Literacy support and guidance for secondary school teachers

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Introduction

Why is the current emphasis on raising literacy standards considered necessary? Literacy is vital to function in a modern, communications-led society, for personal pleasure and for intellectual growth. However there is a wealth of evidence that we have not yet 'got it right' for a sizeable number of the population. These people are disadvantaged by their low level of literacy.

What's in it for departments across the school?

1. Literacy supports learning. Pupils need vocabulary expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects.
2. Reading enables us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience.
3. Through language we make and revise meaning.
4. Writing helps us to sustain and order thought and retain knowledge.
5. Responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry.
6. Better literacy leads to improved self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows pupils to learn independently. It is empowering.

Possible key objectives for key stage 3

Year 7 Cross-curricular priorities

1. Recognise and record personal errors, corrections, investigations, conventions, exceptions and new vocabulary.
2. Recognise the cues to start a new paragraph and use the first sentence effectively to orientate the reader, e.g. *when there is a shift of topic, viewpoint or time*.
3. Revise the stylistic conventions of the main types of non-fiction:
– information
– recount
– explanation
– instructions
– persuasion
– discursive writing
4. Use appropriate reading strategies to extract particular information, e.g. *highlighting*, *scanning*.

Year 8 Cross-curricular priorities

1. Explore and compare different methods of grouping sentences into paragraphs of continuous text that are clearly focused and well developed, eg *by chronology, comparison or through adding exemplification*.
2. Learn complex, polysyllabic words and unfamiliar words which do not conform to regular patterns.
3. Combine clauses into complex sentences, using the comma effectively as a boundary signpost and checking for fluency and clarity.

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4. Use talk to question, hypothesize, speculate, evaluate, solve problems and develop thinking about complex issues and ideas.

Year 9 Cross-curricular priorities

1. Compare and use different ways of opening, developing, linking and completing paragraphs.
2. Synthesize information from a range of sources, shaping material to meet the reader's needs.
3. Write with differing degrees of formality, relating vocabulary and grammar to context, e.g *using the active or passive voice*.
4. Discuss and evaluate conflicting evidence to arrive at a considered viewpoint.

Section 1 Active reading strategies

Activities which are known as DARTs (directed activities related to texts) can be very helpful in encouraging pupils to read a text carefully and in detail, to go beyond literal comprehension and to think about what they read.

DARTS are popular with pupils as they have a game – like quality and offer a good focus for group work and are very engaging. However learning may be implicit and teachers may need to draw out the significance of the learning and relate it to subject – specific objectives.

Some pupils expect reading tasks to involve no more than a rapid trawl for the right answer; helping them to realise that something more demanding and often less clear – cut is required takes time and practice. Training pupils to talk constructively in pairs and groups may require time if it is new to them. Pupils need consistent messages from different teachers in different departments about the values of these ways of working.

Activities which encourage close reading of a text are most effective when worked on by a pair or small group as the discussion of possibilities leads to a closer look at the text. Activities may include;

Cloze

Filling the gap involves the reader in actively constructing meaning. Skills include:
_ paying close attention to the meaning of the sentence
_ choosing a word that fits grammatically
_ using one's existing knowledge of the topic
_ working out what is likely from the rest of the text
_ working out what will fit with the style of the text – eg whether a word has already occurred in the sentence
_ attending to the sense of the whole sentence by reading and rereading.

Sequencing

Sequencing activities involve reconstructing a text which has been cut into chunks. Skills include:
_ reading and rereading
_ paying close attention to the structure of the genre
_ paying close attention to link words
_ hunting for the logic or organising principle of the text – eg chronological order
_ using previous experience and earlier reading.

Text marking

Text marking includes underlining, annotating or numbering the text to show sequence. Skills may well include:
_ skimming or scanning to find specific information
_ differentiating between different categories of information
_ deciding what is relevant information

_ finding the main idea(s)
_ questioning the information presented in the text.

Text restructuring

Text restructuring involves reading and then remodelling the information in another format. For example, flow charts, diagrams, Venn diagrams, grids, lists, maps, charts, concept maps or rewriting in another genre. Depending on the format, skills used will include:
_ identifying what is key and relevant in a text
_ applying what they know in a new context
_ remodelling the content and the format of the text
_ awareness of the characteristics of different genres
_ critical reading
_ summary and prioritisation
_ writing as well as reading skills.

Categories of DARTs

DARTs can be grouped into two main categories.

