or could be reinforced by using an alarm clock.

Give a longer period, perhaps a one-hour lesson, for a complete piece of work and stick to it, except for learners who need extra time for particular reasons. Learners need to be trained to work at pace so that they can deal with future examination or workplace pressures.

Encouraging redrafting

1. Response partners/self- and peer assessment

Learners need to get into the habit of self-assessment, that is, by realising that their first attempt at a piece of writing is unlikely to be the best they can produce and then by formulating a sequence through which they can work to improve their work.

First drafts of writing are often completed carelessly though many learners have the capacity to self-correct when errors are pointed out to them either by a teacher or another learner. They need to achieve a situation where they can look 'with new eyes' at their own work, ideally as they go along, and identify errors immediately instead of 'reading' what they think they have written as opposed to what is actually there.

In helping learners to reach this situation, the following suggestions have been shown to work effectively. They fit well with the principles of assessment for learning (see Unit 10) and with the processes described in the progression for Developing thinking in the *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). They assume that the learner is aware of the success criteria for the work in hand which should have been established at the outset as a class activity.

First step: For the writer – self-assessment

When you have finished writing:

- i) Read your work aloud to yourself.
- ii) Ask yourself:
 - Am I pleased with my writing? Does it match the success criteria in terms of audience, purpose and form?
 - Is there anything I want to add or change?
 - Are there any words missed out?
 - Is there any detail I could add?
 - Are there any spellings I'm not sure about?
 - Is the punctuation right?

Second step: Peer assessment/response partner work

- iii) Now read your writing to a friend/response partner, listen to his/her ideas and respond to them.

In some cases, where a learner's self-assessment skills are poorly developed, the second step might be the only focus. Such an activity, listening to a partner's comments, can help a learner to improve their own self-assessment skills (see also Unit 10). Meaningful self-assessment is often a direct by-product of peer assessment.

Sheet 4.4 (continued i)

Third step: Final draft

iv) Redraft your writing, including the changes you have discussed and which you think will improve your work.

How to be a good response partner

- i) Listen carefully as your partner reads his/her work.
- ii) Tell your friend what you like about the writing – find at least one thing, more if possible.
- iii) Think about how they might improve the writing. Ask yourself:
 - Is there anything missing?
 - Is there anything that is not clear or accurate?
 - Are the beginning and ending suitable? If not, could you suggest something better?
 - Could anything be missed out?
 - Is the writing suitable for the intended audience (has it used the right text type and language)? Will the audience understand it? Will they find it interesting and enjoyable? Is it about the right length?
 - Can you suggest any helpful words or expressions?
 - Can you help with any problems with spelling and punctuation?
- iv) Now talk to your partner about your thoughts. Write them down on a piece of paper if necessary.

Learners work in pairs, probably of similar ability though this need not always be the case as an able learner working with a less-able learner can be productive for both. They revise their work, each in turn, using a sequence similar to the above to structure their discussion.

2. The author's chair

This is an extension of response partner work but uses the whole class to respond to a learner's writing. When beginning to use this strategy with a class, choose first those learners who are confident enough to read their work aloud and to discuss ways of improving it in public.

Ask the learner to come out and sit in a special chair, probably the teacher's but appropriately labelled and adorned. You are reinforcing the idea that learners are real writers and that writing requires an audience if it is to mean anything. Once they have listened carefully to the piece:

Sheet 4.4 (continued ii)

- ask the class to identify what they liked about the writing, keeping the atmosphere as positive as possible
- enquire whether there were any further details they would have liked included
- encourage the writer to expand on these details orally, ideally making a quick note on their writing to show where such details might be added, perhaps with just an asterisk to remind themselves that a section was not totally clear or fully enough described
- praise the writer but also encourage him/her to be appreciative of the class' comments.

Teacher feedback

Teachers' marking can also help learners to improve their work if it identifies areas of possible improvement, but without giving the solutions. Learners need to do the work, not the teacher, but many learners will welcome some indicators of where to start, especially if response partner work is not able to take place for some reason.

Teachers might use any of the following strategies:

- Requiring learners to leave a free line in-between lines of writing so that there is space for revisions to be made.
- Requiring learners to write their first draft on the left-hand page of an exercise book so that a revised version can be written opposite of either sections or the whole piece.
- Encouraging learners to use ICT where sections of writing can easily be amended and moved around as well as spelling and grammar checked, doing away with the element of physical rewriting and the untidiness of crossing out, adding words etc.
- Providing an encouraging comment at the end of the work indicating strengths and pointing out areas for improvement, for example identifying three strengths and an action.
- Using a marking code – S for a spelling error, P for punctuation needed, etc. – but leaving the actual correction to the learner. It will be most helpful if the same code is common to all teachers in a school, or cluster of schools, so that learners become familiar with consistent responses, across subjects and across time.
- Placing an asterisk in the margin beside an area that requires improvement, as a prompt for the learner.
- Adding improvement prompts in the body of the text. These might include:
 - questions to make learners justify or explain their ideas (e.g. 'Why ...?')
 - comments that encourage learners to elaborate and extend their ideas (e.g. 'I'd like to know more about ...')
 - adding a word or sentence (e.g. 'What else could you add here to ...')
 - changing the text (e.g. to use a better word; improve sentence structure; correct errors in spelling/punctuation/grammar).

Audience and purpose

Learners will respond more enthusiastically if they feel their writing has a real purpose and audience. If they constantly write purely for the teacher, there is little motivation to do their best as nothing really happens as a result of their writing and they therefore do not feel that it requires any particular effort. The advantages of writing for real are:

- it saves time setting contexts
- it provides real purpose and real readers; learners know their writing has to be effective
- there are opportunities for genuine feedback and review
- learners see their writing being used and appreciate the importance of crafting it well.

Non-literary writing, for example, can be planned to:

- express an opinion through a letter in a school/local/national newspaper
- provide a list of criteria for making a toy in design and technology
- present an article or a report on a sports fixture for a school magazine/newspaper
- present a report for the headteacher/school governors
- provide a list, e.g. of books about world religions in the school library
- organise and report on a survey of learners' opinions about a school or local issue
- design and produce a programme/tickets/publicity material for a concert featuring the school orchestra and choir
- write a letter to a learner in an associated school, for example Year 7 to Year 6 or vice versa, about the process of transition; or as part of whole school links to Global Citizenship projects (see DCELLS website, www.wales.gov.uk, for further information)
- write a letter of thanks to someone who has performed a service to the school, e.g. presenting information as part of personal and social education
- write a letter to complain or make an enquiry, e.g. about the opening times of a local art gallery
- be part of a class display celebrating good writing in all subjects of the curriculum, e.g. a newspaper account of a famous battle in history, or discussion of an issue from two different viewpoints in science or geography, etc.

Sheet 4.6 (continued)

Creative writing can be planned as part of:

- a class storybook to include final drafts of learners' stories
- a class display celebrating good work
- a transition project where secondary learners write for younger learners in their cluster primary schools
- the school magazine or newspaper
- a class/school anthology, on paper or CD-ROM, for publication for parents
- the school website
- an e-mail correspondence with another school/learner
- an entry for a local or national competition.

It is essential, however, that these tasks are actually carried out – that the letters are posted or passed on, that the entries to competitions are actually made, and that the opinions reach the intended audience.

See also Unit 9 for discussion of the practicalities of publication.



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Unit 5: Writing in different forms for different audiences and purposes

Unit 5

Writing in different forms for different audiences and purposes

Aim: To explore the characteristics of different text types and discuss ways of teaching them.

Time: 1½ to 2 hours

Preparation: Read through the whole of Unit 5

Resources: Copies of Sheets 5.1 to 5.7 for all group members.

Task summary

Task 1: Text types

Task 2: Helping learners to choose

Task 3: Using the same form of writing for different purposes

Task 4: Using different text types in subjects across the curriculum

Non-literary text types

It is generally agreed that there are six main non-literary text types and that if learners are to be successful in reproducing these they need to explore the grammatical characteristics of each form. This, however, is an issue similar to that concerning the use of writing frames. Although the exploration and use of single text types is a necessary first step in learning to write non-fiction, we need to recognise that the really effective writer will move beyond this stage and experiment with combinations of text types and styles to suit particular purposes. For most learners specific text types need to be discussed and practised in Key Stage 2, whereas older learners should be encouraged to manipulate the 'rules' where this is appropriate.

Task 1

Text types

Distribute Sheet 5.1(a–f) on which the six text types are summarised.

Look at each one in turn, discussing the grammatical features and style characteristics involved and considering where and when learners might read and write these texts. How can teachers provide sufficient models of such writing? Sheet 5.2 provides some suggestions.

Ask six teachers – preferably volunteers – to carry out a quick shared writing session for each type. The remaining teachers should be in role, as a class, ideally providing suggestions that are not always appropriate.

Take about 45 minutes in total.

Task 2

Helping learners to choose

Previous units have emphasised the need for learners to question themselves about the writing they are about to undertake in order to define its audience, purpose and form. This self-questioning is equally necessary when the learner is deciding which text type to choose. The initial question will be, 'What am I trying to do in this piece of writing?' Helping learners to identify key questions about the purpose of a piece of writing can help them to distinguish between different types of writing, to sort out which is appropriate for the task in hand and to identify the features they should use.

As a group, using a flipchart, board or large computer screen, list the questions a learner might ask to help him/her make a decision. Compare your list with Sheet 5.3 and discuss. Building up a list such as this with a class would be a useful exercise and could then be used as part of a classroom display and as an aide-memoire for learners to refer to.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 3

Using the same form of writing for different purposes

Learners need to be familiar with a range of forms of writing and to use them as often as possible. A list of such forms is provided on Sheet 5.4. With the group, discuss quickly ways/contexts in which these forms of writing could be practised.

Note, however, that many forms can be used for different purposes. Distribute copies of Sheet 5.5 to group members. Ask them to decide the purpose of each poster.

Take about 20 minutes.

Task 4

Using different text types in subjects across the curriculum

As a group, discuss which subjects of the curriculum might provide an appropriate context for each type of text, allowing learners to consolidate their knowledge of text types.

Sheet 5.6 provides some suggestions.

Take about 20 minutes.

Sheet 5.7 provides a possible planning sheet for use in the school as a whole. Ask teachers to take a copy away with them and to consider whether such a sheet would be helpful as part of a whole-school approach.

Sheet 5.1a

The six main non-fiction text types – Recount

Purpose: to retell events.

Language features:

- written in the past tense
- written in chronological order
- uses temporal connectives, e.g. 'then', 'next', 'afterwards', 'later'
- focuses on individuals or a group, e.g. 'I', 'we', 'the men', 'the inhabitants'.

Generic structure:

- orientation – scene setting, opening, e.g. 'It was a beautiful evening in Llandrindod'
- events – a recount of the events as they happened
- reorientation – a closing statement.

Possible contexts:

- a story
- a recount of an event/events, e.g. in a period of history, in a period of geographical change.

Ways to prepare/plan:

- the teacher models writing a recount/narrative as a shared writing activity
- learners read widely, both literary and non-literary recounts, e.g. biographies, autobiographies, stories
- learners take part in oral activities to clarify the order of events, e.g. hot-seating a character, fictional or real; preparing a news bulletin for TV or radio
- learners identify the sequence of events in a narrative/an event in note form
- learners place what has happened in chronological order using a timeline or similar graphic device.

Success criteria:

- Are all the relevant details of the happening included?
- Are the events in their correct sequence?
- Does the recount have a logical structure with an appropriate beginning and ending?
- Does the writing engage the reader?

Note: The chronology of a narrative can be manipulated by a confident writer through the use of flashbacks, etc. This is often a characteristic of high-level writing.

The six main non-fiction text types – Instruction

Purpose: to describe how something is done through a series of sequenced steps.

Language features:

- written in the imperative or the present tense, e.g. 'Sift the flour' or 'First you sift the flour'
- written in chronological order
- uses temporal connectives/conjunctions, e.g. 'first', 'next', 'finally'
- uses adjectives and adverbs for precision (not description)
- focus on generalised human agents rather than named individuals, e.g. 'you'
- contains:
 - a statement of what is to be achieved
 - list of items/ingredients required
 - sequential steps showing the process
 - optional diagram or illustration.

Possible contexts:

- making an artefact in design and technology
- how to operate the computer in ICT
- how to carry out a science investigation
- how to carry out an art and design activity
- how to play football or other games
- describing procedures in mathematics
- describing general school procedures.

Ways to prepare/plan:

- the teacher models writing a set of instructions as a shared writing activity
- learners gain first-hand experience of the process involved
- learners prepare notes in a flow chart or timeline showing required stages
- learners make decisions about layout.

Success criteria:

- Are all the steps clearly stated?
- Are all the necessary items/ingredients listed?
- Is any part of the sequence left out?
- Is there enough detailed information?
- Is the language appropriate for the audience?
- Can another person complete the task successfully?

The six main non-fiction text types – Non-chronological reports

Purpose: to describe characteristics; the way things are; to give information.

Language features:

- written in the present tense
- organised 'thematically' rather than chronologically
- focus on general participants
- uses an impersonal style
- uses organisational devices such as paragraphs, numbered lists, subheadings
- might use diagrams or illustrations.

Possible contexts:

- section for a class reference book outlining the characteristics, general life patterns and habitats of plants or animals
- aspects of daily life in a historical period
- description of localities and geographical features
- comparison of 'then' and 'now', e.g. methods of transport, our school over the years
- information leaflets linked to work in any curriculum area
- posters about future events, e.g. a school performance.

Ways to prepare/plan:

- the teacher models how to research facts, select and categorise them into a logical order
- learners look at reference books or examples of the kind of writing they are about to undertake
- learners take part in oral activities to clarify understanding
- learners brainstorm information and organise facts into clusters using a spidergram, a comparison grid, a Venn diagram, a labelled map, picture, plan or mindmap
- learners make decisions about the most logical way to present the facts.

Success criteria:

- Does the writing provide the necessary information?
- Is the information clear and accurate?
- Is there a logical sequence to the writing?
- Is the tone of the writing appropriate for a general unknown audience?
- Is there a record of the sources used to accumulate the information, e.g. a bibliography, when appropriate?

The six main non-fiction text types – Explanation

Purpose: to explain a process or how something works; to explain cause and effect.

Language features:

- written in the present tense, e.g. 'the car requires ...'
- uses temporal connectives, e.g. 'then', 'next' and/or causal connectives, e.g. 'because', 'so', 'therefore'
- uses technical terms when appropriate
- organised as a general statement followed by a series of logical steps until the explanation is complete
- benefits from diagrams and flow charts integrated into the writing.

Possible contexts:

Explanations to answer such questions as:

- How does insulation work?
- What causes the seasons?
- How does the water cycle work?
- How did the Industrial Revolution affect Wales?
- How does a battery-powered torch work?
- What caused the First World War?
- Why do coasts erode?
- What happens when a volcano erupts?
- Why do we need school rules?

Ways to prepare/plan:

- the teacher models writing an explanation as a shared writing activity
- learners research facts and make notes, creating diagrams and/or flowcharts to illustrate the process, e.g. a flow chart to record plant growth in science
- learners rehearse explanations orally to an audience, e.g. a group or class
- learners use drama approaches to consolidate learning, e.g. forming a physical version of an electric circuit.

Success criteria:

- Is the explanation clear?
- Has any stage been left out?
- Has the necessary technical language been used effectively?
- Is there a logical sequence?
- Are there diagrams to support the explanation?

Sheet 5.1e

The six main non-fiction text types – Persuasion

Purpose: to persuade the reader to agree; to argue the case for a single point of view.

Language features:

- written in the present tense
- might use emotive language, rhetorical devices, anecdote or a direct approach to the reader ('Do you know that..?') to strengthen the persuasive element
- mainly logical rather than temporal connectives/conjunctions, e.g. 'however', 'because', 'this shows'
- usually has an opening statement setting out the main idea, then a series of points to support the argument with a final summary and repeat of the opening statement
- might use subheadings, different fonts and other features of layout to create effect.

Possible contexts:

- a publicity campaign for a school performance
- a brochure about a local museum or place of interest
- a speech expressing one side of an argument/debate
- a health promotion leaflet
- a campaign about road safety or to support a charity
- an article outlining a point of view, e.g. about a local issue
- a letter to a newspaper expressing an opinion on a current area of news.

