



Guidance

Curriculum & Standards

The National **Literacy** *Strategy*

Headteachers & Teachers at KS2

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Grammar for Writing

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The National
Literacy *Strategy*

Grammar for writing

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This book has a two-fold purpose:

- to provide lively whole class activities for teaching the Key Stage 2 sentence level objectives in the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching*;
- to explain and illustrate the varied forms which shared writing can take as a powerful medium for teaching writing.

Part 1

Introduction and rationale

We all use language to think and communicate. Language is systematically organised by its grammar which is inextricably linked to meaning and communication – we cannot make sense without shaping grammatical and linguistic structures. All pupils have extensive grammatical knowledge. Much of this is implicit, but they are able to generalise and improvise from this knowledge. Teaching which focuses on grammar helps to make this knowledge explicit, extend children's range and develop more confident and versatile language use.

This guidance is designed to help teachers teach writing. It focuses on the teaching of the sentence level objectives in the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching*. We have called it 'Grammar for writing' to emphasise the centrality of grammar in the teaching of writing. In the video accompanying Module 3 of the NLS 1998 training materials, Professor David Crystal explains the importance of grammar:

'Grammar is what gives sense to language ... Sentences make words yield up their meanings. Sentences actively create sense in language and the business of the study of sentences is the study of grammar.'

Some would argue that the study of grammar is worth teaching in its own right because it is intrinsically interesting – and so it is. This is not the primary aim here; our aim is to improve children's writing. Grammar is fundamental to this, as a means to an end, but a means which involves investigation, problem-solving, language play and a growing awareness of and interest in how language works. This book focuses on the teaching of sentence level objectives in the Literacy Hour but, throughout, the emphasis is on how children's growing understanding and use of grammar helps them to write more effectively.

It should be clear from this that the purpose of teaching grammar is not simply the naming of parts of speech, nor is it to provide arbitrary rules for 'correct' English. It is about making children aware of key grammatical principles and their effects, to increase the range of choices open to them when they write.

Children learn grammar as an integral part of learning to speak from the earliest stages. The development of oral language is vitally important in its own right as well as being essential to success in literacy. In the course of development, children will use grammar in a wide variety of ways, often with considerable complexity. Very young children will imply meanings using single

words in a variety of grammatical ways. For example, a one-year-old saying 'Milk' could mean: *Look! There's some milk; Can I have more milk?; Is that one milk?* etc., showing what they mean by tone of voice and/or gesture. Older children often use very complex grammatical constructions in speech which may not be appropriate as written forms. Children frequently encounter very sophisticated grammar in the speech and writing of others which they understand without difficulty.

The National Literacy Strategy sentence level teaching objectives are not intended to provide developmental descriptions of this kind. They focus on a limited but important range of skills that children need for writing. They are about extending and making explicit aspects of children's intuitive knowledge of grammar, focusing on aspects of grammar which tend to distinguish written from spoken texts. The grammatical characteristics of spoken language are different in significant ways from those of written language. These differences are related to the permanence of the written form, and the need to be concise and explicit, and because often the intended reader is separated from the writer by time and space. Whereas speakers often rely on context, facial expression, intonation, pauses, etc. to convey meaning and create effect, writers often use more explicit grammatical structures as well as other organisational features, such as paragraphs, headings and sometimes diagrams, to communicate ideas. The following two texts illustrate some of the differences:

A Today we learnt about taste and Miss Ward put some things out on the table and we had to taste them and what we had to do is they all had numbers by them and we had to taste them and it had a different taste to them and we had to taste them and see if it was sweet, salt, and bitter and sour and I did not taste any sour.

B Taste experiment
We had to taste foods which had different numbers to see if they tasted sweet, salt, bitter or sour. I thought the best taste was cheese and the worst was pickle. I did not find anything sour.

In these two examples, the intentions are similar: to explain the experiment. Text A recounts the events but backtracks and repeats. When written down, these repetitions stand out but, when spoken, they make sense. The speaker joins all the thoughts together with 'and' and uses intonation, gesture and stress to keep the listener on track. Text B is more clearly a written recount. It contains far fewer clauses than A and joins them in more complex ways, ie by subordination rather than the continuous use of the conjunction 'and'. The effect is a more focused and free-standing account which can be read by any reader.