Directed Activities Related To Text (DARTs); a summary	
Reconstruction activities use modified text	**Analysis activities** use straight text
Pupil tasks: completion – type activities with deleted or segmented text	Pupil tasks: text marking and labelling or recording
1 Text completion Pupils predict deleted words (cloze), sentences or phrases	**1 Underlining or highlighting** Pupils search for specific target words or phrases that relate to one aspect of content, e.g. words that support a particular view
2 Diagram completion Pupils predict deleted labels on diagrams using text or other diagrams as sources	**2 Labelling** Pupils label segments of text, which deal with different aspects, e.g. labelling a scientific account with labels provided by the teacher, such as prediction, evidence, conclusion
3 Table completion Pupils complete deleted parts using table categories and text as sources of reference	**3 Segmenting** Pupils segment paragraphs or text into information units
4 Completion activities with disordered text	**4 Diagrammatic representation**

A Predicting logical order for sequence B Classifying segments according to categories given by the teacher	Pupils construct diagrams from text, e.g. flow diagrams, concept maps, labelled drawings or models
5 Prediction Pupils predict the next part(s) of text with segments presented in sequence	**5 Tabular representation** Pupils extract information from a written text, then construct and represent it in tabular form

Examples of how DARTs activities can be used in different ways.

How fresh is fresh?

You may have noticed that the supermarkets sell apples and other fruits all the year round. Apples ripen in England in the autumn. Once ripe they last up to a week or two. Apples are imported from other countries such as New Zealand to extend the season but this alone will not make sure that you can have an apple at any time of the year. Many apples are picked just before they are ripe and then stored in a controlled environment. Carefully stored, some varieties of apple can last up to 12 months. So the apple you buy could be a year old.

How can you store an apple so that it will stay fresh? As apples ripen the minerals and other chemicals in the cells that make up the apple tissue change. Starches in the cells change to sugars and the cell walls begin to break down, so when you bite into the apple it is sweet and juicy. If you want to keep an apple for longer you need to make sure it does not ripen too soon. You do this by picking the apple at the right time and then by storing it so that it ages slowly.

You can check how close apples in an orchard are to being ripe by testing one or two to see how much of each mineral such as phosphorus, magnesium and potassium they contain. Cell walls need some of these minerals to maintain their rigidity. As the apple ripens so the amount of each mineral in the fleshy part changes. By tracking the changes you can tell how ripe an apple is. Picking the apple at just the right time makes sure it will last longer.

Once picked the apple will continue to ripen, so this process needs slowing down. An apple is living and each of its cells continues to respire. This means that they continue to absorb oxygen from the air and emit carbon dioxide. As each cell respires some of the stored food is converted to energy. The apple also emits a gas called ethylene that helps ripen the fruit. Controlling the atmosphere in the store can slow the respiration rate down in the apple cells. A slowly turning fan can keep the air circulating and blow away the ethylene as it is formed. If you decrease the level of oxygen and increase the level of carbon dioxide, then the cell respiration slows.

Some varieties of apple will tolerate high levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The Cox, for instance, will tolerate 9% of carbon dioxide. These varieties can be stored for longer. Apples such as the Worcester will tolerate less so cannot be stored for long periods. The apple store is also cooled. This makes sure that any chemical

reactions such as respiration will take place at a slower rate than normal. Fruit such as apples cannot be frozen without becoming softer and mushy. As water freezes to form ice it also expands. So, as the water in the cytoplasm freezes, sharp crystals of ice form and these burst the membrane and cell walls.

Growing and selling apples and other fruits is big business, so it is in the interests of producers to extend the shelf life of these products as long as possible. But do they taste the same as freshly picked apples? The industry claims they do. If you are lucky enough to live in an apple-growing area you could try your own experiment, but you may have to wait until next autumn.

Example 1: text marking (analysis)

If your learning objective was to develop pupils' understanding of the processes affecting ripening, you might ask pupils to work in pairs and provide each pair with a copy of the text. You could ask them first to skim-read the article, then to highlight in pink those things that happen as the apple ripens, and highlight in yellow ways of preventing ripening. Following this you might ask them to complete a table under the following headings.

How to slow ripening	What process does it stop?

Example 2: table completion (analysis)

If your objective was to develop an understanding of cells and storage of fruit, you might ask pupils to work in small groups, to skim-read the text and then to find reasons for the statements in the left-hand column.

Statement		Explanation
Apples are imported from other countries, such as New Zealand	because	
When you bite into a ripe apple it is sweet and juicy	because	
The apple store is cooled	because	
Levels of oxygen are decreased	because	
You cannot use freezing as a method to store apples	because	

Example 3: sequencing activity (restructuring)

If your learning objective was to consider what affects cell respiration and how to construct a logical argument, you might ask pupils to work in pairs, provide each pair with a fragmented paragraph on cards and ask them to reformulate the paragraph.