Ways to prepare/plan:

- the teacher models writing persuasive texts highlighting possible structures
- role-play/simulations of events where people discuss issues, e.g. a public meeting, a council debate, a criminal court
- research on the issue in question, with the learner making and organising notes showing main points, each with subsidiary points of elaboration/evidence – this could be through a grid, spidergram or mindmap
- decisions about the form of writing best suited to the audience and purpose.

Success criteria:

- Does the writing engage the reader?
- Do the facts build up into a powerful argument?
- Is the writer's point of view totally clear and convincing?
- Is there sufficient evidence to back up the argument?
- Is it likely to persuade the reader to agree/to act?

The six main non-fiction text types – Discussion

Purpose: to present arguments and information from differing viewpoints.

Language features:

- written in the present tense
- uses logical connectives/conjunctions, e.g. 'therefore', 'however', 'on the contrary', 'nevertheless', 'on the other hand', 'alternatively'
- contains:
 - statement of the issue, often with a preview of the main arguments
 - arguments in favour, plus supporting evidence
 - arguments against, plus supporting evidenceor
 - argument/counter-argument, one point at a time
 - summary and conclusion, maybe personal, having weighed the arguments and come down on one side
- should use objective, impersonal language, except perhaps in the conclusion where a personal viewpoint might be expressed as a final comment.

Possible contexts:

Issues arise in all subjects of the curriculum where learners need to be aware that there is more than one valid viewpoint. They need to learn to avoid making rapid, uninformed judgements, to appreciate the views of others and to make a balanced assessment of the matter in hand. They might write about the pros and cons of:

- the effects of urban development in geography
 - recycling in science
 - a particular picture in art and design
 - mobile phones and their use in schools in personal and social education (PSE)
 - the healthy food debate in design and technology
- or about different interpretations/representations of the same event or person in history.

Ways to prepare/plan:

- the teacher models the structure(s) for writing a discursive essay
- learners read examples of discursive writing
- learners compile a for-and-against grid for each major point, expressing arguments succinctly and objectively, and providing evidence to support points
- learners take part in debates or simulations to allow them to articulate their arguments and hear those of others with opposing views.

Success criteria:

- Is the writing structured effectively?
- Does the writing present a balanced assessment of the issue?
- Are the arguments valid and clear?
- Is the tone and use of language appropriate for purpose and audience?
- Is the conclusion logical and based largely on evidence and fact?

Accessing models of the six text types

Models of these text types can be found in the world within and outside school, many of them at no cost if learners (and teachers) regularly collect examples to add to class resources. A list of possible sources is provided below. In forming these lists, however, it becomes increasingly clear that many texts are mixtures of these basic text types. Where, for example, would you place:

- A restaurant menu?
- A newspaper article reporting an incident?
- A concert/theatre programme?
- A tourist board leaflet?

Discuss these composites as a group and think of ways to encourage learners to mix and match textual characteristics in their own writing.

Recount:

- some newspaper or magazine articles, though these are often differently structured
- some TV news bulletins
- autobiographies and biographies
- diaries/journals
- stories.

Instructions:

- recipe books
- manuals
- instruction booklets.

Non-chronological reports:

- topic books, e.g. on the subject of animals of the world
- some magazine articles
- book/film/play reviews.

Explanation:

- some recounts describing an event and its subsequent effects
- some information leaflets, e.g. on the subject of the effects of a poor diet on children
- answers to questions, e.g. 'How do engines work?', 'Why do bats fly at night?'

Persuasion:

- advertisements
- some articles in magazines or on information leaflets, e.g. 'Stop smoking!'
- a speech based on one point of view.

Discussion:

- debates/group discussions in class
- magazine/newspaper articles/TV programmes/ICT programmes that provide the pros and cons of an issue.

Sheet 5.3

What am I trying to do in this piece of writing?

This 'decision chart' was created by a class and their teacher in order to help learners decide which type of writing they needed to produce. It was created as a joint exercise and then displayed on the classroom wall as a perpetual reminder for the learners – a good use of display to support the curriculum. It is a learner-friendly version of the chart describing the six text types.

Am I recounting an event that has happened, to inform or entertain? For example, in Welsh/English or history.	Language needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • past tense • chronological order • usually refer to a particular person, place or event • may use 'I', 'we'.
Am I writing instructions for someone else to follow? For example, in design and technology or physical education (PE).	Language needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple present tense or imperative • chronological order, e.g. '1, 2 ...' or 'first, then ...'
Am I writing to report facts about a topic, to describe the way things are? For example, in geography or science.	Language needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present tense • general nouns • don't use 'I'; keep it impersonal.
Am I trying to explain a process? For example, in science, mathematics or design and technology.	Language needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple present tense • 'time' words such as 'next', 'then', 'after' • causal words such as 'because', 'therefore', 'as a result'.
Am I trying to persuade another person, to promote a particular point of view? For example, in PSE or Welsh/English.	Language needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeated phrases • imagery/alliteration • simple present tense • rhetorical devices.
Am I expressing different points of view and reaching conclusions based on the evidence? For example, in history, geography or Welsh/English.	Language needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple present tense • 'I', 'we' or general terms such as 'people think ...' • causal words such as 'because', 'therefore'.

Sheet 5.4

Forms of writing

Learners need to see and to use as many of the following forms as possible, including opportunities across both languages in bilingual settings and across the curriculum in all settings, according to subject opportunities. Choices of text will need to reflect progression in terms of style, content and challenge during, over and between key stages. At transition, it will be helpful for secondary teachers to know some details of learners' prior experience.

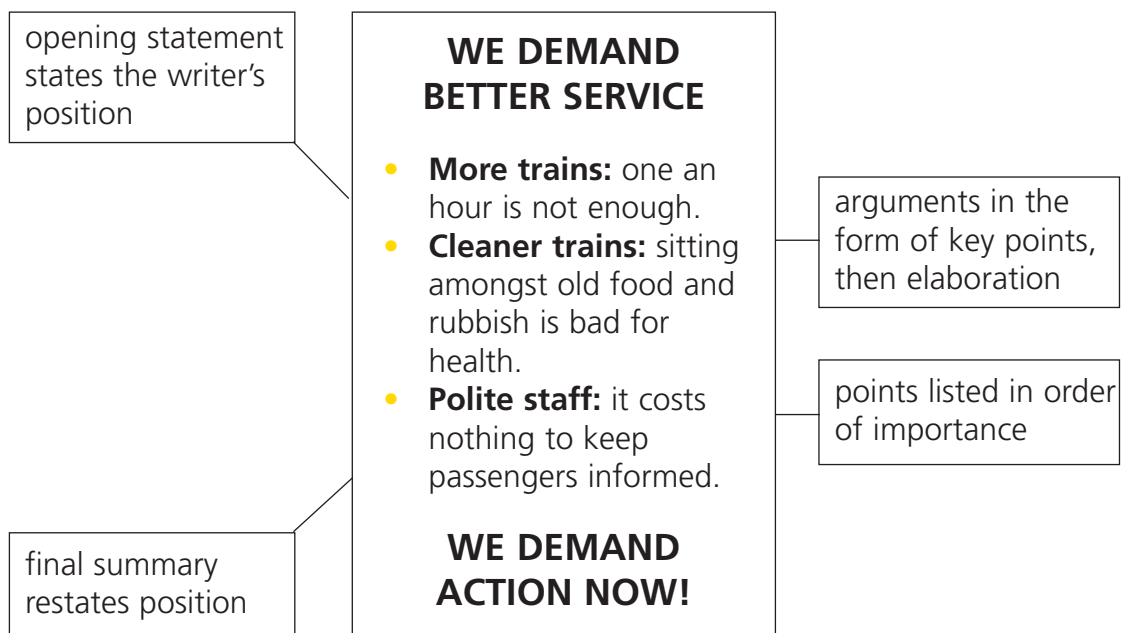
narrative/story	poem	fable/myth
joke	word puzzle	fairytale
song lyric	article	autobiography/biography
report	menu	label
contents page	glossary	index
blurb	bibliography	description
explanation	rules	timetable
policy document	complaint	journal
diary	memo	survey
questionnaire	interview	set of directions
manual	list	recipe
report of experiment	summons	invoice
headline	slogan	editorial
job application	competition entry	order form
review	minutes of a meeting	invitation
apology	greetings card	message
note	programme	advertisement
letter	CV	poster
leaflet	subject text books	e-mails
websites	text messages	blogs

Sheet 5.5

Same form; different purpose

Transactional or non-fiction writing can be in many different forms such as letters, posters or leaflets (see Sheet 5.4) but the structure and layout of each form will differ according to the purpose of the writing. For example, a poster can be used for many different purposes and will have a correspondingly different structure.

A poster to protest is often written to present a persuasive argument about why the current state of affairs is not good enough.



What is the purpose of the following posters?

<p>SORRY ABOUT THE DELAY TO YOUR TRAIN</p> <p>This was due to the driver sleeping late and then finding his bicycle had been stolen. He walked five miles to the station in driving rain and finally arrived one hour late.</p>	<p>IMAGINE GETTING HOME BY 5.00 PM</p> <p>Train travel makes best use of your time ...</p> <p>...and lets you spend more time with those you love.</p> <p>TAKE A TRAIN TONIGHT!</p>	<p>TO BUY YOUR TICKET</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select the means of transport by pressing buttons A, B, C or D.2. Select destination from the list provided.3. Insert money.4. Collect ticket.
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Sheet 5.6

Contexts from subjects across the curriculum

Learners need to practise their writing in all subjects of the curriculum for this is where they will find real contexts through which to develop and apply their writing skills. The following list suggests some of the opportunities available.

In English, Welsh, modern foreign languages All forms of fiction and non-fiction texts

Mathematics explanations of solutions
glossary of terms

Science reports
recounts
instructions
explanations

History analysis of evidence
explanations
biographies
discussion
summaries
descriptions

Geography reports
recounts
explanations
descriptions
annotated maps
annotated diagrams
discussion of issues

Art and design biographies
descriptions
instructions
reports
explanations

Physical education instructions
reports
explanations
rules

Design and technology explanations
instructions
annotations
evaluations

Sheet 5.6 (continued)

ICT

manipulation of text
e-mails
websites

Religious education

narratives
explanations
arguments
recounts
reports
descriptions

PSE

reports
journals/diaries
recounts
information writing
discussions about issues
text of speeches

Music

In music, learners communicate through performing and composing, and develop and apply the skills of speaking and listening through appraising their own and others' work. While some learners may find it helpful to make notes while listening to music, there is no requirement for extended writing. Music is essentially non-verbal so, in most cases, practical work will be the principal source of evidence of musical understanding.

Sheet 5.7

Writing across the curriculum: a grid for whole-school use

Purpose of/kind of text	English/ Cymraeg	Modern foreign languages	Mathematics	Science	History	Geography
information						
instruction						
persuasion						
description						
comparison/ discussion						
entertainment						
reporting events or 'how things are'						
expressing feelings						
explanation						
hypothesis or prediction						
writing to learn						
analysis						
drawing substantiated conclusions						
evaluation						

Sheet 5.7 (continued)

Writing across the curriculum: a grid for whole-school use

Purpose of/kind of text	Art and design	PE	Design and technology	ICT	PSE	RE
information						
instruction						
persuasion						
description						
comparison/discussion						
entertainment						
reporting events or 'how things are'						
expressing feelings						
explanation						
hypothesis or prediction						
writing to learn						
analysis						
drawing substantiated conclusions						
evaluation						

This form might be used by a literacy coordinator and the teachers in a school:

- as a means of planning for the use of a wide range of writing across the school during a specific period, e.g. a term
- as a tool for an audit of writing that has been completed across the school in a given period.

Unit 5



Unit 6: Looking at grammar

Unit 6

Looking at grammar

Aim: To consider how best to teach key aspects of English grammar to learners, with a focus on text-level work.

Time: 1½ to 2 hours

Preparation: Make copies of Sheets 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4 for each group member.

Resources: Copies of Sheets 6.1, 6.2, 6.4 for each member of the group.
An overhead transparency (OHT) or slide of Sheet 6.3 for group activity.

Task summary

Task 1: What is grammar?

Task 2: Parts of speech

Task 3: Extending the repertoire

Task 4: Use of connectives/conjunctions to achieve coherence

Many books have been written about the teaching of grammar and it is not possible for this unit and the ones that follow to cover every aspect. They will, however, attempt to highlight some of the issues involved and to provide some ideas about effective practice.

Task 1

What is grammar?

In pairs, consider the statements on Sheet 6.1.

What are their implications for the teaching of grammar?

Take about 25 minutes.

Task 2

Parts of speech

As one of the statements indicates, grammar is more than the naming of parts of speech. Nevertheless, learners need to know these names so that they and their teacher have the necessary vocabulary to talk about language and to think about the function of different kinds of words.

The kind of teaching about parts of speech will differ according to the age, skill development and past experience of learners. Early in Key Stage 2, learners will need to learn basic information about nouns (the names of people, places and things) and verbs (the action words) and about their modification through the use of adjectives and adverbs in simple sentences. They will also need to think about verb tenses and the need for consistency in their use. This knowledge will need to be reinforced as learners move through Key Stage 2 and into Key Stage 3, and beyond in some cases. Learners in any year group will be at different stages of development and all teachers need to be aware of these differences and to plan for them.

With the group, consider ways in which this teaching can be made active and interesting, sharing strategies familiar to the teachers. Sheet 6.2 provides some suggestions if these are needed.

Take about 30 minutes.

Task 3

Extending the repertoire

As learners become more experienced, they will be able to experiment with the use of compound and complex sentences, with varying sentence structures and word order, and with using a range of techniques for effect or emphasis. They will need to expand their vocabulary and to learn to use different ways of organising text such as paragraphs or headings, becoming increasingly able to produce a coherent and lively piece of writing that is appropriate for its audience and purpose. (See Unit 5 for characteristics of text types.)

Shared reading and shared writing are the two most effective strategies for teaching learners to make such progress. They are appropriate for use across all subjects of the curriculum. Through shared reading of a text (where the teacher and the class all read the same text together, preferably on a large screen in front of the class) the teacher can model the way an effective reader questions the text and reflects on the language used. The teacher can pick out whatever elements of grammar are the particular class focus and encourage learners to consider their effect and to try to emulate this in their next piece of writing. A similar strategy, group prediction, is explained in the partner publication to this document, *Guidance on the teaching of higher-order reading skills: INSET opportunities for teachers of all subjects of the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010).

Using Sheet 6.3, carry out a shared reading exercise with the group noting how this could be used to consolidate knowledge of language and the way it creates meaning.

Follow this with a brief shared writing session on an appropriate subject (see Unit 3) thinking aloud about parts of speech and their use, 'improving' the piece as you go by adding necessary detail and explaining your decisions using grammatical terminology.

Take about 30 minutes.

Task 4

Use of connectives/conjunctions to achieve coherence

One of the indicators of effective writing is the confident use of connectives or conjunctions (you will find both terms are used). These join the main clause and subordinate clauses in sentences. The most common is the word 'and' and we are all aware of the learner who writes with a string of 'and thens', producing a boring and lifeless piece of work.

Ask group members to build up a list of connectives and to group them according to their function and meaning. If working with teachers of subjects across the curriculum, ask them to identify the connectives most commonly used in their subjects. Sheet 6.4 provides such a list for comparison after the group has had about 10 minutes. Think about ways to teach these signal words and about how learners need to use them effectively if they are to write coherent texts.

Take about 25 minutes in total.

Note: A glossary of terms is included in Appendix 1.

Sheet 6.1

What is grammar?

Consider the following statements:

Grammar is what gives sense to language. It is about the organisation of language, how language works, and is inextricably linked to making meaning.

Grammar is fundamental to children's writing, not as a separate entity but as a means to an end. Children's growing understanding and use of grammar helps them to write more effectively.

Grammar has three key features that need to be addressed in writing in all subjects of the curriculum:

- the cohesion of a whole text (the way it links together)
- the linking of ideas within and between sentences, with punctuation that clarifies meaning
- word choice and the modification of nouns and verbs to add precision, interest and variety for the reader.