The growth of competence in writing also contributes importantly to the broader development of children's thinking. The more context-free and explicit nature of writing helps children become increasingly reflective about language. By structuring and restructuring ideas in writing, children extend their powers of imagination, learn to express increasingly complex, abstract and logical relationships, develop skills of reasoning and critical evaluation. This, in turn, feeds back into their competence as thinkers and speakers.

It is instructive to look at the key messages about children's writing from the national tests derived from analysis of a sample of scripts. These give a very clear indication of the writing skills that children need to succeed in as they move through to their secondary education (*Standards at Key Stage 2 English, Mathematics and Science. Report on the 1999 National Curriculum Assessments for 11-year-olds*, QCA, 2000).

Key messages about writing from the National Curriculum tests

To reach a secure level 2A by the end of Key Stage 1, children should be able to:

- write with legible and accurate handwriting;
- discriminate and spell phonemes accurately – especially long vowels;
- understand spellings of simple word roots and inflectional endings: 'ed', 'ing', etc.;
- write and punctuate simple sentences;
- sequence them coherently in a text;
- select from an increasing range of vocabulary to enhance meaning, create effects and add precision to their writing.

To reach a secure level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2, children should be able to:

- apply spelling rules and conventions, eg consonant doubling, pluralisation, affixes;
- apply strategies to choose correct vowel formation;
- modify the meanings of words by adding words or phrases for effect and precision;
- develop more varied and complex sentences;
- use commas to mark clauses in complex sentences;
- pay more attention to the ending and thus the direction of the narrative;
- use formal, impersonal styles, eg consistent use of third person or the passive voice;
- review and edit work for clarity and interest, organisation and purpose;
- connect ideas at both text and sentence levels;
- organise texts in other ways than by order of event;
- adapt their writing to the purposes and characteristics of non-fiction text types.

Some of these expectations refer to phonics and spelling which are addressed in other guidance (National Literacy Strategy, *Progression in Phonics and Spelling Bank*, DfEE, 1999). Nevertheless, it is striking how many of them are directly or indirectly about grammar – about children's ability to manipulate words in sentences and to link sentences together. Some are specifically grammatical, eg the ability to form and punctuate simple sentences at Key Stage 1 or to develop more complex sentences at Key Stage 2. Others, like the use of formal styles, the purposes and characteristics of non-fiction text types and the direction of narrative also depend on the writer's awareness and control of grammar.

Across the primary years, there are three key features of grammar which need to be addressed. All of these are covered in the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching*. They are particularly important because they mark key differences between the ways in which grammar is used in spoken and written English.

Text cohesion

Throughout the primary years children should learn how to link sentences:

- at Key Stage 1, they should be able to create a coherent sequence of ideas;
- through Key Stage 2, they should learn to select from a wide range of connecting words and phrases, and to use verbs and pronouns consistently to create cohesive chronological and non-chronological texts to suit a variety of audiences and purposes.

Sentence construction and punctuation

- at Key Stage 1: the representation of ideas in sentences is a characteristic of written text which children need to be made aware of through reading and learn to control in writing. Written sentences are differently structured from spoken utterances which can rely on gesture, intonation and stress to fill out the speaker's meaning;
- at Key Stage 2: the ability to link ideas within sentences by combining and sequencing clauses enables children to structure and connect ideas in a wide variety of ways, which create interest for readers and make children's writing more precise, varied, engaging and fit for purpose.

Word choice and modification

- at Key Stage 1, children should draw from their reading an increasingly rich vocabulary, and learn to select words and phrases that add colour and precision to their writing and refine its meaning and are appropriate to its audience and purpose;
- through Key Stage 2 children should learn how to enhance their meaning through the choice of words and through modifying nouns and verbs to add focus, variety and interest for the reader.

The teaching of writing

Evidence from the early stages of the National Literacy Strategy (*The National Literacy Strategy. An evaluation of the first year of the National Literacy Strategy*, OFSTED, 1999) shows that, in most classrooms, while both reading and writing have been emphasised, the teaching of reading, particularly shared reading, has been more systematic and better structured. It is most likely that this was a major factor in the substantial rise in reading scores in 1999. Yet, despite frequent opportunities for writing, repeated encouragement and careful marking, many children still find writing difficult and do their best to avoid it.