An apple is living, and each of its cells continues to respire.	As each cell respires, some of the stored food is converted to energy.
Controlling the atmosphere in the store can slow the respiration rate down in the apple cells.	If you decrease the level of oxygen and increase the level of carbon dioxide, then the cell respiration slows.
The Cox, for instance, will tolerate 9% of carbon dioxide.	This means that they continue to absorb oxygen from the air and emit carbon dioxide.
Once picked the apple will continue to ripen, so this process needs slowing down.	The apple also emits a gas called ethylene that helps ripen the fruit.
A slowly turning fan can keep the air circulating and blow away the ethylene as it is formed.	Some varieties of apple will tolerate high levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
The apple store is also cooled.	Apples such as the Worcester will tolerate less so cannot be stored for long periods.
These varieties can be stored for longer.	This makes sure that any chemical reactions such as respiration will take place at a slower rate

Section 2 Reading for information

Reading strategies demanded by different tasks and ways to help pupils to learn from non – fiction texts are important to be developed across subjects, especially when DARTs have been introduced and teachers and pupils are ready to develop whole class methods of teaching reading more actively.

The demands made upon the reader when reading for information are very different from those made by a narrative, which for many pupils will be their dominant experience of reading. Without an appreciation of these differences, the difficulties that pupils experience can be compounded.

Reading for information: possible challenges.

- Prior knowledge
- Subject – specific vocabulary
- Grammar
- High levels of information (dense texts)

Writers of information books often make assumptions about the knowledge their readers will bring to their texts. Without this understanding readers may not be able to connect new information with what they already know and thereby create meaning.

Writers assume familiarity with subject-specific vocabulary. However, some of this vocabulary may be unknown to the reader and some familiar words may be used in new and unfamiliar ways.

The grammatical features of information texts are often different from narrative texts:
- The sentence structure of information texts can be demanding. Sentences invariably consist of more than one clause and the more clauses in a sentence, the greater the demands made upon the reader.
- Passive verbs are commonly used in information texts and textbooks (*are compared*, *are logically related to*) though active verbs are usually easier to read and make sense of, particularly when used in a negative statement.
- Turning verbs into nouns is often preferred to active verbs, such as *formation* in preference to *If we form…* or *Smoking is…* instead of *People who smoke…*

Ideas may be communicated in texts which are very dense: there may be high levels of information transfer and little helpful redundancy (repetition of ideas in different terms) in the language, increasing the need for the reader to close-read, to monitor that reading and to take effective, remedial action when in difficulty.

Reading for information: useful support.

- Create a context: brainstorming, group discussion, displays, diagrams, charts, summaries. Creating a context, which activates and builds relevant knowledge, prior to reading. This might include such activities as brainstorming, group discussion, the use of display which features supporting

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pictures, diagrams and exemplification, and summarising the main ideas in the text before it is read.

- Glossaries: A glossary or some explanation of subject-specific vocabulary.
- Collaborative work: An opportunity to work collaboratively on the meaning of the text.
- Shared reading: The teacher sharing the reading with a whole class demonstrating how to access the text, cope with difficulties and integrate it.
- Opportunities to read similar texts: Opportunities to read and have heard such texts before.

Ways of reading.

The choice of a particular kind of reading is usually prompted by the nature of the text and the purpose fir reading it.

Continuous reading usually involves uninterrupted reading of an extended piece of text – e.g. reading a chapter in a novel or an article in a newspaper for pleasure or relaxation.

Close reading involves careful study reading and usually includes pausing to think or look back in order to examine the text in detail – e.g. studying a document in preparation for presenting a summary to colleagues.

Skimming involves glancing quickly through a passage to get the gist of it – e.g. looking through a newspaper to see what is worth reading or glancing at sub-headings in a book.

Scanning involves searching for a particular piece of information – e.g. looking up a phone number.

The importance for pupils to learn these reading strategies in different subjects;

- Obviously there are differences from subject to subject. As they get older, pupils are expected to engage in more independent study and it is often at this point that their inability to read in different ways for different purposes becomes obvious.
- Weaker readers have a limited repertoire of reading styles. Some are capable of fluent, continuous reading but unable or unwilling to vary this.
- Some are resistant to close reading but prefer to scan the text for the 'right answer'. Others are inefficient skimmers and scanners, feeling that they are somehow 'cheating' if they do not read every word.
- In setting reading tasks, teachers should show or tell pupils which reading style would be most effective.

How do you teach these ways of reading?

- Demonstrate and model different reading styles – e.g. using an enlarged text.
- Walk pupils through the organisation and presentational devices in textbooks in your subject.

- Discuss with pupils when different styles are appropriate.
- Give pupils opportunities to reflect on how they read specific texts.
- Monitor the range of reading and patterns of success and be alert to weaknesses.