Of these, the most effective teaching is that which gives priority to text-level work (i.e. to composition) and provides adequate time for extended writing – of a piece that is at least longer than a single paragraph though it might be much longer. Sentence- and word-level work should always be linked to this principle focus and should be relevant, applicable and practical. It should never be discrete or free-standing.

The purpose of teaching grammar is not simply the naming of parts of speech, nor is it to provide arbitrary rules for 'correct' Welsh/English. It is to help learners to communicate with others by expressing ideas and emotions clearly.

All learners have extensive grammatical knowledge, much of it implicit. The teaching of grammar helps make this knowledge explicit, extends writers' range and develops more confident and versatile language use.

Sheet 6.1 (continued)

The grammar of spoken Welsh/English is different from that of written Welsh/English – for example, in terms of sentence structures in writing that are not reflected in spontaneous speech. Speakers do not necessarily speak in complete sentences and often rely on wider communication skills such as facial expression and gesture, intonation and timing to convey meaning and create effect. Writing is usually separated from the reader and therefore has to use explicit grammatical structures as well as organisational features to communicate meaning effectively and clearly.

Writers learn to write through writing.

Many learners in Wales are bilingual, can speak, read and write in Welsh and English, and can move confidently and smoothly between these languages for different purposes. Although aspects of the grammar of the two languages differ, there are many common features. Knowledge of these features, such as organisation of text, punctuation, etc., can be learned in one language and transferred to the other.

Active ways to teach parts of speech

All these activities can be adapted to be appropriate for learners of all abilities. It is essential that teachers know their learners well and plan work that will help each learner to make progress, whatever their ability. In a mixed-ability class, for example, tasks should be differentiated according to the needs of individual learners so that both those who are under-attaining and those who are more-able and talented are equally well supported and challenged. Appendix 2 includes references to useful publications that provide more detail about ways to help learners of different abilities.

Avoiding tired words – making collections

Most teachers have, at some time, asked their learners to collect words that are more expressive and interesting than tired words like 'said' or 'nice'. This strategy can be expanded very easily, with an increased focus on the learners' activity in asking them to add to their collections daily when they find a suitable word in their day-to-day reading, in whatever subject. Words need to be given their grammatical name and their function reinforced as part of this work. Ask learners to become word detectives or some such term, all of which will add to the interest of the activity. These collections will become part of the classroom environment to be used as necessary.

As well as a class collection, learners should be encouraged to make individual collections of words that appeal to them (and which they wish to use and spell correctly) in their personal writing or spelling journal. They should also become familiar with the vocabulary specific to different subjects of the curriculum.

Expanding and improving sentences

Give learners a simple sentence, for example 'The boy went home.'

Model the process of expanding and improving the sentence by asking questions and suggesting improvements, using the name of the required part of speech:

- What was his name? (I need to use a proper noun.)
- What did he look like? What was he feeling/doing? (I need to use adjectives to describe him/his mood.)
- Did he go slowly or quickly? (I need to use an expressive verb and/or an adverb.)
- Why did he go home? (I need to use a subordinate clause to add information.)

Sheet 6.2 (continued i)

You might end up with a sentence such as:

'Terrified of the dark, young Alun, who had missed his bus, ran home as fast as he could.'

An alternative sentence, '*Bees make honey*' might be expanded to become:

'The common British honey bee is responsible for creating much of the delicious honey eaten in this country today.'

Once learners are confident about the process, encourage them to replicate it individually.

This technique of teacher-modelling moving to individual work can be used to focus on various grammatical exercises – transforming from one tense to another; changing the atmosphere; changing from active to passive voice; changing the word order to achieve the same/different meanings; varying the order of clauses; looking at noun–verb agreement, etc.

Cloze procedure, omitting one part of speech

Cloze procedure can be used effectively to focus on the function of different parts of speech.

Take a passage and omit words of the same type: nouns, verbs or adjectives, etc. Ask learners to complete the passage – either giving them a list of words to use or, for more-able learners, leaving them to generate their own. Point out that by varying the words used, they can alter the whole tone and meaning of the passage, for example by using 'happy' adjectives as opposed to using 'gloomy' ones.

For example, in the passage below, the pronouns have been deleted. Completing the text will focus learners' attention on pronouns and their contribution to cohesion within the text.

Have you ever played in the snow? As soon as had had breakfast, Emma and James wrapped up warmly and ran out of the house. Their mother called..... back. made them put on gloves and scarves. Then raced off to the end of the field. The snow lay thickly everywhere. covered the mountains with a crisp blanket tried to cover the trees but green branches poked through. The children rolled the snow into a huge ball.was for the snowman's body. head was a smaller ball. What dothink they used for mouth and eyes?

Sheet 6.2 (continued ii)

A more challenging task for more-able learners would be to omit the connectives/conjunctions from a piece of writing, for example key connectives from a description of a process in design and technology. A longer passage, with several paragraphs, could also be cut into sections and the conjunctions removed. Both of these activities would force learners to consider the sequence of ideas and the function of the connectives/conjunctions in making meaning and achieving coherence.

Reading and writing poetry

Because poetry is often concentrated and written with an economy of language, it provides a very useful focus for language work. Reading a range of poetry is a good way to focus learners' attention on the technique of writing – see Case Study 2 in *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* (Estyn, 2008).

Use the following steps to write a poem:

- Decide on a theme/title for writing the poem.
- With the class, build up a bank of nouns that might appear in the poem.
- Repeat the process for appropriate verbs, adjectives and adverbs.
- Build up a list of phrases indicating places, feelings or anything else appropriate.
- Ask learners to create a poem using one or more items from these word banks in each line, sometimes varying the word order within the lines.

Sheet 6.3

Shared reading

Prepare a presentation of this passage – on OHT or slide to be shown on an interactive whiteboard – and carry out a shared reading session, focusing on the use of language.

Each year group at this primary school has its own raised bed to work with in their organic garden, and between them they have grown a fantastic variety of vegetables and fruit. While the younger ones are introduced to growing with spring onions and lettuce, the older learners are producing everything from sweet corn to prize parsnips.

The school first branched out into gardening through fruit, rather than vegetables. Villagers had expressed concern that local apple varieties growing in their gardens might be lost forever if they were not protected so five years ago the school came to the rescue by creating an apple orchard in its grounds, using cuttings from all of those cherished varieties.

The following year, the school decided to create 'The Organic Garden'. Teachers and learners knew little about gardening to begin with. They had to learn by trial and error – providing some marvellous meals for caterpillars in their early days – but they are now harvesting plenty of wonderful vegetables and fruit that they have the chance to eat and enjoy themselves.

Organic gardening has also inspired the children to look after themselves and their environment in other ways – their teacher describes this as the 'domino effect'. For example, the children were given an opportunity to try 30 different varieties of apples, in a bid to encourage them to enjoy healthy, fresh food. They are now happy to eat only fruit at break times, instead of chocolate and crisps, and this has helped to clear up the school's litter problem because the fruit peelings go straight into their compost bin.

Taken from *Food and fitness in the curriculum in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009).

Discuss how such an exercise could help learners to focus on parts of speech, the organisation of text or vocabulary choices and, in this example, the use of connectives to organise the text.

Connectives/conjunctions: signal words and phrases

A coherent text is one that ‘hangs together’ and is created mainly through the effective use of connectives/conjunctions and signal words and phrases. It is important for learners to become familiar with these words, and to extend their repertoire, by having opportunities to use them regularly in speech before they write, and by noting them in their reading.

What does it do?	Possible use	Key words and phrases
<p>Compare and contrast</p> <p>This involves trying to explain how two or more objects, events or arguments are the same or different.</p>	<p>Might be used in any of the six text types – see Unit 5. For example: Art and design: comparison of two representations of the same thing. History: looking at two accounts of the same event from different perspectives. Geography: considering the pros and cons of out-of-town retail developments.</p>	<p>similarly on the other hand yet not only/but also in spite of in contrast instead however otherwise but meanwhile although compared with alternatively nevertheless even so</p>
<p>Listing</p> <p>This involves explaining the characteristics of people, animals, objects or places by drawing on lists, collections of details or sequences.</p>	<p>Might be used in any of the six text types – see Unit 5. For example: Design and technology textiles: a specification to guide the designing and making of a garment. PE: rules for a game. Science: recount of an experiment; characteristics of a species.</p>	<p>Collection of details: an example such as another Sequence words (mainly temporal): first earlier finally eventually on (date) for instance several in fact next afterwards in addition to begin with later</p>

Sheet 6.4 (continued)

What does it do?	Possible use	Key words and phrases
<p>Problem and solution</p> <p>This involves identifying a problem, then trying to find/generate ways of overcoming it.</p>	<p>Might be used in any of the six text types – see Unit 5. For example: Science: exploring a problem, e.g. pollution, and presenting possible ways forward. PSE: writing an advert for a health product. Geography: exploring ways to prevent exploitation of workers in international trade.</p>	<p>the problem is one solution is one response is one reason for that my proposal is because ... therefore</p> <p>this means that I therefore think it is possible that this leads to</p>
<p>Change of focus</p> <p>This involves warning the reader of an opposing idea, an apparent contradiction, or a change in the direction of the discussion or narrative.</p>	<p>Might be used in recounts, non-chronological reports, persuasion or discussion. For example: PSE: exploration of the pros and cons of school uniform. Geography: discussion of rural life in Wales. Art and design: biography of an artist showing a change in their fortunes, e.g. from obscurity to fame or vice versa.</p>	<p>yet nevertheless despite on the other hand however more ... than notwithstanding</p> <p>in spite of otherwise on the contrary although conversely because alternatively</p>
<p>Cause and effect</p> <p>This involves showing causal relationships between events.</p>	<p>Might be used in recounts, non-chronological reports, explanations, persuasion or discussion. For example: History: exploration of reasons why the Spanish Armada failed in its aim. Design and technology: explanation of a process (how it works) Welsh/English: analysis of the reasons for the fall of a tragic hero.</p>	<p>because so therefore due to nevertheless this resulted in</p> <p>as a result of then accordingly consequently if ... then ... unless</p>

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Unit 7: More grammar: sentence-level work

Unit 7

More grammar: sentence-level work

Aim: To consider further strategies for teaching grammar at sentence level.

Time: 1½ hours

Preparation: Read through the whole unit and familiarise yourself with its content.

Resources: Copies of Sheets 7.1 to 7.5 for each group member.

Task summary

Task 1: Is punctuation important?

Task 2: Avoiding ambiguity

Task 3: Using punctuation to clarify meaning

Task 4: The much-misused apostrophe

Task 5: Using speech marks

Task 6: Using commas

Task 1

Is punctuation important?

The activities in this unit, and in Unit 6, highlight some of the routine decisions a learner has to make when writing – decisions which ultimately will become automatic for the able writer, allowing him or her to concentrate on the wider issues of composition. Raising awareness of punctuation is something that needs to go on constantly – through shared whole-class work, guided small-group work, response-partner work and during peer and self-assessment by learners.

As a group, consider the following three statements and discuss their implications for your teaching:

1. Errors in punctuation, as in spelling, are one of those visible problems that can lead to false judgements about a writer's skills, taking attention away from what might otherwise be seen as lively and engaging work. Although the cohesion, relevance and interest of the whole text are pre-eminent, accuracy in basic grammar and punctuation is an important contributory element and teachers must do all they can to help learners to understand this fact.
2. Comma splicing, using a comma where a full stop is required, is one of the indicators in GCSE English that the writing is below C standard. It is therefore essential that learners develop the ability to demarcate sentences securely in all their writing.
3. In the world outside school, most writing is carried out for a particular purpose (often linked to employment or the recording of facts and opinions) and errors that affect and detract from meaning can have significant consequences.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 2

Avoiding ambiguity

This task also focuses on clarification of meaning, this time in a situation where two possible interpretations of a phrase or sentence can provide two very different meanings. Such ambiguities are often the vehicles for verbal humour and teachers would do well to exploit this fact in their teaching.

Ask group members to look at Sheet 7.1, to punctuate the text there and to discuss their findings.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 3

Using punctuation to clarify meaning

Teachers in the group will be well aware of the importance of punctuating writing to clarify its meaning. But how to persuade learners of this importance, that these small symbols on the page actually play a crucial role in effective writing?

One strategy is to provide learners with a piece of writing containing no punctuation at all and ask them to talk about the problems it presents. Sheet 7.2 provides such a piece.

In pairs, ask group members to punctuate the passage and to note how they did so (i.e. to note the problem solving and decision making that took place). Although this appears to be an easy task, it requires an inherent understanding of grammar to separate the text into sentences, to present the lists clearly and to punctuate it appropriately.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 4

The much-misused apostrophe

Misuse of the apostrophe is one of the most common errors in written English – and one that can be found on most shopping streets in the country where ‘the greengrocer’s apostrophe’ is a frequent sight.

Learners need to understand that the apostrophe has two uses: to indicate omission of letters and to show possession. As stated in the previous unit, the best way to demonstrate this and to consolidate learners’ understanding is through shared reading and shared writing. These strategies allow learners to identify examples in reading and explain their function, and to include examples in a piece of shared writing.

What other ways might the group members use to teach this troublesome piece of punctuation? Discuss as a group and share ways that work. Sheet 7.3 provides some examples of the ways meaning can be changed by using apostrophes differently in the same phrase or sentence.

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 5

Using speech marks

As a group, discuss the principles relating to the use of speech marks. Sheet 7.4 provides a list for comparison.

What kinds of activities could help learners to remember when and how they are used? Sheet 7.4 provides some suggestions but the group should add any more that they have used successfully, for future reference.

Take about 20 minutes.

Task 6

Using commas

As learners experiment more with complex sentences, they need to use commas accurately to clarify the meaning within the sentence. There are certain rules about the use of commas, as listed on Sheet 7.5. Discuss these as a group and consider the implications for teaching.

Take about 15 minutes.

Sheet 7.1

Avoiding ambiguity

Ambiguity is a characteristic of poorly written text since its meaning is not clear to the reader. It can be caused in several ways:

- through the use of words that have double meanings despite being spelled the same way (homonyms), e.g. 'flag', 'present', 'wind' (see *Cider with Rosie* where Laurie is annoyed at being told by his teacher to 'sit there for the present' yet goes home empty-handed)
- through the overuse of pronouns where it is difficult to see what a word such as 'he' or 'they' refers back to, e.g. 'He saw him riding his bike and he thought he would pass him if he didn't hurry to reach his house' or 'They hoped they would leave them behind in their home.'

Different uses of punctuation can also result in ambiguity since the same passage punctuated in two different ways can have two entirely different meanings. This letter is an example that illustrates this point. In pairs, ask group members to punctuate it so that it makes sense.

dear john I want a man who knows what love is all about you are generous kind thoughtful people who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior you have ruined me for other men I yearn for you I have no feelings whatsoever when we're apart I can be forever happy will you let me be yours jane

Depending on the placing of punctuation marks, this can be a love letter or a 'Dear John' letter, trying to end a relationship.

Or punctuate this sentence: 'a woman without her man is nothing'.

These are light-hearted exercises for an adult audience but the point needs to be made to learners that punctuation does, in fact, perform a necessary and useful function in clarifying meaning. Without it, misunderstanding can easily occur.

'Answers'

Dear John,
I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful, people who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior! You have ruined me. For other men I long! For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we're apart, I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?
Yours.
Jane

A woman: without her, man is nothing.

Dear John,
I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I long for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we're apart. I can be forever happy. Will you let me be yours?
Jane

A woman, without her man, is nothing.

Sheet 7.2

Is punctuation important? (change of text order)

Try to read the following passage aloud without any preparation. It is quite difficult to do so as the punctuation and capital letters have been removed.

the areas of food and fitness offer many opportunities for employment in wales and further afield the welsh assembly government's drive to encourage healthier lifestyles and increase participation in physical activity as well as the popularity of wales as a tourist destination are likely to increase these opportunities and provide key employment growth areas in future years schools and the curriculum have an important part to play in providing pupils with opportunities to develop skills appropriate to the wide range of jobs in wales relating to food and fitness in food jobs relate to the following categories agriculture horticulture fishing fish hatcheries farms manufacture of food products and beverages wholesale of agricultural raw materials wholesale of food and beverages retail food etc. in specialised stores restaurants and hotels tourism canteens and catering food science employment opportunities relating to fitness encompass sport and recreation health and fitness dance outdoor and adventurous activities manufacture wholesale and retail of specialist equipment

Taken from *Food and fitness in the curriculum in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009).

