

Key Stage 3 Strategy

Exemplar Units of Work for English, developed in conjunction with QCA

Introduction

These exemplar units of work for Key Stage 3 English show how medium and short-term planning can be based on the Key Stage 3 *Framework* objectives and support the implementation of Curriculum 2000. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Key Stage 3 Strategy have developed these materials jointly.

The aim of the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stages 1 and 2 is to equip pupils with the confidence and competence as language users to exploit the learning opportunities of the secondary curriculum. The Key Stage 3 English strand builds on this as it introduces pupils to more specialist study of language and literature and supports the study of subjects across the curriculum.

The units are not a 'scheme of work': they are exemplars which schools are free to adopt, adapt or ignore. What matters is that departments should use the *Framework for teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9* to help review and shape the English curriculum in their own school. Departmental planning needs to guarantee the entitlement of pupils, as outlined in the *Framework*, and to do so in a planned and coherent way that matches the context of the school and the needs of pupils. The units are in *Microsoft Word* format to enable schools to select from, amend or add to the units to fit departmental priorities.

Lessons in these exemplar units usually reflect the lesson structure which has been trialled by Key Stage 3 Pilot schools, but they exemplify the principle that the lesson format should be determined by the objectives, rather than becoming the controlling factor.

Principles

- detailed planning is necessary to support effective teaching based on the objectives in the *Framework for teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9*;
- word and sentence level work must underpin effective reading and writing;
- it is important to plan for what the teacher does, not just for what the pupils do;
- the teacher's creative role in modelling reading and writing can make public the 'invisible' processes of interpretation and composition;
- speaking and listening must be integrated with reading and writing;
- improving writing is a national priority, and teaching writing needs to have a high profile within the context of the programmes of study;
- pupils need to engage with non-fiction as well as fiction, poetry and drama in English lessons;
- pupils should meet and explore texts from a range of cultures and times;
- boys and girls of all abilities have the entitlement to differentiated access to the rich and rewarding range of language experiences embodied in the National Curriculum for English.

Format

Each unit has a cover sheet which provides:

- an outline of what is covered in the unit;
 - the envisaged timescale, assuming a lesson length of around an hour;
 - differentiated expectations for higher-achieving, typical and lower-achieving pupils;
 - the stages of progression within the unit;
 - the anticipated prior learning;
 - the range of starter activities.
- *Framework* objectives at word, sentence and text level, which could be addressed through the unit, are identified for each stage.
 - Relevant resources are listed, but not included, since the responsibility for gaining copyright clearance rests with users in the school.
 - Each lesson is described within a matrix which reflects the teaching and learning sequence recommended in the Key Stage 3 Strategy. That sequence usually begins with a starter activity, followed by a teacher-led introduction, development through whole-class or group work and a plenary session. Homework activities are suggested for some lessons. Where the identified objectives are better addressed through a different pattern, the sequence is modified as appropriate.

Focus

Every unit enables teachers to address a range of *Framework* objectives and thereby to cover important aspects of the Programmes of Study. The units are deliberately different in their content and focus.

The first five units include:

- *Write Now* which centres upon writing (Year 7);
- *Books in their Times* which has a literary focus (Year 7);
- *Great Lives* built around biography and autobiography (Year 7);
- *A Sense of Place* featuring stories from different cultures (Year 8);
- *Scientifically Speaking*, which is a unit for abler pupils and focuses on scientific language (Year 8);
- *Travelling and Telling* which has a non-fiction focus (Year 9).

Later units will focus on drama, media and other aspects of the Programmes of Study.

Teaching and learning

Consistent features of the approach to teaching and learning embodied in the units are:

- building in and building on prior knowledge;
- giving a high profile to writing through a teaching sequence which builds a bridge between reading and writing;
- planning for guided reading and writing, when the teacher works with a small group and the majority of the class work independently;
- modelling shared writing to make public the private process of writing;
- doing shared reading to give pupils access to challenging texts;
- using plenary sessions to consolidate learning;
- ensuring differentiation whilst maintaining curriculum access.

Progression

Progression does not happen by accident; it needs to be planned for within and across units. The image of progression in the *Framework* is not just about widening the range of texts or purposes; it is also about the orchestration of related skills, about increasing subtlety or precision and improving accuracy.

Each unit is intended for a specific year, but the selected units range across Years 7,8 and 9 to illustrate progression. The expectations in units Year 9 pupils are more challenging than those in typical units for younger pupils.

There is progression within units as well as across years. Each unit has identifiable stages, consisting of variable numbers of lessons, which develop in deliberate sequence.

Starter activities

Starter activities are included because they have proved both popular and effective in Key Stage 3 Pilot schools. They offer enjoyably interactive ways of paying systematic attention to objectives, and can be free-standing sequences of starters or be linked with the focus of a lesson.

Many lesson plans include starter activities, but where there is no natural link between the lesson objectives and a starter objective, the starter can be determined by the learning needs of a particular class, or drawn from the bank of suggested starter activities which accompanies the units.

Pupils

Most of the units offer access to pupils across the ability range, but one unit, *Scientifically Speaking*, is specifically intended for abler pupils. The assumptions about capacity to cope with sophisticated texts and ideas are deliberately challenging in this unit.