Introducing textbooks

Modern textbook pages contain a plethora of presentational devices: flow charts, drawings, colour coding, bullet points, bold type, explanation, labels, symbols and questions. The written text is condensed and difficult to follow without diagrams. The emphasis on the visual is typical of many modern school textbooks. Teachers should consider ways in which they can highlight the features of text books with their pupils.

Research

The EXIT model (Lewis and Wray) identifies the process stages in research and identifies both the points at which support might be provided and the forms which that support might take.

	Process stages	Teaching strategies	Purpose
1	Activating prior knowledge	Brainstorming Concept – mapping KWL grid*	To remind pupils what they already know and create a context for introducing new learning.
2	Establishing purposes	Question setting KWL grids* QUADS grids**	To understand why the topic is worthy of research, and what will be the aim and outcome.
3	Locating information	Situating the learning in meaningful context Teacher modelling	To consider where information can be found, and have the skills to find it.
4	Adopting and appropriate approach	Metacognitive discussion Teacher modelling	To plan how to research a topic.
5	Interacting with the text	Text marking Text restructuring Rewriting in different text type or genre	To engage with the meaning of the text and focus on the important features.

		Cloze Sequencing Labelling	
6	Monitoring understanding	Teacher modelling Strategy charts	To review findings and adjust the research plan in the light of them.
7	Making a record	Writing frames Grids Teacher modelling	To cull or distil the relevant knowledge
8	Evaluating information	Discussion of biased texts	To evaluate the validity and reliability of information, and take this into account.
9	Assisting memory	Review Revisit Restructuring	To place new knowledge in context, and map it in with other knowledge.
10	Communicating information	Different types of writing frames Drama Alternative outcomes	To secure and record new knowledge.

- KWL = 3 column grid entitled: **QUADS =
- What do I already **know** about this topic?   Questions
- What do I **want** to know about this topic   Answers
- What have I **learned** about this topic?   Details
                   Source

Section 3 Writing non – fiction

The main **categories** of non – fiction are;

- Instructions – *recipes, giving directions.*
- Recount – *science experiment write – up, match commentary.*
- Explanation – *the rain cycle, how erosion occurs.*
- Information – *food in Roman Britain, the properties of mercury.*
- Persuasion – *advertisement, manifesto.*
- Discursive writing - *'discuss' essays, magazine article.*
- Analysis – *literary criticism, analytical essay.*
- Evaluation – *critical review, reflection on outcomes.*

It is important for teachers to consider if their subject makes particular demands on pupils to write in one or more of these categories. Each category has its own conventions at word, sentence and whole – text level.

Conventions

Purpose

- What is its purpose?
- Who is it for?
- How will it be used?
- What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?

Text level

- Layout
- Structure/organisation
- Sequence

Sentence level

- Viewpoint (first person, third person, etc)
- Prevailing tense
- Active/passive voice
- Typical sentence structure and length
- Typical cohesion devices

Word level

- Stock words and phrases
- Specialised or typical vocabulary
- Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices

Examples of conventions;

Text level

- The conventions of layout, sequence and organisation in a *recipe*:
- title
- list of ingredients (*Listed* – many pupils write them horizontally because they are not familiar with the convention. There is some fun in trying to work out the convention for ordering ingredients).
- step-by-step numbered instructions
- serving suggestion.

Sentence level

An example is *directions for getting to a place:*
- voice – implied 'you'
- prevailing tense – present
- active/passive voice – active, directing typical sentence structure and length – short and simple, to aid memorisation
- typical cohesion devices – *first, then, next, after the turning* (let them suggest phrases)
- use of prepositional phrases to illustrate the route – e.g. the garage *on the corner,* the road *opposite the church.*

Word level

An example is *the front page story of a tabloid newspaper:*
- stock words and phrases – *big, shock, blow, kill, hate*
- specialised or typical vocabulary – tends to emotive and short choices, favours alliteration and word play
- elaborate/plain vocabulary choices – simple words, easy to read, commonplace vocabulary.

All three of these examples use conventions which are easy to explain. They serve their purpose well, and they are tailored to the needs of their audiences.
Recipes are plain, orderly and functional because of the way they are used to provide guidance on the spot. Directions are constructed to be memorable.
Tabloid front page articles are designed to make a quick appeal to the customer.
The main point to make is that all writing relates to sets of conventions, and pupils need to be taught what they are.

- Most writers write in the expectation that what they write will have an effect upon someone else. This gives their writing purpose and aids motivation. Therefore, writers need to have a clear idea of both their audience and their purpose for writing before they start. If they are to develop as writers they will also need to know why it has, or has not, had the desired effect.
- Pupils need the time and space to experience sustained writing as a process. They need opportunities to develop their writing through the four stages of brainstorming, drafting, revising and publishing.