Now, as a group punctuate the passage (which is aimed at adult readers). This will be relatively easy for an adult group who are accomplished readers but such an exercise, even when using an appropriate passage, would not be as simple for a learner working at around Levels 3 or 4. Presenting a passage with no punctuation is a useful shared reading task that should make the point to learners that punctuation is very important.

It is for this reason also that, when working together, response partners should read the writing they are discussing aloud. Any problems with punctuation and meaning will then be revealed and natural pauses will indicate where punctuation is necessary

The apostrophe

Most teachers are aware of the dangers of teaching the apostrophe; once learners' awareness has been raised, apostrophes are scattered throughout learners' writing like confetti, usually whenever a learner sees the letter 's' at the end of a word, revealing a complete lack of understanding about the function of the mark. But the apostrophe is important in its dual usage and can make a great difference to the meaning of a sentence.

There are two uses of the apostrophe: to show omission of one or more letters from a word or phrase, and to show possession. Incorrect use of this punctuation mark is common and can lead to misunderstanding and ambiguity, particularly in its use to show possession.

Omission

This is perhaps the easier function to understand and should be taught first. Learners need to realise that they can check whether their usage is correct by replacing the omitted letters or numbers. For example:

- 'it's' means 'it is'
- 'haven't' means 'have not'
- 'we'll' means 'we will'
- ' '04 ' means '2004'
- '6 o'clock' is a contraction of an old phrase, '6 of the clock'.

The placing of the apostrophe should be accurate – above the omitted letter(s) or number(s). This creates a further source of confusion in the minds of some learners, resulting in examples such as 'hav'nt' being found in their work.

The use of the apostrophe illustrates in some instances how language 'rules' change. In the past, some long words were shortened and were expected to be written with an apostrophe – words such as 'pram' for 'perambulator', 'plane' for 'aeroplane', 'phone' for 'telephone', 'disco' for 'discotheque' – but the convention has changed and such shortened words are now considered to be words in their own right and do not need any apostrophes. Similarly, it used to be thought that words with omissions should only be used in informal writing such as letters or diaries or in direct speech. This is now less of a convention and it is acceptable to omit letters if this leads to a clearer and less pedantic sentence.

If you cannot expand the word to its original form, the apostrophe is being used incorrectly. Probably the most common error in this respect is with the use of 'it's' which is frequently written with an apostrophe even when it refers to possession, as in 'The cat lashed its tail in anger' where 'its' denotes possession/ownership of the tail by the cat. Unless you can substitute the words, 'it is', 'its' does **not** need an apostrophe.

Sheet 7.3 (continued)

Possession

This is a more difficult concept for learners and should not be tackled until they have a secure understanding of apostrophes of omission. The best way to teach the use of the apostrophe for possession is to look at examples and to discuss what they actually mean. The placing of the apostrophe before or after a final 's' in a word makes the difference between a singular or plural 'possessor' in most cases. The apostrophe goes **after** the possessor – before the 's' if the possessor is singular; after the 's' if the possessor is plural. An additional complication is with irregular plurals that do not end in 's', such as 'men', 'people', 'children'. In these cases, the apostrophe of possession is placed after the plural word and before the added 's' – 'men's coats', 'the people's decision', 'children's voices'.

What's the difference? What do these mean?

Look at these examples and decide on the difference in their meaning

The cats like silk.

Ladies' lounge

The shop sells boys and girls' shoes.

Find the girl's book.

Were here to help you.

The small dogs' home.

It's a good idea.

We like discos.

The cat's like silk.

Ladies lounge

The shop sells boys' and girls' shoes.

Find the girls' book.

We're here to help you.

The small dog's home.

Its aim is to shock.

The disco's on Friday.

O or P?

In shared reading and writing, bring the apostrophe to learners' attention and ask them to decide on its use or on the way it should be written – demonstrating their decision by raising cards with either an 'O' or a 'P' on them or making the letters 'O' and 'P' with their fingers. When accepting an answer, insist on an explanation for the decision. In this way, you can judge who and how many have understood the concepts.

Using speech/quotation marks

Speech marks, single or double according to choice, are used:

- in direct speech, around all spoken words – except in a play script where the speaker is indicated in the margin, usually separated from the body of the text with a colon
- around a quotation: ‘To be or not to be ...’
- around a slang or dialect word: a ‘dap’ is a kind of sports’ shoe
- around a word used in an unusual way: the ‘strangeness’ here refers to ...

Learners often have problems deciding how to punctuate direct speech and where to use capital letters. There are several simple rules:

- A capital letter signals the start of direct speech.
- Each new speaker’s words should start a new line of text.
- The break between the words spoken and the non-spoken words is usually signalled by a comma, e.g. “Look at me,” said Mary. “I can swim!” This is not true, however, when the first group of spoken words ends with a question mark or an exclamation mark – see below.
- If an interrupted speech consists of two or more full sentences, the second sentence follows the normal rule and begins with a capital letter, e.g. “Don’t do that!” shouted the teacher. “You might fall.”
- If a speech is interrupted in mid-sentence, the second part starts with a lower-case letter, e.g. “Don’t do that,” shouted the teacher, “or you will hurt yourself!”
- All punctuation relating to the speech should be inside the speech marks (as in “I can swim!” above).

Strategies to consolidate learners’ knowledge of speech/quotation marks include:

- shared and guided reading and writing
- transformation of a comic strip with speech bubbles to a written story
- transformation of a play script to a conversation as part of a story
- highlighting of text to indicate different speakers
- reading aloud from a novel, where two or more learners take parts and read the speeches of ‘their’ character (this will require them to omit the reporting clause, for example ‘said Peter’, and only read the actual words spoken)
- transformation of direct to indirect speech. This has its own rules that will need to be taught:
 - tense of the spoken verb will change, usually from present to past
 - personal pronouns will change
 - word order will change
 - punctuation will change
 - words will have to be added.

For example:

“I love you,” she whispered.

becomes

She whispered that she loved him.

Sheet 7.5

Using commas

Commas are used:


- to separate items in a list apart from the final two that are separated by the word 'and', e.g. 'apples, pears, tangerines and bananas'
- to separate a descriptive phrase within a sentence, e.g. 'Max, the boy with the best voice, sang the solo'
- to separate clauses within a sentence, e.g. 'When they saw the plane crash, they all screamed in horror'
- after introductory words at the beginning of a sentence, e.g. "Oh, I don't think so" or "Yes, I can see you"
- to follow signal words at the beginning of a sentence, e.g. 'However, the rules say that ...'
- to separate the person spoken to at the beginning of a sentence, e.g. "David, bring me that bag"
- around signal words within a sentence, e.g. 'The rules, however, say ...'
- in front of a direct quotation within a sentence, e.g. She said, "I'm very sorry"
- after a quotation but as part of the direct speech at the beginning of a sentence, e.g. "I'm very sorry," said the girl
- before a conjunction such as 'and', 'or', 'but', 'yet', in a sentence containing two complete sentences (a compound sentence), e.g. 'Susan wished to go to the shops, but she had to do her homework first'
- in a sentence where there are other 'ands' or where it makes the meaning clearer, e.g. 'You can buy them in Boots, and Marks and Spencer, and Smiths' or 'Road signs tell us to slow down, be careful, consider others, and be safe' (sometimes called the Oxford comma or the serial comma)
- in pairs, for parenthesis, in the same way you would use brackets, e.g. 'The poodle is the best, if not the cleverest, of all dogs.'

Punctuation clarifies meaning. Where it is used ineffectively, or not used at all, it can change the meaning of a sentence.

Consider these examples. Where would you put a comma? If you placed it somewhere else, what difference would it make to the meaning?

- Anna walked on her head a little higher than usual.
- The driver managed to escape from the car before it sank and swam to the bank of the river.
- The prisoner said the judge is mad.

See also Sheet 7.2.

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Unit 8: Word-level work: spelling and vocabulary

Unit 8

Word-level work: spelling and vocabulary

Aim: To explore effective ways of teaching spelling and helping learners to broaden their vocabulary.

Time: 1½ to 2 hours

Preparation: Read through the whole unit and familiarise yourself with its contents.

Resources: Make copies of Sheets 8.1 to 8.5 for each group member.

Make copies of Sheet 8.6 if Task 5 is undertaken.

Task summary

Task 1: The issue of spelling

Task 2: What are the rules?

Task 3: Beware the spellcheck!

Task 4: Extending vocabulary

Task 5: (optional) Teaching English spelling in Welsh-medium schools

Introduction

As was stated in Unit 7, spelling errors, like those in punctuation, are highly visible and can lead a reader to make unjustified judgements about the intelligence of the writer. It is therefore necessary for writers to be as accurate as possible, either automatically, in the case of effective writers, or as a result of consistent and careful editing and proofreading.

The English language and its spelling are complicated. It is not phonetically regular, like Welsh, but owes much of its complexity to the many languages from which it has taken words. There are, nevertheless, spelling rules that work in most cases and learners need to learn these as early as possible. They can then turn their attention to the words that do not follow the rules.

There are numerous commercial schemes for the teaching of spelling in English providing a systematic programme of lists/patterns and activities for teachers and learners to follow. It is not the aim of this document to replicate or recommend these schemes. Such a systematic approach is useful and necessary in Key Stage 2 and, through revision and consolidation, into Key Stage 3 or beyond for some learners, but it is quite possible to teach spelling without spending large amounts on expensive resources.

Task 1

The issue of spelling

Most people have occasional 'blank spots' with regard to spelling certain words, even teachers.

Using the words on **Sheet 8.1**, give the group a spelling test, ask others to mark it and then publicise the number of errors made by each person. This is partly for fun and to make the point that we are all capable of spelling words wrongly (unless, of course, someone in the group is 100 per cent accurate) but also to simulate the situation where a learner might feel humiliated by such a public airing of their mistakes.

Ask group members to discuss the ways they teach spelling. Is it mainly through correction or through more active strategies that involve the learners in investigations and activities, or a mixture of both? Share strategies that have worked well.

Sheet 8.2 provides some comments and strategies for consideration. It is not a comprehensive list and teachers should be encouraged to add their own ideas for future reference.

Take about 40 minutes in total.

Task 2

What are the rules?

Most teachers of Key Stage 2 learners (especially those in Years 3 and 4) will be familiar with the spelling rules that work most of the time. If, however, you are working with teachers who are not in this situation, particularly secondary teachers whose subject is neither English nor Welsh, it may be necessary to remind them so that they, in turn, can pass on this knowledge to their learners.

As a group, consider the rules listed on Sheet 8.3 and discuss.

Take about 30 minutes.

Task 3

Beware the spellcheck!

As learners become more confident in their use of ICT, they will increasingly use the spellcheck facility on their computer to eliminate spelling errors in their writing. The spellchecker is a valuable tool for improving the quality of learners' work, but there are dangers in this approach. Learners need to realise that a spellchecker can help them check their work but it does have limitations. If they have spelled a word correctly, a spellchecker will not pick up the fact that it has been used in the wrong context. Many errors will remain and can lead to a bizarre text such as this:

The Miracle of Technology

I have a spelling chequer,

It came with my pea see.

It Marx for my attention

Mistakes I cannot sea.

I've run the poem threw it.

I'm shore your pleased too no

Its quiet correct in every whey.

My chequer tolled me sew.

This task is mainly for fun, but it is also a cautionary tale for all teachers.

Take about 5 minutes.

Task 4

Extending vocabulary

The writing of many learners lacks interest and impact because the range of vocabulary used is limited and imprecise.

Learners need actively to 'collect' interesting words as they read or listen to someone else talking or reading. Teaching the necessary vocabulary to bring meaning to a piece of writing is something to which all teachers should aspire: the Welsh or English teacher who wants to improve writing through the use of an appropriate and vivid part of speech, as well as the teacher of science or geography, for example, who requires the learner to use the appropriate subject-specific term to describe a process or situation.

As a group, discuss ways of extending vocabulary that group members use. Sheet 8.4 provides some suggestions to use during or after this discussion.

Take about 25 minutes.

Task 5 (optional)

Teaching English spelling in Welsh-medium schools

Estyn's publication, *Raising Standards of Spelling in English in Primary Schools* (2001), makes the following statement at the beginning of Section 5:

The relationship between sounds and letters is generally far more consistent in Welsh than in English. This means that pupils in Welsh-medium schools, many of whom have been successful in learning Welsh spelling patterns, may face particular challenges in learning the English spelling system. In some Welsh-medium schools, pupils start to read and write in English during the last term of Year 2. In these and all other Welsh-medium schools, Year 3 is crucially important in the development of pupils' spelling in English.

If appropriate to your school(s), ask group members to consider the implications of this statement and to identify particular strategies that will address the issues. Compare these with those quoted by Estyn, reproduced as Sheet 8.6.

Take about 20 minutes.

Sheet 8.1

Spelling test for group

Ask group members to spell the following words, either aloud or on paper:

embarrassment
maintenance
diarrhoea
diaphragm
accommodation
resuscitate
diphthong
fuchsia
desiccated
cemetery
bankruptcy
supersede

practice (noun) and to practise (verb)
procedure
millennium
harassed
weird
commitment
receipt
humorous
cenotaph
jewellery/jewelry
acquiesce
inoculate

Learning to spell – some strategies to consider

Being confident with high-frequency words

All learners need to know how to spell high-frequency words (see Sheet 8.5). They can best do this by:

- having them pointed out in shared or guided writing sessions
- noting them in the texts they read as individuals
- spending frequent, short starter sessions at the beginning of lessons when these are the focus, perhaps linked with the use of individual whiteboards on which they can write
- using them regularly in their writing.

For learners who have completed the Foundation Phase through the medium of Welsh, it will be particularly important in Year 3 to focus on these high-frequency words, as well as the basic spelling patterns of English, when learners begin to write in English. See case study 17 in *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years* (Estyn, 2008) and section 5 of *Raising Standards of Spelling in English in Primary Schools* (Estyn, 2001).

Spelling rules/patterns

Spelling rules and patterns need to be introduced and focused on in a systematic way during early Key Stage 2 and then regularly reinforced and consolidated after that – for as long as is necessary for individual learners.

Words in context

Single words can mean different things. Words need to be learned in context, that is as part of a sentence where their meaning is clear. When writing words that have been memorised, therefore, learners should place them in a sentence.

Spelling tests

Random weekly spelling tests that are common to all learners in a class are of limited use, except to provide routine homework and to keep parents happy. Those who can spell will do well and those who can't, won't. If they are used, they need to refer to specific work done in class that week (perhaps on a spelling pattern) so that they reinforce what has been learned.

Personal spelling lists/spelling journals

The only spelling lists that are really effective are those personal ones, made by the learner, of words that cause a problem to that learner (i.e. taken from the learner's writing across the curriculum, if possible). If learners keep their own spelling journal, they can list their problem words there and use this when learning to spell them, either with a partner in a regular spelling session in class where learners test each other individually, or at home with a parent helping to consolidate the word(s). The best method for this learning is the well-known 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' sequence.

Sheet 8.2 (continued i)

Active investigations

If learners can work out the rules themselves through investigation and observation of how words work, they are more likely to remember them, for example plurals – adding ‘s’ or ‘es’. If they look at a passage (in a book or prepared by you) and extract all the plural words they should be able to separate the ones that have an ‘s’ and those that have ‘es’ into two columns, and come to some conclusion about the rule.

Making collections

Turn your class into word detectives once again – detectives who, once they have focused on a spelling rule, have the task of collecting words that follow that pattern/rule from anything and everything they read over a period of a few days. Let them add these words to a list or a bag of words, or some other form of word bank that is part of the classroom environment. Becoming aware of exceptions to these rules is another likely result of this activity.

In subjects across the curriculum collect words related to a particular topic or aspect of the subject; collect words with the same prefix or suffix, noting their derivation and original meaning.