The National Curriculum English Order provides a model of the writing process. Children should learn to *plan, draft, revise, edit, present* and *evaluate* their writing. Each of the elements is important in the production of a finished piece of writing. Effective teaching will often focus on particular aspects of this process, eg planning a story, an explanation, an argument, or revising a draft to change or improve it. At regular intervals, all children should have experience of developing a piece of writing through the whole process.

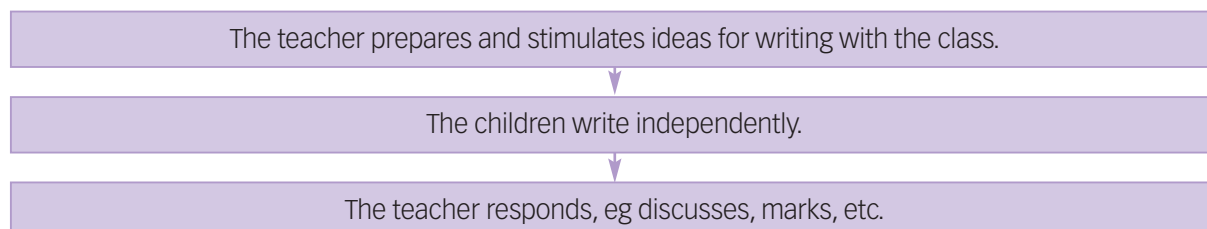
However, it is easy to misinterpret this model by treating it as a simple linear process or omitting essential elements altogether. Consider the following illustration.

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Daniel is 10. He has class writing time once or twice a week. This week he has written a story about a journey, linked to a book read in shared reading time and done some imaginative writing linked to the history topic on Romans. Mostly, the lessons begin with discussion about the topic. His teacher helps the class think it through, provides ideas about what to write and builds up a bank of useful vocabulary on a flipchart. After that, they all begin to write. In the course of writing, Daniel is expected to help himself but can go to his teacher if he gets stuck. His teacher, meanwhile, supervises and encourages children as they work. At the end of the lesson, the work is handed in and Daniel usually receives it back the next day or the day after. His teacher will have identified some spellings and made helpful and encouraging comments on his work. However, looking back over his work through the year, a number of things become clear:

- Most of the writing is narrative.
- There is a high proportion of unfinished or poorly finished work.
- The teacher's corrections and comments seem to have had very little effect.
- His writing does not seem to have improved very much.

There is an implicit sequence to this teaching:



Setting the sequence out in this simplified way is revealing. It shows how the teaching of writing can easily be reduced to teaching by correction – teaching after the event – instead of teaching *at the point of writing*. Thus, most of Daniel's direct teaching is focused on stimulating ideas and preparing him to write, while he is left to compose, ie to draft and revise, his work on his own, after which the

teacher proofreads and corrects it for him. It should go without saying that responding to and marking children's work remain very important and should be effective (see Module 3, page 51 in the National Literacy Strategy training materials on 'constructive marking'). Nevertheless, set against the National Curriculum model of writing above, this process simply misses out on key areas of essential teaching.

A useful way to think about writing is to turn the National Literacy Strategy 'searchlights' model of reading inside out. Successful readers need to orchestrate a range of cues (phonic, graphic, grammatical and information drawn from the wider context of the text – its organisation and meaning). But, while a reader has to decode, understand and interpret a text, a writer has to invent it. For a writer each 'searchlight' represents a range of *decisions*, rather than cues, that have to be orchestrated to create a text. Many children find independent writing a struggle because they are faced with too many hard things to do at once. They have to plan what they will write, think of which words and sentences to write, work out the spellings 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. Repeated experiences of this kind are likely to reinforce, rather than overcome, children's problems, making them increasingly reluctant writers in the process.

Teaching at the point of writing, in contrast, focuses on demonstrating and exploring the decisions that writers make in the process of composition. Once embarked on, it soon becomes clear that the writing process model is not linear at all but iterative. Drafting, revising and sometimes the presentation of the text are all aspects of a common process involving constant rereading and improvement. Writers rarely draft without rereading and revising as they go. It is with this kind of process in mind, that shared writing has such a prominent place in the Literacy Hour.