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- Talk is central to the support of writing. Ideas can be generated collaboratively and peers can comment critically upon the communication

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Writing non – fiction.

Teachers should establish a supportive context for writing and apply a teaching sequence for writing when they introduce a new and particular type of writing.

A sequence for teaching writing;

1. Establish clear aims.
2. Provide example(s).
3. Explore the features of the text.
4. Define the conventions.
5. Demonstrate how it is written.
6. Compose together.
7. Scaffold the first attempts.
8. Independent writing.
9. Draw out key learning.

Conventions of the main text types

Analysing text types: Instructions	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?	• To describe how something done, in a series of sequenced steps • Will enable someone who knows nothing about subject in hand to complete task successfully • Level of technical vocabulary will be dictated by age/experience of intended audience • Clear, direct writing, not open to inference
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	• Title indicates *How to…* • Layout designed to make text appealing/easy to read, including large fonts, short sentences • Often contains step – by – step diagrams/illustrations to clarify or even replace text • May include diagrams/illustration of completed item • Clear sequence indicated by bullet points/numbers/letters • Written in chronological order. • Statement of what is to be achieved, followed by list of equipment needed, followed by sequenced steps, followed by final statement indicating achievement of goal • Encouraging remarks – e.g. *Four easy steps to…., Have you ever wanted to…?* • List of equipment provided/required to complete the task • Annotations relate to equipment – e.g. *the large screws (A in diagram 1)*
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length • Typical cohesion devices	• Written in imperative – e.g. *Take the large spanner…* • Present tense • Active voice; passive used when the identity of agent is not relevant e.g. *When the glue is applied…*

	• Will include sentences containing *you* e.g. *If you find any parts are missing…* • Short sentences, each covering one instruction • Connectives relating to chronology, e.g. *Next…, then…, when the glue is set…* • Punctuation limited to full stops and commas

Word level
   • Stock words and phrases
   • Specialised or typical vocabulary
   • Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices
	• Level of technical vocabulary will be dictated by age/experience of intended audience
	• Plain vocabulary to ensure clarity
	• Nouns and verbs predominate
	• Very little use of imagery/adjectives/adverbs

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Analysing text types: Recount (chronological report)	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate? • Chronological sequence provided – e.g. scene setting, events, closing statement	• Retells an event/series of events, usually in chronological order • Audience often defines by age – e.g. writing for peers, for younger pupils, for parents • Sometimes used by teachers as check on understanding e.g. *Describe the events leading up to the Norman Invasion of 1066* • Used as entertainment, in fiction/insight into human motivations, in (auto)biography and history • Sequential/chronology provides order • Fiction/diary/(auto)biography/history • Newspaper articles are sometimes recounts, often beginning with the sensational aspect plucked out of sequence and placed first, then returning to chronology
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	• Paragraphs used for effect, and to mark change of focus/time/place • Wide variety of links between paragraphs • Starts at beginning/finishes at end of series of events
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length • Typical cohesion devices	• First person in autobiography, sometimes in fiction; otherwise third person • Past tense • Active voice • Variety of sentence structure to create different effects – e.g. sequence of long sentences followed by short sentence • Connectives related to time – e.g. *later, meanwhile, twenty years on;* or to cause – e.g. *because, since;* or to contrast – e.g. *although, however, nevertheless* • Sophisticated use of punctuation for effect – e.g. colons, semi-colons, dashes, brackets • Dialogue used to forward plot/indicate character, in fiction and (auto)biography

Word level	
• Stock words and phrases • Specialised or typical vocabulary • Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices	• Painting a picture in words involve the use of adjectives/adverbs/powerful verbs • Seeks to answer questions - e.g. *when, where, who, what, why* (5W's) • Uses specific dates/times/names of people/places • Vocabulary of thoughts/feelings/description • Recurrence of words for poetic effect • Use of imagery/simile/metaphor

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Analysing text types: Explanation	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?	• To explain the processes involved in natural/social phenomena • To explain how something works • Often forms the basis of essay type questions – e.g. *How are sedimentary rocks formed?* • Emphasis on clarity and directness rather than inference
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	• Title indicates *How*…or *Why*… • Layout designed to make text appealing/easy to read • Often contains diagrams/illustrations to clarify or even replace text • General statement introduces topic – e.g. Sedimentary rocks are formed by the compression of layers of particles… • A series of steps explains why something occurred – e.g. perhaps the most important reason was… • Steps continue until the explanation is complete • Clear sequence may be indicated by bullet points/numbers/letters
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length • Typical cohesion devices	• Third person • Present tense for phenomena still in existence; past tense for past events • Mostly active voice; passive used when identity of agent is not relevant – e.g. *The number of sweets was divided by the number of sweet- eaters*… • Sentences contain connectives which indicate sequence – e.g. *next, gradually*; cause and effect – e.g. *because, so*; comparison – e.g. *although, in contrast* • Paragraph openings mark sequence of events/express cause and effect/contrast and comparison/elaboration – e.g. *next, gradually, meanwhile, therefore, similarly, on the other hand, in other words*