Mnemonics

Hold regular competitions for the learner who can compose the best mnemonic of the week to help them remember problem words, and display the winners in the classroom. Here are some examples to start the process:

Because: ‘Big elephants can always understand small elephants’

Necessary: ‘Not every cat eats sardines – some are really yummy’

Rhythm: ‘Rhythm helps your two hips move’

Accommodation: ‘Two caravans and two motels’

Potassium: ‘One tea and two sugars’.

‘Have a go’ pads

Encourage learners to ‘have a go’ at spelling the words they need on a ‘have a go’ pad of rough paper. If a teacher constantly provides the right spelling without requiring the learner to try to spell the word, the learner will not bother to think.

Most adults will automatically try to write a word they are unsure of – just to see if it looks right, as the majority of adults are visual spellers. If learners are encouraged to do the same, you will often find that they make a good attempt, perhaps only getting a small part of the word wrong. This is fine for the first draft, pre-editing, and can be corrected later when it might form part of a teaching focus for an individual, a small group or the class as a whole. The word, then, should be added to the list of problem words in the learner’s spelling journal and kept there until it can automatically be used correctly.

Sheet 8.2 (continued ii)

Choosing the best way to learn to spell

For those who are not visual spellers, there are other strategies linked to other styles of learning. These are summarised below:

Ways to learn to spell

If you learn best by seeing things:	If you learn best by doing things:
Look at the word; say it aloud, pronouncing all the sounds, even those that are normally silent.	Look at the word; trace it with your index finger; say the letters.
Close your eyes and see it.	Draw a box around the word that follows the letter shapes; notice what the drawing reminds you of.
Open your eyes and write the word.	Write the word in shaving cream, salt in a box, finger paint, pudding, etc.
Check for accuracy; write again.	Punch out the letters in the air; say each letter with each punch.
Look up to the left and see the word in a bright colour.	Sing, act, or dance the word (in your mind is okay).
Hide your written sample; write again; check for accuracy.	Use sandpaper letters; trace words with your index finger while saying the letters aloud.
Hide sample; write again using a different bright colour pen or pencil; check.	Write the word in the air; write it on paper and check accuracy.
Repeat these steps with all other words.	Hide your written sample; write again; check for accuracy.
Write each word several times; check each time.	Repeat these steps with all other words.
If unsure of a word, write it down and see if it looks right – as in a 'have a go' pad.	Write each word several times; check each time.

Sheet 8.2 (continued iii)

If you learn best by hearing things:	If you learn in all three ways:
Say the word, making sure you pronounce it correctly.	Look at the word; pronounce all sounds.
Sound it out, saying each letter or blend even when this sounds ridiculous, e.g. immediately – i/m/med//at/el/y.	Visualise it with your eyes closed.
Spell it aloud; write it as you spell it aloud.	Trace the letters with your finger; make sandpaper words if needed.
Check for accuracy; write again; check.	Draw a box around the word.
Sing the letters to the tune of a song or jingle you know.	Sing, act, or dance the word.
Pronounce each letter clearly or blend slowly.	Write the word with your fingers on a partner's back.
Repeat these steps with all other words.	Write in coloured chalk or markers, or other media.
Write each word several times; check each time.	Repeat these steps with all other words.

It should be remembered that teachers should aim to extend a learner's preferred style of learning, not just encourage or present everything through their preferred style.

Looking at the structure of words

English spelling is more regular than it seems and 80 per cent of words follow a 'rule'. There are fewer than 500 wholly irregular words and these need to be practised and learned in context. If teachers of all subjects of the curriculum focus attention on the patterns, the structure and the logic of words, learners will gain confidence as they realise that learning to spell one word can lead to being able to spell many more since words are linked and patterns repeated. They will also find connections that are central to subject understanding.

Encourage learners to break long words down into sections and find prefixes, roots and suffixes, and words within words.

Prefix: a group of letters placed at the beginning of a word to change its meaning. Learners need to note that the 'base' word remains exactly the same. There are many prefixes and these, like roots and suffixes, might form the basis of another class collection. They include:

Sheet 8.2 (continued iv)

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
con, com	with, together	converge, combine, compress
dis	opposite	disapprove, disagree, disappoint
un	opposite	unfair, unrealistic, unhappy
trans	across	transport, transfer, translate
micro	small	microscope, microprocessor, microfilm
audi	hear	audience, audition, auditory
re	again	reappear, revise, regain
extra	outside, more than	extraordinary, extravert
inter	between	international, intervene, internet
anti	against	antiseptic, antifreeze, antibody

Roots: the central part (morpheme) of a word. For example:

Root/base word	Meaning	Examples
port	carry	import, portable
sanct	holy	sanctuary, sanctify
sect	cut	bisect, section, intersect
spect	to look	spectator, spectacle, prospect
vert	to turn	revert, convert, vertigo

Sheet 8.2 (continued v)

Suffix: a group of letters added to the end of words to change meaning. Their generic meanings are more difficult for young learners to grasp and may only confuse. However, grouping and discussing key words with the same suffixes can help learners make connections and help spelling. They include:

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
able, ible	capable or worthy of	achievable, flexible, laughable, notable
ance, ence, ant, ent	state	performance, permanence, immigrant, resident
ate, fy	to make or cause to become	create, celebrate, magnify, deify
ful	much, full of	beautiful, useful
ive	of, belonging to, quality of	adhesive, corrosive, persuasive, massive
ion, sion, tion, ation	condition or action	admission, perception, saturation, inflation
cy, ity, ty	quality, condition, a fact of being	infancy, quality, novelty

Word derivation (etymology)

Studying the origins of words or word parts is closely linked to work on prefixes, roots and suffixes. It is an interesting activity to undertake across languages and is recommended as a strategy to encourage language awareness in *Making the Link, Language learning 5–14* (ACCAC, 2003).

For example:

Word part	Meaning	Examples
aero	air	aeroplane, aerobics, aeration
bi, tri	two, three	bicycle, tricycle, binoculars, triennial
aqua	water	aquarium, aquarobics, aquaplane
super	greater	supernatural, superman, superpower
phobia	fear	claustrophobia, arachnophobia

Identifying derivations and their linked meanings might also lead learners to considering **word families** where patterns are repeated.

For example:

nation, nationality, national, nationalistic	sign, signature, signal, signatory
science, scientist, scientific	build, built, builder, building
create, creator, creature, creation	music, musician, musical
script, prescription, description	

Sheet 8.3

Basic spelling rules

ie/ei rule: the following rhyme works for most words, apart from a few such as 'weird' and 'seize':
'i before e except after c
or when sounded like a
as in neighbour and weigh'

Forming plurals

- Most words just add 's', e.g. 'things'.
- Words ending in 'sh', 'ch', 'ss', 's', 'x' or 'z' add 'es', e.g. 'churches'.
- Words ending in 'o' generally just add 's', e.g. 'banjos', 'cellos', but there are exceptions which take 'es'. These are: 'tomatoes', 'potatoes', 'heroes', 'buffaloes', 'dominoes', 'torpedoes', 'vetoes', 'volcanoes', 'cargoes', 'haloes', 'mangoes', 'flamingoes'.
- Words ending in a consonant followed by 'y', change the 'y' to an 'i' and add 'es', e.g. 'hobbies'.
- Words ending in a vowel followed by a 'y' just add 's', e.g. 'monkeys', 'days', 'boys'.
- Words ending in 'is' change the 'is' to 'es', e.g. 'analyses', 'oases'.
- Words ending in 'f' change the 'f' to a 'v' and add 'es', e.g. 'calves', 'thieves', but there are exceptions including 'roofs', 'briefs', 'chiefs' and 'beliefs' (noun).
- Words ending in 'fe' change the 'fe' to 've' and add 's', e.g. 'knives', 'believes' (verb), curves.
- Words that retain the plural spelling of the original language, e.g. 'antennae', 'formulae', 'bacteria', 'criteria', 'fungi', 'phenomena', 'macaroni', 'ravioli', 'spaghetti', 'strata' (there used to be more but usage has changed and, for the majority of people, the 'normal' rules now apply to words such as 'forums').
- A few words are completely irregular, e.g. 'men', 'women', 'children', 'geese', 'sheep', 'mice', 'teeth', 'dice'. These have to be learned.

Adding suffixes that begin with a vowel such as 'ing', 'ed', 'ion' or 'able'

- Words with a short vowel and ending in a consonant, double the consonant before adding 'ing' or 'ed', e.g. 'hopping', 'hopped'.
- Words ending in 'e' (magic 'e') with a long vowel lose the 'e' and add 'ing' or 'ed' or any other suffix beginning with a vowel, e.g. 'deciding', 'decided', 'hoping', 'hoped', 'evaluation', 'substitution', 'dilutable'.
- The final 'e' is kept in a few cases: to maintain the identity of the root word, e.g. 'shoeing'; to distinguish it from another word with a different meaning, e.g. 'dyeing'/'dying'; to keep a 'c' or 'g' soft, e.g. 'noticeable'.

Sheet 8.3 (continued)

Adding suffixes that begin with a consonant such as 'ment', 'less', 'ly' and 'ful'

- Words ending in 'e' keep the 'e' before adding a suffix beginning with a consonant, e.g. 'settlement', 'agreement', 'battleship', 'hopeless', 'hopeful', 'lovely'.
- Words ending in 'y' change the 'y' to 'i' before adding 'ful', e.g. 'beautiful', 'plentiful'.
- 'Full', 'all' and 'till' drop one 'l' when they are attached to other words, e.g. 'until', 'always', 'careful'.

This sheet has only indicated the basic spelling rules that govern English. There are other rules and conventions that should be followed up in a specialist book on the subject.

Extending vocabulary

Previous units have already covered some of the strategies that will help learners to develop their vocabulary. The most important is to expose the learner to as rich and wide a range of reading as possible, including 'model' texts from all subjects of the curriculum, discussing vocabulary as a regular part of that reading and encouraging learners to use the new words they learn in their own writing. Some acquisition of vocabulary will happen informally, as a result of repetition and interest, but there are other, more formal ways to harvest the words from learners' reading and experiences.

If, for example, a class is preparing to produce a travel brochure, they might collect appropriate examples of vocabulary and format from a range of material analysed in the classroom. Alternatively, if they intend to write a ghostly, scary story, they might work in groups to read examples of a similar genre, collecting useful and vivid vocabulary as well as techniques for creating suspense, and record them for later use in their own writing.

Understanding subject-specific vocabulary

The sort of discussion described above is necessary not only in specifically language-based subjects but also in all other subjects of the curriculum. It is the responsibility of each subject teacher to introduce, explain and consolidate the use of the subject-specific vocabulary pertaining to that subject. Word walls are frequently used to display such vocabulary but these alone will not achieve the desired result of helping learners to use the words with confidence. Only when learners have discussed, practised using and assimilated the words will they be able to use them freely and effectively. A geography or science teacher might, for example, produce a series of exercises that require learners to develop their understanding of a set of terms relating to a specific topic by using them in different ways:

- by labelling a map or diagram
- completing a cloze procedure exercise
- matching words and definitions
- writing their own definitions
- generating a word wall.

This need only take one lesson but it will pay dividends in that learners' understanding and ability to talk or write about the topic will undoubtedly improve.

Sheet 8.4 (continued)

External resources

Visitors to class and visits outside the classroom provide many opportunities for extending learners' working vocabulary. Learners should be encouraged to record words that interest them or that are necessary for further work on a subject, in a writing or spelling journal that is their own personal resource bank.

Word derivation

The subject of word derivation (etymology), already explored in Sheet 8.2 of this unit, is relevant and enjoyed by most learners. It can be extended to include work on 'borrowed' words that have come into English from other languages over the years.

Learners might, for example, investigate the country of origin of selected words, look for further examples from that country and record their findings on a map of the world. In a class with a proportion of learners with English as an additional language (EAL), this sort of activity will have added interest.

Looking at the derivation of place names can also be a fascinating exercise that will produce interesting insights into the history of an area.

Avoiding tired words

Unit 6, Sheet 6.2, includes a reference to the need to avoid those meaningless words that so often slip into a learners' work when they are not challenged to use precise and vivid vocabulary. Learners should be encouraged to collect, for example:

- words instead of . . . , e.g. nice
- formal/informal words with a similar meaning
- powerful verbs
- scary adjectives

and so on.

Both class and individual collections can be made.

Using dictionaries, thesauri and reference materials

Every classroom, in a primary, special or secondary school, should contain a selection of appropriate dictionaries, thesauruses and reference materials in print and/or electronically for learners' use. The concept of alphabetical ordering is something that needs to be progressively taught and consolidated at all stages of education so that learners are able to use these materials effectively.

In the early stages of dictionary work, it will be necessary to provide some help; for example, by giving learners the first three letters of a word and then asking them to use a dictionary to find what is required.

Sheet 8.5

High-frequency words

100 High-frequency words in order

1. the	21. that	41. not	61. look	81. put
2. and	22. with	42. then	62. don't	82. could
3. a	23. all	43. were	63. come	83. house
4. to	24. we	44. go	64. will	84. old
5. said	25. can	45. little	65. into	85. too
6. in	26. are	46. as	66. back	86. by
7. he	27. up	47. no	67. from	87. day
8. I	28. had	48. mum	68. children	88. made
9. of	29. my	49. one	69. him	89. time
10. it	30. her	50. them	70. Mr	90. I'm
11. was	31. what	51. do	71. get	91. if
12. you	32. there	52. me	72. just	92. help
13. they	33. out	53. down	73. now	93. Mrs
14. on	34. this	54. dad	74. came	94. called
15. she	35. have	55. big	75. oh	95. here
16. is	36. went	56. when	76. about	96. off
17. for	37. be	57. its	77. got	97. asked
18. at	38. like	58. see	78. their	98. saw
19. his	39. some	59. looked	79. people	99. make
20. but	40. so	60. very	80. your	100. an

Tables from: J Masterson, M Stuart, M Dixon and S Lovejoy (2003) Children's Printed Word Database, as published in the Primary National Strategy in England.

Strategies for teaching English spelling in Welsh-medium schools

Adapted from section 5 of *Raising Standards of Spelling in English in Primary Schools* (Estyn, 2001).

Good teaching of spelling is the same whether it is in the Welsh or English language and has many of the characteristics already mentioned. However, effective teachers at the start of Year 3 know that there are some common spelling errors which happen because pupils apply rules which they have learned in Welsh to their new language, namely English. Effective teachers of English spelling in Welsh-medium schools use the following strategies:

- they focus on letters which sound similar in English and Welsh, but which are spelled differently, e.g. 'th' (as in 'the') and 'dd' (as in 'ddiwrnod'), 'f' (as in 'feet') and 'ff' (as in 'ffrind')
- they introduce patterns and rhymes in English spelling and compare these to the Welsh spelling of words which also seem to rhyme, e.g. 'hide', 'side', 'ride', 'tide' in English and 'paid', 'rhaid', 'taid' in Welsh
- they introduce pupils to words for the same thing which are different in North and South Wales, e.g. 'llaeth'/'llefrith', 'gwdihŵ'/'tylluan', 'gyda'/'efo' and 'merch'/'hogan', to alert pupils to look for differences and similarities in language from an early age and to help them tune into differences between completely different languages, like Welsh and English
- they are alert to the potential for interference between pupils' English and Welsh spelling in the later years of Key Stage 2, when pupils have become much more competent spellers in English, and teachers continue to focus on the differences between the two languages, for example 'l'd' in English and 'i'r' in Welsh where many pupils use the capital 'l' in both languages
- they encourage pupils in Key Stage 2 to use their knowledge of Welsh to find the meaning of English words and to learn to spell them correctly, e.g. 'tripartite' and 'mellifluous'.

Bilingualism often makes pupils aware of language and this helps their spelling in the medium and long term.

Overall, learning two languages simultaneously within a bilingual context often has the effect of making pupils sensitive to the structure and content of language. This awareness of language often has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of both spelling systems. However, it can take bilingual pupils slightly longer for fluency and accuracy in English spelling to become well established.