Shared, independent and guided writing

The goal of shared and guided writing is independent writing but, as we saw with Daniel above, the range of decisions facing a writer at the point of writing can seem formidable. Shared and guided writing enable teachers to support children by 'scaffolding' some of these decisions in order to pay attention to others. This is particularly important for teaching composition which, for slower writers, can be obscured because so much of their attention is taken up with spelling and handwriting, which slows them down and deflects attention from what they are writing about. Teaching compositional skills must go hand-in-hand with teaching handwriting and spelling, and children should be learning to compose text from the earliest stages. Handwriting and spelling need to be developed to a level of automaticity where they 'go underground' and cease to dominate children's attention as they try to write. But they must not stand in the way of teaching compositional skills which are even more fundamental to effective writing.

These compositional skills are stated in the National Curriculum and reflected in the sentence and text level objectives in the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching*:

Children should be taught to:

- choose form and content to suit a particular purpose;
- broaden their vocabulary and use it in inventive ways;
- use language and style appropriate to the reader;
- use and adapt features of a form of writing drawing on their reading;
- use features of layout, presentation and organisation effectively.

Understanding and using these compositional skills must be grounded in a rich experience of reading and reflecting on quality written texts, and on the use of these texts as models for writing. The ability to control and manipulate texts for audience and purpose depends on an ability to understand and control the sentences of which they are composed. Reading is not merely a vehicle for writing and has important priority in its own right. However, the assumption that children will simply bring their reading experience to bear in their writing is mistaken. Some children will do this easily but, for the majority, teachers will need to structure these links explicitly.

Shared writing

Shared writing is a powerful teaching strategy and the principal means of teaching writing in the Literacy Hour. It is much more than merely scribing for pupils, writing down their ideas like an enthusiastic secretary. It has an essential place in the Literacy Hour because it enables teachers to:

- work with the whole class, to model, explore and discuss the choices writers make at the point of writing (rather than by correction), demonstrating and sharing the compositional process directly;
- make the links between reading and writing explicit by reading and investigating how writers have used language to achieve particular effects, and using written texts as models for writing, eg through imitation and innovation in the early stages to understanding and using underlying structures and principles towards the end of Key Stage 2;
- scaffold some aspects of writing, eg the spelling and transcribing, to enable children to concentrate on how to compose their writing, eg through the choice of words or phrases and ways of constructing sentences to achieve particular purposes or effects;
- focus on particular aspects of the writing process:
 - planning
 - composing
 - revising, editing and redrafting;
- introduce children to appropriate concepts and technical language as a means of discussing what writers do and internalising principles to apply in their own work;

- provide an essential step towards independent writing by helping children to understand and apply specific skills and strategies.

Key features of shared writing

During shared writing it is important to:

- agree how **the audience and purpose** of the writing task will determine the structure, grammatical features and content;
- **use the specific objectives** from the text, sentence or word level work;
- **rehearse sentences** before writing them down. (In this way pupils are more likely to learn how to compose in sentences. This habit can also help pupils to 'get it right' first time as sentences are 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 checking for possible improvements or errors;
- **discuss and explain** why one decision might be preferable to another;
- pause during the writing to focus discussion upon the specific objective but, otherwise, move the rest of the composition on quickly so that pupils' attention is not lost;
- take suggestions from pupils who will make effective contributions, but also ask pupils who may struggle, in order **to check misconceptions** and provide further opportunities for explanation. These pupils should be specifically checked up on when they are using dry-wipe boards to assure the quality of their writing. Where a small group remains uncertain they may be targeted as a guided group;
- make the occasional **deliberate error** to hold pupils' attention and focus on common errors or an error related to the specific objective being taught.

A shared writing session should be clearly focused upon one or two specific teaching objectives at sentence and text level. There are three broad teaching techniques which can be used during a shared writing session to help children move towards greater independence.