Word level • Stock words and phrases • Specialised or typical vocabulary • Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices	• Glossary may be needed for specialist technology • Impersonal language – i.e. neither reader nor writer directly involved • Level of technical vocabulary will be dictated by age/experience of intended audience • Plain vocabulary to ensure clarity • Nouns and verbs predominate • Very little use of imagery/adjectives/adverbs

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Analysing text types: Information text (non – chronological report)	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?	• To describe the way things are • Addressed to the reader who wants to know more on a given subject • Audience sometimes defined by interest rather than by age • Used as a source of information/reference • Clear/factual/impersonal
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	• Headings/subheadings to classify/categorise information • Tables/diagrams/illustrations add information/draw in reader/break up text/replace text • Different fonts/sizes attracts readers attention • Information broken up into sections/boxes on the page, allowing reader to browse in random order • Opening general statements – e.g. *Penguins are birds* • Following statements in categories – e.g. location, habitat, breeding habits, etc • Opening statement explains clearly the intent and scope of text • May include index/glossary/notes/references/table of content
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length • Typical cohesion devices	• Third person generic – i.e. *penguins*, not *Percy the Penguin* • Present tense describes how things are • Active voice alternates with passive – e.g. *the young are reared*, to avoid writing *they* all the time • Length of sentence dictated by need to be clear; tendency towards simple and compound sentences to achieve clarity and conciseness • Connectives emphasise sequence/cause and effect/comparison – e.g. *then, and so, similarly* • Questions used to interest reader – e.g. *Penguins: Are they a Pest?* • Cohesion achieved through sub-headings

	• Paragraphs mark sequence/express connections between pieces of information – e.g. *Secondly…, Thus we can see that…, That being so,…*
Word level • Stock words and phrases • Specialised or typical vocabulary • Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices	• Vocabulary of precision – e.g. facts and figures/Latin names/etc • Technical terms referred to in subject matter – e.g. *habitat, mating season* • Little use of imagery/inference • Impersonal language • Nouns and verbs predominate

Analysing text types: Persuasion	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?	• To argue the case for a point of view • To make people do something/buy something • Forms of writing which purport to be pure information often include persuasive writing – e.g. leaflets, some travel writing, TV programme information, biased newspaper articles • Writing will draw reader into writers assumptions/prejudices • Writing will work on reader's feelings through use of rhetoric and value judgements
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	Illustrations sometimes used for emotive effect – e.g. flashy car to engender envy, photograph of child to tug at heartstrings Illustrations sometimes predominate Use of different sizes of print and fonts for impact Formal persuasion text has thesis – often in the form of point plus elaboration, then reiteration – summary and conclusion Humour gets read on writer's side – e.g. *Go to work on an egg*
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length • Typical cohesion devices	• Third person in formal persuasion text; often second person/imperative in advertising • Active voice predominates; passive used when identity of agent is not relevant – e.g. *It can clearly be stated that…* • Short sentences used for emphasis after series of longer, complex sentences – e.g. *Let's look at the facts* • Connectives in formal text are related to logic – e.g. *this shows, because, therefore, in fact* • In formal text, counter-arguments are set up to be demolished – e.g. *Some people might imagine that*

	• Parts of sentence often missing in advertising – e.g. *Because I'm worth it* • Punctuation/capitalisation often unorthodox or missing in advertising
Word level • Stock words and phrases • Specialised or typical vocabulary • Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices	• Value judgement words seek to influence reader – e.g. *obviously, vital, vandal, security forces, terrorists* • Adjectives/adverbs used for emotive/rhetorical effect • In advertising wordplay/rhythm/alliteration - e.g. *Buy British* • Unorthodox spelling – e.g. *Kwiksave* • Invented words – e.g. *Rentokil, docusoap*