A thick yellow horizontal bar is positioned at the top left of the page. From its right end, a thin yellow vertical line extends downwards, crossing a thin yellow horizontal line that spans the width of the page. The text 'Unit 9: Writing techniques: writing for effect' is located in the lower-left quadrant of the page, to the right of the vertical line and below the horizontal line.

Unit 9: Writing techniques: writing for effect

Unit 9

Writing techniques: writing for effect

- Aim:** To explore different writing techniques that learners might use.
- Time:** 1½ to 2 hours
- Preparation:** Read through the whole unit and familiarise yourself with its contents.
- Resources:** Make copies of Sheets 9.1 to 9.4 for each group member.

Task summary

Task 1: Stylistic features

Task 2: Organisational/presentational features

Task 3: Publication

Writers consciously select and use linguistic and print devices to enhance impact, or to influence particular audiences. They select from these depending on their purpose for writing and the needs of their audience.

Task 1

Stylistic features

Effective writing is crafted by the writer to achieve particular effects. For example, a writer needs to focus on:

- clarity and correct sequence in procedural or instructional writing
- a straightforward, formal style in a report of a meeting
- descriptive, pacy and sometimes emotive language in a narrative
- persuasive and sometimes rhetorical or emotive language in a persuasive piece
- unemotional, logical and causal language in a serious discursive article
- poetic devices in poetry, drama and fiction, and some non-fiction forms.

In pairs, look at Sheet 9.1, which provides some examples of different kinds of writing. Highlight areas of interest and discuss the kinds of stylistic features used there. Name as many as possible.

If necessary, consult the list of stylistic features in Appendix 1. If any are unfamiliar to members of the group, explain and discuss them.

Take about 40 minutes.

As a group, discuss what features you might expect to find in your learners' writing and the best ways of teaching their use. This will differ across stages and phases and you should consider what would be most appropriate for particular age groups. What sort of progression would be appropriate and what are the implications of this view of progression for transition between classes and schools?

Sheet 9.2 provides some comments and suggestions for use after the initial discussion.

Take a further 15 minutes.

Task 2

Organisational/presentational features

Unit 4, Task 4, looks at writing in different forms for different purposes and audiences, and the need to find real reasons for writing. A list of such opportunities is included as Sheet 4.6.

This unit focuses on the subsequent decisions that a learner needs to make about the way that writing will be organised and presented. A learner will need to be familiar with the features of different texts that help them to fulfill their purpose – to know, for example, that:

- a narrative is organised into paragraphs
- some articles are in columns
- newspapers use headlines to highlight key messages
- most leaflets and many information books mix blocks of text with images and diagrams or maps, and may use subheadings within the text.

Such organisation brings challenges for the reader but also requires a writer to make parallel decisions when ‘publishing’ their own writing.

As a group, consider the ways different texts are organised and the variety of organisational and presentational features that learners need to be familiar with. The texts on Sheet 9.1 may be a useful starting point. List the features and the skills required, decide how best to teach them and:

- which forms of writing
- which subjects of the curriculum

would provide the most appropriate contexts for developing and applying them.

Sheet 9.3 provides a partial list for use if necessary.

Modelling writing has been cited throughout this document as a very important way to teach writing and this applies to all subject areas. Discuss with teachers whether it would be useful and possible for your school(s) to build up a bank of models of writing, ideally illustrating tasks from all subjects of the curriculum (e.g. a recount from history, a report from science, a survey from PSE, a set of rules from PE, a biography from art, an explanation of a problem from mathematics). How could such a resource be organised?

Could it form part of the portfolio of evidence already in existence or planned as part of subject moderation in secondary schools? Such examples already exist in the subject guidance materials published by the Welsh Assembly Government relating to the revised curriculum. Are they already part of your school portfolios? Could their use be developed so that they act as exemplar materials for whole-school use? Take about 25 minutes.

Task 3

Publication

Having gone through the writing process, as described in Unit 4, learners will be ready to publish their completed work. They will have to make a number of decisions relating to the final version of their writing.

Quickly, as a group, list these decisions. A 'starter' list is provided on Sheet 9.3.

Then, consider together how learners can best be helped to carry out their intentions for publication. If ICT is to be used, who in your school(s) is best qualified to support them? Are all teachers competent and confident to advise and demonstrate the necessary skills? Is the necessary equipment available? Is the availability of resources a limiting factor? If so, how can this be remedied?

The answers to some of these questions may reveal gaps in provision and in teachers' knowledge and expertise. You, as group leader, need to ensure that this is recorded and that, if possible, some solutions are suggested and some follow-up occurs to improve the situation.

Take about 20 minutes.

Sheet 9.1

Example 1

A newspaper article from *The Western Mail*, 14 February 2009

The Insider: Peter Finch

And they shall all have prizes might no longer be society's great plan. There are signs out there that everyone might no longer be equal to everyone else, at least not every time.

We've had a couple of decades now where ability and personal achievement have been in retreat. Actually getting somewhere in the world has been regarded as, well, vaguely dishonest and certainly unfair.

Among the writers this has led to a slew of vast and seemingly never-ending digital magazines where the poems slide about in their weakness like dead sardines. New books have fallen off the presses much in the style of the collapsing rocks along the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. Indiscriminately, in great impenetrable piles, but with gems at their centre. Here on the inside, it has sometimes felt like this. I'm exaggerating, of course. But only slightly.

Real achievement, the ability to write and to do that well, has been regarded with suspicion in some quarters. But things are shifting.

In Wales the Writing Squads movement has seen healthy growth over the past few years. Squads are groups of youngsters in a single geographic area who meet together four times a year in the company of a famous writer. For one term it will be Robert Minhinnick, teaching about non-fiction, the next it will be with Gillian Clarke, passing on her knowledge of how to craft a national poem.

Meetings occur off school premises, often in libraries or community centres, and always out of school time. Participants, who start at around eight years old and often stay the course until they are 18, attend because they want to. That's the first essential qualification. The second is that they have to be good.

In some sense squads are like county level sports teams. You get to join if you have ability. You can't simply sign up. Traditionally, amateur writers have thought this kind of thing totally unfair.

Down the years I have encountered many who write their first poem and having written it imagine that they are now ready for a whole book. Rather like those who buy a play-in-a-day guide to the violin at the start of the week and by the end have sent in their applications to join the LSO.

Squads nurture real talent. They are where the Welsh literary future lies. Academi has recently been given a Beacon Award in order to increase their number and to encourage activity. Currently, there are Young People's Writing Squads in Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Cardiff, Ceredigion, Denbigh, Gwynedd, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea, Torfaen and Vale of Glamorgan. Expect more elsewhere in Wales soon.

Sheet 9.1 (continued i)

Example 2

From *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens; extract from Chapter 1

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.

Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun may, from the spongy fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and ploughboy. Most of the shops lighted two hours before their time — as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look.

The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest near that leaden-headed old obstruction, appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed old corporation, Temple Bar. And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and mire too deep, to assort with the groping and floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds this day in the sight of heaven and earth.

Sheet 9.1 (continued ii)

Example 3

A recipe from *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*

Carrot soup

Ingredients – 4 quarts of liquor in which a leg of mutton or beef has been boiled, a few beef-bones, 6 large carrots, 2 large onions, 1 turnip; seasoning of salt and pepper to taste; cayenne.

Mode – Put the liquor, bones, onions, turnip, pepper, and salt, into a stewpan, and simmer for 3 hours. Scrape and cut the carrots thin, strain the soup on them, and stew them till soft enough to pulp through a hair sieve or coarse cloth; then boil the pulp with the soup, which should be of the consistency of pea-soup. Add cayenne. Pulp only the red part of the carrot, and make this soup the day before it is wanted.

Time – 4–1/2 hours. Average cost per quart, 1–1/2d.

Seasonable from October to March.

Sufficient for 10 persons.

Example 4

The Big Country advertisement from the Welsh Tourist Board.



Get out and enjoy the **BIG** Country!

Had enough of listening to cries of "We're bored!", or with feeling bored yourself? Then why don't you get out and about in Wales? Wales has something for everyone. Whether you're addicted to adrenalin or just dedicated to taking it easy, Wales has it all, so get out and enjoy everything on offer.

Why don't you make a change?

Fed up with going to the gym? Then why don't you try climbing a mountain like Snowdon instead? Frustrated by doing dreary DIY? Then why don't you get out into the countryside and paint a picture of it instead? It's easy to get bogged down in your day-to-day routine and forget that there's a big and beautiful world out there.

That's why it's vital, when you do get the chance to take a few days out of your normal routine, to get away from it all. You need to experience somewhere completely new, somewhere you can revel in the fresh air and feel inspired.

The good news is that you can do just that, right on your doorstep. With a huge variety of landscapes, activities and places of interest, Wales is the perfect solution for those who want to experience something completely different.

Why don't you take the family?

Wales's variety makes it a great place for a family holiday. Whatever pace you and the kids like, you'll find plenty of things to see and do. Whether you and the family enjoy good old-fashioned treats like building sandcastles or exploring rock pools, or prefer the high adrenalin rush of a modern-day theme park, Wales has the answer.



So why don't you head over the border now and take a look at everything it has to offer?

Get close to nature at one of Wales's many animal parks or marine centres; or catch a glimpse of the future at one of its interactive science attractions – the list of fun, educational things to do is endless.

Why don't you get active?

If your idea of bliss is hurtling down a rocky river, or paragliding over hills and valleys – then you've come to the right place. Wales's dramatic scenery is the perfect backdrop for a range of extreme sports. Quad-biking or white-water rafting or kayaking: there is an almost infinite number of ways to expend a bit of energy. Of course, there are also plenty of more relaxing out-door pursuits available too, such as walking, fishing or golf.

Why don't you get cultural?

You can visit beaches and mountains in many countries across the world. But in Wales there are other elements that set it apart as a holiday destination. Where else would you find such a rich heritage in such a small area? The story of Wales is clearly visible in the unique castles, built in different centuries, and in the mining museums which bring the past to life.



Throughout the year, you'll also find a multitude of music, theatre and arts festivals across Wales. The most famous of these is the National Eisteddfod of Wales in August, a week-long celebration of Welsh culture and language.

Why don't you tuck in?

Of course, no good holiday is complete without a deliciously rich and varied diet, and Wales certainly won't let you down. Farmers' markets, food festivals and local skilled producers mean that traditional dishes, using the finest ingredients, are on menus all over the country.

Wherever you go, look out for hotels and restaurants that guarantee genuine, locally produced food. Welshcakes, Bara Brith, fantastic Welsh lamb and stunning seafood are just some of the treats you shouldn't miss.

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Stylistic features

Learners need to recognise and understand the form and function of these features. They will best do this by:

- being taught about the specific terms involved so that they have the language to identify and talk about them (metalanguage) (see Appendix 1)
- identifying them in their reading and discussing their effect, not just feature spotting
- using them in their own writing.

Progression in this respect cannot be set in stone. It will depend on the learners' abilities and interests and the texts they read. However, it would be sensible to concentrate initially on the effect of such devices as rhyme, rhythm and alliteration with which young learners will be familiar through work in the Foundation Phase. Work could then move on to similes and metaphors, for example, and the concept of onomatopoeia in Key Stage 2. More difficult concepts such as irony and rhetoric could be introduced as learners become more mature and confident in their writing. A list of the main devices can be found at the end of Appendix 1. Look at these with colleagues and make sure that you understand them.

Much work on linguistic devices can be active and quite light-hearted.

- The use and effect of alliteration can be explored by asking learners to produce alliterative sentences linked to numbers:

'One wicked witch wore woolly wellies', or

'Two terrible twins tore terrifically to town', and so on.

- There are numerous, well-known ways to teach similes and metaphors. This, in fact, is a situation where such teaching is often repeated across phases, leading to possible disaffection from learners who become tired of 'more of the same'. If part of the liaison between primary and secondary colleagues allows teachers to identify what has already been taught and used in Key Stage 2, this problem will be removed. This doesn't mean the learners should not be encouraged to use these devices, just that they might be reminded of previous teaching rather than having to experience it all over again from scratch.
- The use of onomatopoeia will often be met first when looking at comics or advertisements, and these are useful starting points.
- Rhythm can be clapped, for example, or sounded out on percussion instruments in order to maintain the necessary pace and stress patterns of a poem such as *Tarantella* by Hilaire Belloc.

Sheet 9.2 (continued)

As learners' reading becomes more complex and varied, teaching should focus on particular devices used by writers and discussion of the effects intended and achieved. As indicated earlier, feature spotting alone is of little use and is a cause for concern to examiners at GCSE and A level who continue to find frequent examples in test papers.

It is essential that we teach learners to understand and deal with the reading that we all have to undertake as a part of daily life, where we are bombarded with multimodal texts that attempt to persuade and manipulate our thinking. Recognising and appreciating the power of linguistic devices is pre-eminently a reading skill. However, one way that learners can demonstrate understanding of a writer's intentions is by replicating what they have read in their own writing.

Analysing famous speeches is a popular way to explore rhetorical devices. An example of this can be found in the recently published *Supporting learners' higher-order literacy skills* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009) where responses to some old favourites, such as speeches by Martin Luther King and Chief Seattle, are included. To update this kind of work, the speeches of Obama, particularly his acceptance speech, would illustrate vividly how a skilful speaker and writer can 'carry' a crowd and affect their thinking. Let learners analyse his words and then try to write in the same style in a speech or article to persuade their class or schoolmates of a particular point of view.

Comparing the language used in both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, and the way each of these treats the same story is a useful way to explore language use in the media. It is also revealing for learners to compare the printed version of a newspaper with the website version and to consider what different choices of language, image and layout have been made and for what reason. This will enable them to produce their own writing in similar genres, drawing on what they have found out.

A similar analysis of web pages, advertising and information leaflets will reveal some interesting use of language and this 'real-life' reading will appeal to many of those learners who might be put off by reading traditional literary texts.

Sheet 9.3

Organisational and presentational features

When 'publishing' their writing, learners will have to make decisions about how to proceed and to consider whether to use some of the following:

complete sentences	note form
formal or informal language	questions or statements
diagrams or other visual aids	tables of contents
columns	indexes
glossaries	paragraphs
appendices/annexes	bibliographies
hyperlinks	footnotes
prefaces	headlines
subheadings	stanzas/verses
font	italics
bold type	print size
capitals or lower case	images
sound	film clips
illustration	table
photograph	graph

It is therefore important that learners see examples of these features in context and discuss advantages and disadvantages relating to their use.

See also Sheets 2.1 and 2.2.

Decisions to make before publication

Learners might also need to ask some of the following questions:

- Will the work be handwritten or word-processed?
- Will I use a particular software package? If so, what is available and best suited to my work?
- How will I structure the text? Will I use paragraphs, chapters, headings, subheadings, page breaks, etc.?
- What font, print size and colour will I use? Will some words be in bold, italics or capitals?
- Am I producing a multimodal text?
- How will I design a web page?
- Will I use hypermedia devices such as symbols, images and sounds to focus and juxtapose views?
- Will I insert hypertext to connect to other documents, audio or film clips?

Sheet 9.3 (continued)

Discussion with the ICT specialist in a primary or special school and/or the head of ICT in a secondary school will be necessary to answer some of the questions posed in Task 2. In some situations, the ICT department of a secondary school might be able to support colleagues in cluster primary schools, be that with expertise, through team teaching, or through the sharing of equipment. See *Bridging the Gap: Developing and using bridging units to support effective transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3* (ACCAC/Welsh Assembly Government/Estyn, 2004) for an example of such collaboration.

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Unit 10: The assessment of writing

Unit 10

The assessment of writing

Aims: To explore ways to assess writing and the use of assessment information to plan improvement.

To familiarise teachers with current guidance: *English: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3, Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3, Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) and the two documents linked to the Developing thinking and assessment for learning project, available at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

Time: 1½ hours approximately

Preparation: Familiarise yourself with the publications listed above and the messages contained therein.

Resources: Photocopies of one or more of the end of key stage learner profiles (if possible with each profile on an A3 sheet) exemplified in *English: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3*. Do not include the commentary or overall judgement with the pieces of work.

Choose those learners whose writing is at the level(s) that are most appropriate to the teachers in the group. For example, for primary teachers, Bethan, Megan and/or Hari; for secondary teachers, Megan, Annie, Sam and/or Carys, or the Level 8 work featured on pages 26 and 27; for a transition group, Megan, Hari, Annie and/or Sam.

