



Department  
for Education

## Guidance

# Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education

Updated 10 July 2025

**Applies to England**

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## Foreword

All our children should be successful writers able to share their ideas confidently and articulately. Enabling children to write clearly and well is critical to success both at school and beyond. It is crucial to the government's mission to ensure that children are not held back by their background but are supported to achieve and thrive in education and throughout life. Today, not being able to write well is holding too many children back. More than a quarter of our children are leaving primary school not up to the expected standard, unable to write well enough to succeed in secondary school and beyond. That's a huge barrier to learning, not just in English lessons, but across the whole curriculum. And it makes it so much harder to go on to live a fulfilling adult life as well.

The evidence tells us that these gaps open up early – and they tend to stick around. Children who are behind at age 5 are more likely to be behind at age 11. That's why the reception year is so important. Schools need to build the foundations for writing right from the start, starting with oral composition and building children's ability to share their ideas. Those firm foundations for children are at the heart of the government's [Plan for Change](#), which sets a milestone of a record proportion of children starting school ready to learn.

But once those foundations have been laid, the work isn't done. Teachers have to gradually build pupils' writing knowledge and skill year on year. And we need to work together to improve how we do this. One of my first actions as Secretary of

State last summer was to commission Professor Becky Francis CBE to review the curriculum and assessment system in England. The review's interim report identified concerns with the way in which writing is currently taught in primary schools, and how this can hold children back from writing fluently.

To deliver the best education for children, I know teachers and leaders have been asking for more support on how to teach writing. That's why I'm delighted that my department is publishing this writing framework. It gives simple, practical advice for teachers and leaders about how to plan and teach writing to pupils in primary schools, from the reception year through to key stage 2. For the first time we will have, in one place, guidance on the most important aspects of teaching writing, based on the best available research to enable all our children to become confident, fluent writers able to share their ideas and find their voice.

Twenty years ago, my predecessor Ruth Kelly announced that all English schools would use systematic synthetic phonics in the future. Phonics is now embedded in schools and over 100,000 more children every year are securing the foundations of reading. But this change did not happen overnight. Similarly, it will take time to address all the challenges in the teaching of writing. This guidance won't be enough by itself. But it's an important step that we can use right now to drive high and rising standards in writing.

So, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone involved in producing this framework. I also want to thank our wonderful school staff – leaders, teachers and support staff – for all you do, day in and day out, to make a difference to so many children. I encourage you to use this document to guide your teaching so that all our children can achieve and thrive.

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