Analysing text types: Discursive writing	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?	• To present arguments and information from differing points of view • To balance argument and counter-argument as fairly as possible, and to come to a reasoned conclusion • Commonly used for the discussion of moral/ethical issues – e.g. *What issues are raised by genetic engineering?* • Impersonal writing, which attempts to 'stay on the fence' until the conclusion
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	• Title may be a question – e.g. *Should human cloning be legalised?* • Statement of the issue, perhaps followed by preview of main arguments on each side; then arguments for, including supporting evidence; then arguments against, including supporting evidence; finally, a conclusion, which comes down on one side of the argument, including clinching evidence • Alternatively, the text could proceed through argument and counter-argument, through a series of points
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length • Typical cohesion devices	• Third person/perhaps p=first person in conclusion • Present tense • Mostly active voice; passive used when identity of agents is not relevant – e.g. *It has been argued that…* • Connectives relate to logic – e.g. *as a result, alternatively, however, for example* • Rhetorical questions may appear – e.g. *What can be said to those who argue that…? But is it right that…?* • Phrases which introduce evidence – *e.g. This view is supported by the fact that…*

	• Paragraphs linked by phrases which aid argument and counter-argument – e.g. *There are those who argue that…But some may say,…From these arguments it is clear that…* • Conclusion may be introduced by phrases such as *In conclusion…Weighing up these arguments, I… What conclusion can be drawn from…?*

Word level
  • Stock words and phrases
  • Specialised or typical vocabulary
  • Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices
	Adjectives and adverbs will be sued, since value judgements are likely to be involved
	Language of logic mixed with language of rhetoric – e.g. *Therefore, it is obvious to all…*

Analysing text types: Analysis, including essay writing	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?	• To analyse a topic/question or to present a reasoned response to a text/series of texts/other media products • In schools, used as a means of assessing pupil knowledge/understanding of the topic/texts/media products • Often in essay form: broad topic, to be addressed through attention to detail – e.g. *What were the reasons for the development of the cotton industry in Lancashire?*
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	• Title often invites debate – e.g. *How can one justify the continuing cost of space exploration?* • Statements of the issue, followed by preview of each point to be made in text, followed by each point in turn, followed by summary/conclusion • Writing takes into account the degree to which the reader is familiar with the subject – e.g. does not retell the plot of a novel • Using quotes to support points
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length • Typical cohesion devices	Third person; perhaps first person when giving summary of views, or when asked in title for personal response Present/past tense depending on the focus Active voice more common; passive used when identity of agent is not relevant or need not be repeated – e.g. *Sherlock Holmes is portrayed as…, The castles were strongly fortified…* Connectives often used for contrast/comparison in areas of debate – e.g. *whereas, though, while, unless, however, on the other hand, similarly, equally, also* Connectives used to establish cause and effect - e.g. *because, since, therefore, so, as a result*

	Connectives used to indicate the use of evidence – e.g. *as in..., I know this because…, this shows that…*

Word level
   • Stock words and phrases
   • Specialised or typical vocabulary
   • Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices
	Critical vocabulary related to subject under review – e.g. in literature: *personification, alliteration*…, in art: *texture*
	Vocabulary associated with value judgements – e.g. *convincing, amusing*

Analysing text types: Evaluation, including self - evaluation	
Purpose • What is its purpose? • Who is it for? • How will it be used? • What kind of writing is therefore appropriate?	• To record the strengths and weaknesses of a performance/product • Part of the plan – do – review – cycle, which might have an effect on future task setting/performance/target setting • Often used as part of assessment process, linked to objective based teaching – i.e. did you meet your objectives for this particular piece of work? • Sometimes more long term – e.g. evaluation of performance over module of work/term
Text level • Layout • Structure/organisation • Sequence	• Title contains value judgement – e.g. *How well did your construction work? How well are you progressing in this subject?* • Sometimes in list form, including strengths and weaknesses, followed by a summary, followed by targets for the future • Bullet points, numbered or lettered items • Subheadings used to focus attention of writer – e.g. *How much did the materials cost? How long did it take you to make it?*
Sentence level • Viewpoint (first/third person etc) • Prevailing tense • Active/passive voice • Typical sentence structure and length Typical cohesion devices	• First person; singular for individual evaluation; plural for group evaluation • Past tense to reflect on performance; present to reflect on personal/group characteristics; future for target setting • Active voice • Connectives used to balance strengths and weaknesses – e.g. *although, however, still, on the other hand* • Connectives used to indicate the use of evidence – e.g. *as in…, I know this because…, this shows that…*

	• Connectives used to establish cause and effect – e.g. *because, since, therefore, so, as a result* • Avoidance of meaningless evaluations and targets – e.g. *It didn't work very well, I will try harder with my spelling*

Word level
    • Stock words and phrases
    • Specialised or typical vocabulary
Elaborate/plain vocabulary choices
	• Technical vocabulary related to subject under review – e.g. in English, the spelling of unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words; in maths, the solving of simple quadratic equations
	• Vocabulary of comment – e.g. *We all felt that…, Some people in the group thought that…*
	• Vocabulary of constructive criticism – e.g. *John's suggestions, though inventive, were not generally accepted…, perhaps at this point, I could have…*

Section 4 Writing Style

Three particular aspects of sentence grammar which can help pupils improve their written expression are;

1   Connecting ideas

Pupils need to know how to link ideas to create a coherent whole in different kinds of writing. They need to know how ideas are linked, e.g. by comparison, by contrast, by order of event, by cause and effect etc. Pupils also need to know that connectives enable the writer to create coherent texts and express complex ideas.