For a group of teachers from subjects across the curriculum, it would be advisable to use examples of writing from their guidance documents in conjunction with one or two selections from English.

Copies of the publications listed in 'Aims' above.

Copies of Sheets 10.1 to 10.4 for each group member.

Task summary

Task 1: Formative assessment: assessment for learning

Task 2: Progression in writing

Task 3: Making a judgement about the work of one learner

Task 4: Summative assessment (assessment of learning):
the policy in Wales

Task 1

Formative assessment: assessment for learning

Ongoing formative assessment focuses on the learner's achievement and on details of ways they can move forward rather than on national curriculum outcomes and level descriptions. Using level descriptions for such day-to-day assessment is not helpful as they are designed to be broad indicators of progression and not concerned with the details of individual pieces of work.

A pilot project to develop thinking and assessment for learning has been in existence for the past three years in Wales and, as a result of its success, is to be extended across Wales over the next three years. Documentation explaining in detail the principles behind the project (*Why develop thinking and assessment for learning in the classroom?*) and providing ideas for implementing these principles in schools (*How to develop thinking and assessment for learning in the classroom*) are available at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

Encourage group members to follow these up in their own time or as a separate continuous professional development (CPD) activity since they will require a longer time than is available for this unit. The extent to which you will need to explain assessment for learning principles and procedures will depend on the current situation in your school(s). Even if you are well on the way, it will be useful to reiterate the basic principles and link them to your work on teaching writing.

In pairs, look at Sheet 10.1, where some comments relating to assessment for learning can be found, and discuss the extent to which they apply to your classroom practice. Consider also how they relate to the principles and practices described in previous units in terms of identifying success criteria, modelling writing, questioning self and others, and improving work.

Take about 20 minutes.

Task 2

Progression in writing

English: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) includes the following statement:

Pupils become competent writers, writing clearly and coherently in a range of forms and for a range of purposes. They acquire a growing understanding of the need to adapt their writing to suit purpose and audience, showing an awareness of the reader's needs. Their awareness of style and the features of different forms are used and they adjust their language to suit the level of formality required for purpose and audience.

In all communication modes they work with increasing accuracy and become reflective and evaluative in relation to their own and others' achievements.

Pupils develop their abilities in different contexts over time; the level descriptions identify aspects that are significant at particular levels.

As a group, discuss the broad lines of progression you would hope to see in learners' writing. Compare your ideas with those on Sheet 10.1 and with Sheet 10.2, which provides the level descriptions for Writing in *English in the National Curriculum for Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

Take about 15 minutes.

Task 3

Making a judgement about the work of one learner

Distribute prepared copies of the range of work of one learner – the end of key stage learner profile – to teachers in small groups.

Ask the teachers:

- to simulate a moderation session and come to a decision on the level of the learner whose end of key stage learner profile they have in front of them. Depending on the size and make-up of the overall group, you will have to decide whether to give all groups the same profile or to give a different profile to each group – each option has advantages and disadvantages which you, as group leader, will have to consider in terms of the coverage you wish to achieve
- to annotate the texts, identifying strengths and areas for development
- to come to a decision about the level at which the learner is working
- to suggest ways forward for that learner.

Once all have completed the task, check decisions against those in *English: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

Take about 30 minutes.

Task 4

Summative assessment (assessment of learning): the policy in Wales

With the group as a whole, go through the statements on Sheet 10.4, one at a time, and invite discussion about teachers' familiarity with these principles and the link with their own practice. Your aim is to ensure that all the teachers present have a clear understanding of current assessment arrangements in Wales.

The publication *Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stage 2 and 3* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) provides support for teacher assessment by offering a range of effective and manageable ways for teachers to make their statutory end of key stage assessments accurate and consistent. It applies equally to religious education and to national curriculum subjects where teacher assessment is not statutorily required.

Take about 30 minutes.

Assessment for learning

Assessment for learning involves learners gaining understanding of specific learning goals and the associated success criteria so that, supported by the teacher, they can develop their capacity for peer- and self assessment. In this way, they can establish their current position, set and move towards targets, and recognise if and when the targets have been reached.

Teachers need to ensure that, if they are to make progress, learners know:

- where they are in the learning continuum
- where they need to go
- how best to get there.

There are three main areas involved in implementing assessment for learning.

- Questioning
 - thinking time – allowing learners time to think about answers (at least five seconds)
 - kinds of questions – open-ended and thought-provoking, asked of the class by the teacher, and of each other and of themselves by learners
 - allowing learners to discuss questions with partners/in small groups before volunteering answers to the class as a whole.
- Quality of feedback
 - immediacy – from self, a partner learner or the teacher
 - no grades, just comments focusing on learning issues and linked to success criteria for the specific task, leading to targets for improvement
 - learner-centred and positive but objective
 - frequency of assessment – regular rather than end-loaded
 - opportunity to practise
 - opportunity to correct
 - clarity so that it helps the learner to think.
- Peer and self-assessment
 - sharing and understanding learning intentions; being clear about the task and its purpose
 - identifying and understanding success criteria
 - recognising good-quality work as a result of working with models that illustrate what is required.

Individual targets should be linked to improving the quality of a learner's work, as highlighted through formative feedback, and therefore linked to success criteria for specific tasks. They cannot be linked directly with outcomes or level descriptions as these describe attainment over a range of tasks at the end of a key stage.

Sheet 10.1 (continued i)

A range of strategies or learning tools can be used to help in each stage of the assessment for learning process. A list of such tools with explanation of their use can be found in Appendix 3 of *How to develop thinking and assessment for learning in the classroom* available at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

The following gives some general questioning/commenting strategies, which have been found to be very successful in promoting assessment for learning and extending learner thinking. These complement those described in Units 3 and 4.

Ask 'follow-ups': 'Why?', 'Do you agree?', 'Can you elaborate?', 'Tell me more.', 'Can you give an example?'

Withhold judgement: Respond to learners in a non-evaluative fashion.

Ask for a summary to promote active listening: 'Could you please summarise John's point?'

Survey the class: 'How many people agree with the author's point of view?'

Allow for learner calling: 'Sarah, will you please call on someone else to respond?'

Play devil's advocate: Push learners to define their reasoning against different points of view.

Ask learners to 'unpack their thinking': 'Describe how you arrived at your answer.'

Call on learners randomly: Avoid the pattern of only calling on those learners with raised hands, or adopt a 'no hands up' policy.

Encourage learner questioning: Allow learners to develop their own questions.

Cue learner responses: 'There is not a single correct answer for this question. I'd like you to consider alternatives.'

Sheet 10.1 (continued ii)

Peer and self-assessment

Learners can only achieve successful learning outcomes if they understand what they need to do. The success criteria must be transparent to learners and concrete examples of success should be provided, for example they should know what the characteristics of work at a particular level look like.

Peer assessment is extremely valuable as learners may accept from one another criticism of their work that they would not take seriously if made by the teacher. Interchange will take place in a language that learners themselves naturally use. If learners do not understand an explanation, they are more likely to interrupt a peer than to interrupt a teacher. Peer assessment places the work in the hands of the learners and they can take responsibility for it. The teacher can then be free to observe and reflect on what is happening and to frame helpful interventions. However, for peer assessment to work effectively learners must be trained in good practice, and this is not something that will happen overnight.

Self-assessment will only happen if teachers help learners, particularly the low-attainers, to develop the skill. Like effective pair and group work, this will take time and practice. Often, meaningful self-assessment is a direct by-product of peer assessment: learners need to be 'coached' in self-evaluation through modelling questions and thinking with others initially.

Engaging in peer and self-assessment is much more than just checking for errors and weaknesses. It involves making explicit what is normally implicit and thus requires learners to be active in their learning. This in itself will help them to improve their learning.

Sheet 10.2

Broad lines of progression in the level descriptions for Writing

Use of skills in writing	From Level 1, pupils develop control over the physical processes of writing, and over the conventions of written language, including spelling and punctuation. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated, for example, in the use of punctuation firstly to demarcate words and sentences (from Level 2), then to mark divisions within the sentence (from Level 4), then using the full range of punctuation marks selectively and with increasing accuracy for clarity and effect (Level 5 to Exceptional Performance). Important early understanding of spelling relates to letter strings and sound–symbol relationships (Level 1). Pupils then build on this understanding to spell increasingly complex words (Levels 2 to 5). Independence in spelling is seen in pupils’ ability to spell unfamiliar words (Level 6 to Exceptional Performance), and to check what they write
Control of different forms of written texts	Pupils’ growing understanding of how texts are organised differently is seen in their ability to vary vocabulary, sentence construction and overall shape of texts for a variety of purposes (from Level 2). Increasingly, pupils’ work will show general competence and flexibility across a range of forms and styles. At the early levels, pupils learn to use the main features of narrative and non-narrative writing (Levels 1 and 2). Then the range of forms becomes more extensive and pupils’ confidence in using them grows (Levels 3 and 4). At the higher levels, pupils show control of a range of narrative techniques and are able to adopt the styles characteristic of formal or impersonal writing (Level 5 to Exceptional Performance).
Adaptation for meaning and effect	In the level descriptions for Writing, at all levels, the impact of the writing and its interest to the reader are significant. This is a continuing theme in the overall assessment of the quality of pupils’ written work, and links with the opportunities to write for a range of audiences and purposes as set out in each programme of study. Pupils’ ability to use and adapt their vocabulary, grammar and overall style relates to the degree of challenge in the task, its intended purpose and the implied readership.

Sheet 10.3

Level descriptions for Writing

Level 1	Pupils' writing communicates meaning through simple words and phrases. In their reading or their writing, pupils begin to show awareness of how full stops are used. Letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated.
Level 2	Pupils' writing communicates meaning in both creative and factual forms, using appropriate and interesting vocabulary, and showing some awareness of form and the reader. Ideas are developed in a sequence of sentences, sometimes demarcated by capital letters and full stops. Simple, monosyllabic words are usually spelled correctly, and where there are inaccuracies the alternative is phonetically plausible. In handwriting, letters are accurately formed and consistent in size.
Level 3	Pupils' writing is often organised, imaginative and clear. The main features of different forms of writing are used appropriately, beginning to be adapted to different readers. Sequences of sentences are used to develop ideas and words are sometimes chosen for variety and interest. The basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct. Spelling is usually accurate, including that of common, polysyllabic words. Punctuation to mark sentences – full stops, capital letters and question marks – is used accurately. Handwriting is legible and work is appropriately presented.
Level 4	Pupils' writing in a range of forms is lively. Ideas are often sustained and developed in interesting ways and organised appropriately for the purpose and reader. Opinions are stated and supported with some reasons given. Vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are sometimes used for effect. Pupils are beginning to extend meaning and use different sentence structures. They organise their writing into paragraphs. Spelling conforms to regular patterns and is generally accurate. Full stops, capital letters and question marks are used accurately and pupils are beginning to use punctuation within the sentence, including inverted commas for speech. Handwriting is clear and legible and, where appropriate, presentation is adapted according to the task.
Level 5	Pupils' writing is varied and interesting, conveying meaning clearly in a range of forms for different readers, using a more formal style where appropriate. They express opinions, supported by reasons. Vocabulary choices are imaginative and words are often used precisely. Simple and complex sentences are organised into paragraphs. Words with complex regular patterns are usually spelled correctly. A range of punctuation is generally used accurately. Work is legible and well presented.

Sheet 10.3 (continued i)

Level descriptions for Writing

Level 6	Pupils' writing often engages and sustains the reader's interest. They show some adaptation of style and register to different forms, including using an impersonal style where appropriate. They present information for various purposes and express opinions, developing some points in support of a point of view. Pupils use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create effects. Spelling is generally accurate, including that of irregular words. A range of punctuation is usually used correctly to clarify meaning. Ideas are organised into effective paragraphs. Work is legible and well presented.
Level 7	Pupils' writing is confident and shows appropriate choices of style in a range of forms. Writing is coherent, sustained and developed. In literary writing, characters and settings are developed and, in non-literary writing, ideas are organised and coherent. They sustain arguments and offer convincing evidence in support of their views. A range of sentence structures and vocabulary are accurately and effectively used. Spelling is correct, including that of complex irregular words. Paragraphing and correct punctuation are used for clarity and effect. Work is legible and well presented.
Level 8	Pupils' writing shows the selection of specific features or expressions to convey particular effects and to interest the reader. Flair and originality is evident within their written work. Literary writing shows control of characters, events and settings and shows variety in structure. Non-literary writing is coherent and gives clear points of view. They structure their arguments, offering evidence consistently. The use of vocabulary and grammar enables fine distinctions to be made or emphasis achieved. Writing shows a clear grasp of the effective use of punctuation and paragraphing. Work is legible and well presented.
Exceptional Performance	Pupils' writing has shape and impact and shows control of a range of styles, maintaining the interest of the reader throughout. Literary writing uses structure as well as vocabulary for a range of imaginative effects, and non-literary writing is coherent, reasoned and persuasive. A variety of grammatical constructions and punctuation is used accurately and appropriately and with sensitivity. Paragraphs are well constructed and linked in order to clarify the organisation of the writing as a whole. Work is legible and well presented.

Sheet 10.4

Summative assessment: the policy in Wales

The following statements are taken from *Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3, Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum*, and *English: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

Statement	Elaboration
The outcomes and level descriptions for Oracy, Reading and Writing set out the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils are expected to have at the end of a key stage.	Outcomes and level descriptions identify aspects that are significant at particular levels.
Level descriptions can help to inform your planning, teaching and assessment at Key Stages 2 and 3.	They indicate expectations at particular levels and progression in the subject.
National curriculum outcomes and level descriptions have been developed for summative assessment of learning at the end of a key stage.	They are not appropriate for use in formative assessment. They do not make effective targets as they describe attainment across the breadth of the programme of study at the end of a key stage.
They are not related to a particular phase or key stage but describe the types and range of performance that learners working at a particular outcome or level should characteristically demonstrate.	A learner in Key Stage 2 might demonstrate achievement at any level, even though the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2 for the 'average' learner is Level 4. Similarly, a learner at Key Stage 3 can demonstrate achievement at any level, including Levels 7, 8 and EP, if their work provides evidence of the appropriate characteristics.
They refer to a learner's achievement over time and over a range of work, providing a holistic view of a number of different characteristics.	A single piece of work should not be levelled as it cannot provide an overall assessment of the level at which the learner is working. It may, however, demonstrate characteristics of a particular level.
A judgement is reached by a best fit analysis, where each description is considered in conjunction with the descriptions for adjacent outcomes or levels, and a learner is allocated the outcome or level at which s/he is secure.	It is likely that the learner will exhibit some characteristics of the adjacent outcomes or levels but summative judgement must relate to the outcome or level that best fits the learner's overall achievement.

Sheet 10.4 (continued)

Statement	Elaboration
The essential function of level descriptions is to help you make rounded summative judgements at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3.	When making judgements at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3, you should decide which level description best fits a learner's performance. The aim is for a rounded judgement that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is based on your knowledge of how the learner performs across a range of contexts• takes into account different strengths and areas for development in that learner's performance• is checked against adjacent level descriptions to ensure that the level judged to be the most appropriate is the closest overall match to the learner's performance in the attainment target.
Arbitrary subdivisions within a level are not part of their design or intended use.	There is nothing in the assessment arrangements that gives any meaning to divisions within a level.
School, department or cluster standardisation portfolios should be produced to be used as a reference source of evidence.	These might include the work of the same learner or of different learners to enable teachers to reach agreement on levels of achievement by confirming a shared understanding of the characteristics of a level. They can be put together and discussed at any time during a key stage.
An end of key stage learner profile refers to a collection of the work of an individual learner over time and over a range of activities.	This might consist of a learner's exercise book or file of written work. There is no need to make a special collection. Summative assessment must take place at the end of a key stage.

Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Grammar

adjective *ansoddair*

A word that describes or modifies a noun. It may come before or after the noun, e.g. 'the blue chair' or 'the chair is blue'. There are different kinds of adjective: number or quantity (e.g. 'few'); quality (e.g. 'good'); possessive (e.g. 'my'); interrogative (e.g. 'which'); demonstrative (e.g. 'this').

adverb *adferf*

A word that describes or modifies a verb, e.g. 'she ran fast', 'he arrived late'.

agreement *cytundeb*

Linked words agree with each other in terms of number, case, gender and person, e.g. 'I say', 'he says' (person); 'the girls carried their books' (number).

article *bannod, y fannod*

A word linked to a noun. It may be definite ('the'), or indefinite ('a', 'an'). (There is no indefinite article in Welsh.)

clause *cymal*

A distinct part of a sentence including a verb. There are two kinds: a main clause ('I will do my homework'), and a subordinate clause ('when I get home'). The main clause makes sense on its own, but the subordinate clause does not.

conditional *amodol*

A tense of a verb which expresses the idea that what happens depends on something else. Conditional forms often involve conjunctions such as 'if' or 'then' and verb forms such as 'would' or 'may'.

conjunction *cysylltair*

A word used to link sentences or clauses or to connect words in a phrase. They express different kinds of link: cause (e.g. 'because'); opposition (e.g. 'but'); addition (e.g. 'and'); time (e.g. 'until').

exclamation *ebychiad*

A sentence or phrase expressing emotion such as horror, surprise or wonder, e.g. 'Oh no!', or 'That is amazing!'

future *y dyfodol*

Tense of verb to express what will happen, and in Welsh what usually happens.

grammar *gramadeg*

The rules that govern the relationships between words in any language.

impersonal *amhersonol*

When the writer does not specify who carries out an action, e.g. 'it was necessary to...'

infinitive (also called verb-noun) *berfenw e.e. cerdded*

The form of the verb preceded in English by 'to', e.g. 'to go', 'to throw', 'to watch'.

mutation *treigladd*

In Welsh, under certain conditions, one consonant is changed for another consonant at the beginning of a word, e.g. 'dwy ferch'.

noun *enw*

A word that names a thing or a feeling. The four types of noun are: common (general, e.g. 'animal', 'chair'); proper (a specific name, e.g. 'Bangor'); abstract (an idea or concept, e.g. 'happiness'); collective (a group, e.g. 'herd', 'crowd').

object *gwrthrych*

The object or recipient of the action in a sentence, e.g. 'she threw the ball'.

paragraph *paragraff*

A section of a piece of writing. A new paragraph indicates a change of time, place, subject or speaker in a dialogue and begins on a new line. Sometimes the writer also uses a one-line gap or an indent on the first line.

participle *rhangymeriad*

Forms of a verb, either present or past:

- present participle, usually describing something happening now, ends in 'ing', e.g. 'walking', 'talking', 'smiling'
- past participle, describing something that has already happened, ends in 'ed', 'd', 'en', 'n', and follows 'has', 'have' or 'had', e.g. 'Harry has helped'.

past *gorffennol*

Tense of a verb to express what has already happened or what was happening.

person *person*

A term to indicate part of a verb. First person 'I', second person 'you', third person 'he'/'she'/'it'. Also plural – 'we', 'you', 'they' (see 'agreement').

phrase *ymadrodd*

One or more words that form a unit or part of a sentence.

plural *lluosog*

A form of noun, verb or pronoun that shows that more than one is being indicated.

preposition *arddodiad*

Words that describe the relationship between two nouns or pronouns, e.g. 'in', 'on', 'under', 'behind'.

present *presennol*

Tense of a verb to express what is happening now or what usually happens.

pronoun *rhagenw*

A word used instead of a noun or a noun phrase, e.g. 'it', 'he'.

punctuation *atalnodi*

A way of marking text to help the reader understand (see punctuation section).

sentence *brawddeg*

A unit of written language that makes sense on its own and is marked by a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end. Sentences can be simple or complex and normally contain a verb.

singular *unigol*

A form of noun, verb or pronoun that shows that only one is indicated.

subject *goddrych*

The who or what that carries out the action of the verb, e.g. 'The dog ate the bone', 'She wrote the story'.

tense *amser berfol*

The form of the verb that tells us when something is happening, e.g. past, present, future or continuous.

verb *berf*

A word that expresses an action or state of being. Verbs can be in different tenses. Verbs can be active or passive: 'Jenny drove the car' (active), 'The car was driven by Jenny' (passive).

Spelling**abbreviation** *talfyriad*

A word that is shortened, e.g. 'phone' (from 'telephone').

accent *acen*

A sign over or under a letter that usually changes the pronunciation, e.g. 'é', 'â', 'à', 'ö', 'ñ'.

acronym *acronym*

A word made up of the initial letters of a phrase, e.g. 'NATO', 'WJEC'.

alphabet *yr wyddor*

The list of letters used to form the words of a language.

cognate *gair cytras*

A word that is similar to a related word or word meaning the same in another language, e.g. 'accent' (English) and 'acen' (Welsh).

compound word *gair cyfansawdd*

A word made up of two other words, e.g. 'football'.

consonant *cytsain*

A sound that is produced when the speaker uses tongue and teeth. All letters of the alphabet except 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', 'u'.

glossary *rhestr termau*

A list of words or phrases with their meanings explained.

prefix *blaenddodiad*

A group of letters added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, e.g. 'unclear'.

root word *gwreiddair*

A word to which prefixes and suffixes may be added to make other words, e.g. the root word is 'polite' in 'politely', 'impolite', 'politeness'.

suffix *ôl-ddodiad*

A group of letters added to the end of a word to change its meaning, e.g. 'run' to 'runner' or 'walk' to 'walked'.

syllable *sillaf*

Each beat in a word is a syllable.

vowel *llafariad*

A letter sound produced without audible friction of the teeth or tongue – ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’, and ‘w’, ‘y’ in Welsh.

Punctuation**apostrophe** ' *collnod*

Used to show contraction, e.g. ‘haven’t’, or possession, e.g. ‘the dog’s basket’.

asterisk * *seren*

Used to organise text, e.g. to draw attention to a footnote.

colon : *colon*

Used to introduce a list, a second clause or a quotation that expands or illustrates the first clause.

comma , *atalnod*

Used to separate parts of a sentence or list.

exclamation mark ! *ebychnod*

Used at the end of a sentence to show emotion such as shock, humour, joy, anger.

full stop . *atalnod llawn*

Used to indicate the end of a sentence.

question mark ? *gofynnod*

Used at the end of a sentence to show that it is a question.

semi-colon ; *hanner-colon*

Used to separate a clause or phrase in a sentence. It is stronger than a comma, but not as strong as a full stop.

speech marks “ ” *dyfynodau*

Sometimes called inverted commas, used to show direct speech in a text.

Language terms**accent** *acen*

Variations in pronunciation and intonation according to the region or country a speaker comes from (see also ‘Spelling’ section).

audience *cynulleidfa*

The people or readers to whom a written, moving image or media text is addressed.

character *cymeriad*

An individual in a story, poem or play.

colloquial *llafar*

Describes conversation or language used in informal or familiar contexts.

dialect *tafodiaith*

Variations in grammar or vocabulary according to where the speaker comes from.

fact *ffaith*

Accepted or provable information supported by evidence.

fiction *ffuglen*

Text that is invented by a writer or speaker.

formal *ffurfiol*

Spoken or written language used in unfamiliar or formal contexts, e.g. addressing visitors, writing formal letters.

informal *anffurfiol*

Language used in familiar contexts or with people known to the speaker or writer.

information text *testun gwybodaeth*

Text written to inform, e.g. a report, an explanation or an account.

instruction text *testun cyfarwyddo*

Text written to help the reader to do something, e.g. instructions, recipes.

intonation *goslef*

Tone of voice used by the speaker to convey meaning. Intonation varies in different languages.

narrative text *testun traethiadol*

Text that retells events in chronological order. It may be fictional or include information.

poem *cerdd*

A text that uses rhythm, rhyme or syntax and vocabulary to convey ideas and meaning, often in a condensed form.

pronunciation *ynghaniad*

Rules that govern the way groups of letters make sounds in spoken language. Pronunciation rules are different for different languages.

slang *bratiaith*

Words or phrases used in an informal context, sometimes linked to a region or group of people.

speech *llefaru*

Spoken language. Direct speech is words actually spoken, indicated in written speech by speech marks, e.g. "Sit down!" he said. Indirect or reported speech is what a writer reports has been said, e.g. 'he told her to sit down'.

text *testun*

Language organised to communicate in spoken, written or electronic forms.

Language skills

comprehension *dangos dealltwriaeth*

Understanding of written or spoken text. Understanding can be demonstrated by verbal or non-verbal responses.

draft *drafft*

First or unfinished written form of a text. The process of working on a text is called drafting.

edit *golygu*

To amend or correct written or spoken text.

listening *gwrando*

To understand and respond to spoken language spoken directly to the listener or recorded speech.

reading *darllen*

To understand and respond to written text, in printed, handwritten or electronic form.

redraft *ailldrafftio*

To amend, review or correct a first draft of a text.

speaking *siarad*

To express oneself orally.

writing *ysgrifennu*

To express oneself in the written form.

Linguistic/stylistic devices

alliteration *cyflythreniad*

The repetition of the initial letters, or sounds in words that are close together.

allusion *cyfieiriadaeth*

An indirect reference to something outside the current piece of writing. To understand it, a reader needs the relevant background knowledge.

analogy *cyfatebiaeth*

This compares one thing with another, often something unknown to something known.

assonance *cyseinedd*

The repetition of vowel sounds in words that are close together.

euphemism *gair teg*

A way of expressing something unpleasant in a less direct or harsh way.

hyperbole *gormodiaith*

An exaggerated statement.

idiom *idiom/priod-ddull*

A phrase that is not meant literally, but is understood by the people who use it.

imagery *delweddaeth*

Use of language to create a lively or sensory image, often visual.

irony *eironi*

Contrasts the reality with the expectation, what is written with what is meant.

jargon

The use of technical language, words that are specific to a particular subject and not commonly recognised.

metaphor *trosiad*

An implied comparison between two things, without using the words 'like' or 'as'. One thing takes on the qualities of another.

metonymy *trawsnewid*

Substituting the name of something with the name of an attribute or object associated with it.

neologism *gair gwneud*

The creation of a new word or expression.

onomatopoeia *onomatopoeia*

Words that sound like their meaning.

parody *parodi*

A humorous imitation of another text where an established text is 'set up'.

pastiche

Writing that combines elements from other texts.

personification *personoliad*

Giving human qualities to animals, things or abstract ideas.

proverbs *dihareb*

Concise sayings that express a general truth.

repetition *ailadrodd*

Repeating words or phrases for effect.

rhetorical questions *cwestiwn rhethregol*

Questions that are asked for effect and do not expect an answer.

rhyme *odl*

Words that contain the same sound in the final syllable are said to rhyme.

similes *cyffelybiaeth*

Direct comparisons between two things to show their similarity, using the words 'like' or 'as'.

symbolism *symboliaeth*

A person, object, image, word or event that is used to represent or suggest something beyond its literal significance. Symbols are culture-specific and will not mean the same thing to all people.

testimony *tystiolaeth*

The use of quotations ostensibly from experts or people positively associated with a situation or product, often used in advertising alongside statistics.

Appendix 2: Useful references

Publications

Welsh Assembly Government

The national curriculum Orders for all subjects.

Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales (2008)

Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales (2008)

Careers and the world of work: a framework for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales (2008)

National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds (2008)

Subject-specific guidance for all subjects of the national curriculum can be seen at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills Of particular relevance are the guidance documents for English, Welsh and modern foreign languages that include sections on writing.

Guidance on the teaching of higher-order reading skills: INSET opportunities for teachers of all subjects across the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3 (2010)

Developing higher-order literacy skills across the curriculum (2010)

Supporting learners' higher-order literacy skills (2009)

Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum (2008)

Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales (2008)

Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3 (2008)

A curriculum for all learners: Guidance to support teachers of learners with additional learning needs (2010)

Meeting the Challenge: Quality Standards in Education for More Able and Talented Pupils (2008)

School Effectiveness Framework (2008)

Making the Link: Language learning 5–14 (2003)

A curriculum of opportunity: developing potential into performance (2003)

Welsh Assembly Government/Basic Skills Cymru

Me Read? No Way! A practical guide to improving boys' literacy

Me read? No way! 13 strategies to improve boys' literacy

Recommended books & resources for boy readers aged 5–8 years

What works for pupils in Wales with literacy difficulties? The effectiveness of intervention schemes (Ref: A5196)

Drama and Literacy: A survey of effective practice at Key Stages 3 and 4 (Ref: A1693)

Writing to learn: A survey of effective practice with writing at Key Stages 3 and 4 (Ref: A1694)

Securing Boys' Literacy – a survey of effective practice in primary schools

EAL: More than Survival (Ref: A1723)

Improving Boys' Literacy: a survey of effective practice in secondary schools (Ref: A1241)

Effective practice in Writing at Key Stage 2: Essential extras (Ref: A1173)

How to ... teach the drafting process (Ref: A1644)

How to ... teach skimming and scanning (Ref: A1331)

How to ... use key words effectively (Ref: A1307)

How to ... Teach Information Text in KS3 Humanities subjects (Ref: A1713)

How to ... Teach Instruction and Explanation Text in KS3 Science and Design Technology (Ref: A1714)

How to ... Teach Spelling in KS3 subjects across the curriculum
(Ref: A1720)

How to develop language for thinking in KS3 in mathematics and science (Ref: A1915)

How to teach evaluation at KS3 in physical education and design and technology (Ref: A1916)

How to teach reading in Key Stage 3 (Ref: A2396)

How to review basic skills provision – a guide for school senior managers (Ref: A5274)

How to support writing (Ref: A5283)

How to support reading (Ref: A5284)

How to support spelling (Ref: A5285)

Ref: A5279 for A2 English Posters

Ref: A5280 for A5 English Cards

Ref: A5281 for A2 Welsh Posters

Ref: A5282 for A5 Welsh Cards

Text Type Posters

Text Type Cards: (English Ref: A5280; Welsh Ref: A5282)

- Information
- Persuasion
- Discussion
- Explanation
- Instruction
- Recount

Tips cards: *Capital Letters* (Ref: A1677)

Read a Million Words in Wales celebrity posters for secondary schools (set of 3) (Ref: A2297)

Read a Million Words in Wales We've been reading (Ref: A2135)

Estyn

Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged five to seven years (2009)

Supplementary guidance for independent and additional inspectors: more-able and talented learners (2009)

Sharing good practice in developing pupils' literacy skills (2009) (key messages from conference held September 2008)

Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years (2008)

Closing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment in schools (2008)

Developing dual literacy: An Estyn discussion paper (2002)

Raising Standards of Spelling in English in Primary Schools: An Estyn Discussion Paper (2001)

Raising standards of writing in English in primary schools: an Estyn discussion paper (2000)

Aiming for Excellence in Key Stage 3
(Estyn/ACCAC/Welsh Assembly Government, 2002)

Moving on . . . Effective Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3
(Estyn/ACCAC/Welsh Assembly Government, 2004)

Raising Standards in Literacy and Numeracy in Key Stage 3
(BBC Wales/Welsh Assembly Government/Estyn/ACCAC, 2003)

Raising Standards in ICT in Key Stage 3
(BBC Wales/Welsh Assembly Government/Estyn/ACCAC, 2004)

Bridging the Gap: Developing and using bridging units to support effective transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3
(ACCAC/Estyn/Welsh Assembly Government, 2004)

Useful websites

Welsh Assembly Government
www.wales.gov.uk

Estyn
www.estyn.gov.uk

Basic Skills Cymru (See the 'Basic Skills Cymru' section under 'Information for Learning Providers')
www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills

British Dyslexia Association
www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Professional association of teachers of students with specific learning difficulties (Patoss)
www.patoss-dyslexia.org

National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum
www.naldic.org.uk

National Centre for Languages (information about plurilingual/EAL learners)
www.cilt.org.uk

Some useful links to additional language resources in section on asylum seekers and refugees
www.literacytrust.org.uk

All Wales autism resource
www.awares.org

The National Autistic Society
www.nas.org.uk

National Association for Able Children in Education
www.nace.co.uk

Academi
www.academi.org

NGfL Cymru
www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk

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