TEACHER DEMONSTRATION

Most shared writing sessions begin with demonstration or modelling by the teacher. The teacher demonstrates how to write a text – how to use a particular feature, or compose a text type – maintaining a clear focus on the objective(s). She or he thinks the process through aloud, rehearsing the sentence before writing, making changes to its construction or word choice and explaining why one form or word is preferable to another. The teacher writes the sentence, rereads it and changes it again if necessary. She or he demonstrates at least two sentences. The teacher does not take contributions from the children at this point but will expect the children to offer opinions on her or his choice of words or construction of sentences. Every so often shared writing is used to orchestrate a number of different objectives, calling upon all that has been learned so far. The length of time spent on demonstration will depend on the type of writing, the objective and the attention span of the children. It is important not to try to pack in too much teaching in these sessions but to move on to the children having a go themselves.

TEACHER SCRIBING

The pupils now make contributions building upon the teacher's initial demonstration. The teacher focuses and limits the pupils' contributions to the objective(s), eg previous sentence level work, reading of similar texts, word level work, prompt sheets, writing frameworks, or planning sheets. The teacher challenges pupils' contributions in order to refine their understanding and compositional skills.

The children can offer their contributions by raising their hands, but more considered contributions and fuller class participation can be achieved by asking the children, individually or in pairs, to note down their idea, eg word, clause, sentence. When the teacher receives a contribution from the children, she or he will explain its merits or ask the children to do so. The teacher may ask for a number of contributions before making and explaining her choice. If the children use dry-wipe boards and thick-nibbed pens, they can hold their contributions up for the teacher to read. The teacher can then decide either to choose a contribution that will move the lesson on quickly or a contribution which will stimulate discussion and offer the opportunity to make a teaching point.

SUPPORTED COMPOSITION

The focus here is on the children's composition. Children might use dry-wipe boards or notebooks to write in pairs, or individually, a limited amount of text, sharply focused upon a specific objective. This needs to be swift, and once sentences are complete they should be held up so that the teacher can make an immediate assessment. Successful examples can be reviewed with the class, whilst misconceptions are identified and corrected. The aim is to practise a number of times until the large majority, if not all, of the class have mastered the objective to the point where they can apply it when they write. Progress should be visible and swift.

From time to time, perhaps fortnightly, supported composition should be allowed a longer time than 15 minutes in order to orchestrate recent work on language effects, sentence construction or organisation of a particular text type. How to plan, using a range of different strategies, how to translate a plan into a fluent first draft, how to revise for improvements and how to check for errors will all be considered in different 15-minute shared writing sessions over the year. However, it is essential to bring these elements together to serve a specific composition in which the writer is also required to consider effective use of language and sentence construction in a supported context. During an extended supported composition period of 50 minutes (using the 30 minutes whole class teaching time and the 20 minutes independent working time), the teacher directs the organisation of the composition in two or three mid-plenaries and the children construct their own text, individually or in pairs.

Independent writing

Because of the constraints of time, guided writing cannot always be used as a stepping stone into independent writing. However, most children should be able to manage the transition from shared to independent writing so long as the shared writing is carefully planned to provide the necessary support. The points above on:

- teacher demonstration,
- teacher scribing and
- supported composition

have been made with this in mind and teachers should plan to move through this sequence towards supported composition as a preparation for independent writing. The focus of the work in shared writing should be continued into purposeful writing tasks through which children apply their new learning.

Shared writing sessions can be used to scaffold independent writing in a number of ways, for example by providing:

- a worked out plan for children to write to. This might be a story but could be a non-fiction plan linked to one of the six main text types and related to work in other subjects;
- 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 clear narrative ending or punch line, with known steps towards it, to be retold to create tension or surprise;

- a basic text to be elaborated by vocabulary changes and the addition of appropriate phrases, eg to create anticipation and interest for a 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, eg changing a recount to a procedure or altering a first person diary to a third person narrative.

Independent writing of this kind can be focused and challenging. It can flow readily from whole class work in shared writing and be scaffolded at different levels according to children's needs. Tasks like these fit comfortably into the Literacy Hour structure, where the teacher's time can be divided between guided group work and general supervision of work by others. The more focused and structured nature of this kind of writing gives children more control and success in writing and enables the teacher to monitor and support more effectively. The plenary session at the end of the Literacy Hour is an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned over a whole cycle of work from shared through to independent working.

Using this general pattern of support, teachers can plan to move children towards increasing autonomy in their writing. As they become more familiar and successful in these relatively scaffolded independent tasks, the props can be removed. The rate and sequence of this process must be judged by the teacher. Certainly, children should always have plenty of opportunity in all aspects of their work to write independently and teachers must be careful not to allow structure of this kind to lower expectations.

Guided writing

In most classes, the arithmetic of time means that children will receive substantially less time in group teaching than they will in whole class teaching. For this reason, as well as those outlined above, shared writing is likely to be the most significant and influential teaching strategy in the Literacy Hour. Group teaching has important and obvious advantages over working with a whole class and, because it is in relatively short supply in most classes, needs to be carefully targeted to make the most of it. Much of the guidance on shared writing above applies equally to guided writing. The main difference is that guided writing, like guided reading, is an additional supported step towards independent writing, where the onus is on the children to make decisions, compose and revise their own texts. Guided writing should be planned with three major purposes in mind:

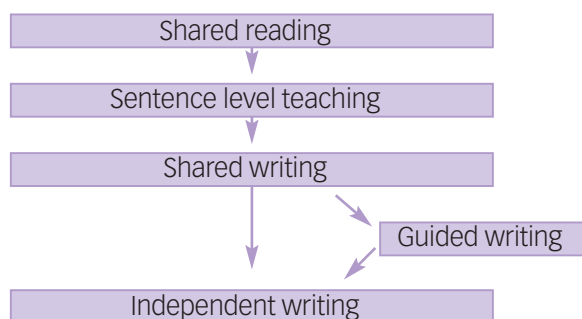
- to support children in planning and drafting their own work
Teachers should support children working on their own independent writing. The work should normally be drawn from previous shared text work with the whole class. As in guided reading, the teacher's task is to help children orchestrate all the decisions needed to draft their own text. But, as in shared writing, the work can be carefully scaffolded so that children can focus on particular aspects, eg:

- retelling a known story in a sequence of complete sentences;
 - planning a piece of explanatory writing drawn from a model discussed in earlier shared text work;
 - writing the next paragraph in an explanation begun with the whole class;
 - writing in a formal style linked to a particular text type using the third person or the passive voice.
- to revise and edit work in progress
Children who have been working independently should bring their work to a group discussion from time to time. These times should be used to acknowledge and praise, to revise and improve writing:
 - rereading it for clarity and purpose;
 - use of punctuation to enhance meaning;
 - choosing vocabulary;
 - how words and phrases can be strengthened or given greater precision;
 - where and why more complex sentences might be appropriate;
 - cohesion: use of connectives; consistency of tense, time, person; consistent use of pronouns.
 - to provide differentiated support for particular groups:
 - to rerun a shared writing session with more support and focus for less secure writers;
 - to prepare a group of children who are learning English as an additional language in advance of a shared writing session;
 - to work intensively with able writers on composing or editing a draft;
 - to work intensively on supported independent writing with less able writers.

Teaching writing in the Literacy Hour

Because we are treating grammar as a means to an end and not as an end in itself, the teaching of grammar must be strongly embedded in the teaching of shared reading and writing at both Key Stages. Nevertheless, teachers need to use these contexts to focus attention explicitly on grammatical features. It is easy to miss this out by taking it for granted in reading and by over-scaffolding the work in shared writing, ie doing the work for the children. Many children develop an intuitive awareness of grammatical forms and features through reading, but do not learn how to articulate and apply these when they write. This is a major reason why so many seem to progress in reading while their writing still lags behind.

Most teaching of writing should follow a similar sequence:



This process fits the structure of the Literacy Hour and allows children to investigate the effects of vocabulary and grammatical choices, within a context of connected and purposeful reading and writing.

The teaching of writing should start from:

- exploration of written texts to identify some important grammatical choices writers have made to achieve their purpose, eg choice of verbs, use of pronouns, sentence structure;
- active investigation of these grammatical features to explore their effects;
- application of these features through teacher-led shared writing;
- use of shared writing as a framework for independent writing supported through group guided writing, where possible.

Teaching text level objectives

This book focuses on practical support for the teaching of sentence level objectives from the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching*. However, these activities are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. The point of teaching them is to improve children's writing. This book also emphasises the role of shared writing as another tool for improving children's writing, but it should not be viewed as a 'programme' for teaching writing. The content for children's writing is derived from the text level objectives which are not covered in this book. However, each teaching unit suggests possible text level objectives through which the sentence level objectives may be practised.

Planning to write starts with establishing a purpose. The purpose (and the audience) determines the text type, which in turn determines the structure, organisation and coherence of the writing. It also determines the types of sentences, their structure and the language features used in the text. To help link text and sentence level objectives, Sections 1 and 2 in Part 3 summarise the main features and some characteristic writing points associated with each text type.

Sentence level teaching can only improve children's writing if it genuinely and continually connects with real, purposeful writing. At every stage, therefore, you should ensure that children:

- consider the effects of the grammatical choices being investigated on meaning, the kinds of text they might be appropriate for and how different options may impact on readers;

- have sufficient understanding to be able to apply this learning in their own writing, and ensure that they do so.

Balancing the teaching time

The National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching* gives some guidance on the balance of time to be spent on teaching the various aspects of literacy. Since it was written, some teachers have found that there are several different ways of rearranging the component parts of the Literacy Hour, while still maintaining the overall balance and adhering to the key principles. Many have found that teaching the word level work in the first part of the lesson has been helpful. In other classes, teachers plan for separate or additional phonics sessions or additional guided reading and writing sessions for particular groups.

The summary below offers a guide to the balance of time for the first 30 minutes of whole class work at Key Stage 2 with a view to securing time for the teaching of writing. It is not a rigid prescription but should be used as a baseline for evaluating variations against the need to maintain the overall balance of teaching across the week.

Guide to balance of class work in the Literacy Hour

KEY STAGE 2			
2/3 days per week		2/3 days per week	
Shared reading	15 minutes per day	Shared writing to cover sentence and text level objectives	30 minutes per day
Spelling and other word level objectives	15 minutes per day		

Key Stage 2 principles

- Many teachers have re-ordered parts 1 and 2 of the Literacy Hour to get more continuity between shared reading and the group and independent work that follows.
- Sentence level work should be a specific teaching focus for two to three days per week drawing on high quality written texts but integral to the teaching of shared writing.
- It makes sense to treat the first 30 minutes of the Literacy Hour as a continuous teaching sequence with focused attention to particular grammatical features as an integral part. In the course of this time, children should:
 - work from examples of written texts to explore the effects of particular grammatical choices;
 - investigate these features through activities such as cloze activities, transforming sentences, collecting and classifying words and phrases to understand principles and conventions;
 - apply this knowledge in composing real texts through shared writing.

- This sequence may need to be planned over several days for continuity and extension work, and to develop shared writing into sustained, independent writing.
- What children learn about grammar should help them to make appropriate choices when they write, not just to write complicated sentences for the sake of it.
- This work will need to be revisited and revised at regular intervals.
- Use guided writing times to teach children to compose, edit and revise their writing independently.
- Independent work (which may also be scaffolded) should be used to:
 - continue grammatical investigations from class work;
 - write more sustained text independently.

Pupil targets and assessment

This guidance has also been designed to help teachers set clear writing targets for children. Children's confidence in writing will grow from aiming for and achieving success. Teachers should use the objectives as targets: to explain to children what they are expected to learn about writing, and to involve them in evaluating their own progress towards these targets. Setting pupil targets does not mean setting a different one for each child. For most children, group or whole class targets will suffice, linked to the work planned for shared writing. These may then be adjusted to suit individual needs with more specific individual targets, where necessary.

Pupil targets can be phrased effectively in the form of 'We can ...' statements. Teachers can use these statements as a focus for class discussion, particularly in Literacy Hour plenary sessions, and for marking children's work. Such statements enable children to gain control, aim for specific improvements in their own work and, above all, earn praise, encouragement and recognition for success. Targets also provide a focus for discussion with parents and records of achievement as the child moves through the term and the year. Examples of such statements might include the following.

- We can use a capital letter and full stop to punctuate a sentence. (Year 1)
- We can plan our writing carefully by thinking up and collecting ideas and using charts and story boards. (Year 3)
- We can write complex sentences using a wide range of subordinates, such as *because*, *although*, *while* and *since*. (Year 5)