There are two types of connectives: conjunctions (e.g. *because*) and connecting adverbs (e.g. *therefore*). Conjunctions link ideas within the same sentence; connecting adverbs link ideas which may be in different sentences or paragraphs. This distinction is important because it affects how connectives are used and how sentences are punctuated. Helping pupils to improve their writing involves enabling them to use both types of connective effectively.

Connectives as signposts

Adding	Cause and effect
and	because
also	so
as well as	therefore
moreover	thus
too	consequently
Sequencing	**Qualifying**
next	however
then	although
first, second, third	unless
finally	except
meanwhile	if
after	as long as
	apart from
	yet
Emphasising	**Illustrating**
above all	for example
in particular	such as
especially	for instance
significantly	as revealed by
indeed	in the case of
notably	
Comparing	**Contrasting**
equally	whereas
in the same way	instead of
similarly	alternatively
likewise	otherwise
as with	unlike
like	on the other hand

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2   Constructing complex sentences

The example and associated explanation below demonstrates how to change a simple sentence in to a complex sentence, and what is meant by subordination.

Example of subordination

1 The headteacher walked away quickly. He was late for a meeting.

2 The headteacher walked away quickly <u>because he was late for a meeting</u>.

3 <u>Because he was late for a meeting</u>, The headteacher walked away quickly.

4 The headteacher, <u>who was late for a meeting</u>, walked away quickly.

Explanation

1. Two sentences. Each one is a clause or simple sentence. In other words, each has a subject and a verb.
2. The two sentences have been joined using the word *because.* (This is a conjunction.) However, in the process of connecting the two sentences, one of the clauses has become more important than the other. The main clause in the sentence is *The headteacher walked away quickly* and the subordinate clause is *because he was late for a meeting.* It is subordinate to the first because it only makes sense when it is used with it. It depends on the first for its meaning. This is why the Americans call a subordinate clause a dependent clause, which is a useful way to think of it.
3. The interesting thing about subordinate clauses is that they can be very powerful if you move them around the sentence. Here, for example, the subordinate clause has been moved to the front of the sentence…
4. …and here it has been moved to the middle.

It is well worth pointing out, the use of commas within sentences.
The convention is that if you move a subordinate clause to the front or middle of a sentence, you put commas, acting as 'buffers' between it and the main clause. This small fact of punctuation is very handy. Lots of people have trouble knowing where to put the comma.

The single most powerful thing you can teach a competent but dull writer of sentences is to learn how to move subordinate clauses around a sentence.
The effect is immediate and impressive. It adds sophistication and maturity to the expression in a startling way. The main purpose, however, is not for style.
The advantage of subordinate clauses is that they enable the writer to describe the relationship between things more precisely and explicitly.

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3   Using the passive voice

In active sentences, you are told who did it and what they did.
In passive sentences, you are told what was done and by whom.

Active and passive

The Headteacher threw the action plan into the bin. (active)
The action plan was thrown into the bin (by the headteacher). (passive)

Active: subject (doer) – verb – object (done to).
Passive: subject (done to) – verb – by (doer) but the doer can be missed out, hence the use of parentheses.

Turning sentences from active to passive changes the normal object into a subject and the normal subject into a phrase starting with 'by', which can also be missed out. Politicians, inspectors, scientists and many journalists like passives: passives can be used to disown responsibility. The examples above exemplify this. It is possible by omitting the words in parentheses to avoid mentioning the headteacher and staff in the passive.

Converting into the passive voice

- We bombed Dresden.
- I was late for the meeting and it started half an hour late.
- We are coming to inspect your school next term.

- We bombed Dresden. *Dresden was bombed by us. Dresden was blitzed last night.*
- I was late for the meeting and it started half an hour late. *The meeting was delayed*
- We are coming to inspect your school tomorrow. *Your school has been identified for inspection tomorrow. Your school will be inspected.*

Classroom routines

- When you set a writing task, alert pupils to the writing conventions. Provide examples.
- Write with them as whole-class activity, talking aloud about the style and expression, so they know what to do.
- Brainstorm and display a list of suitable connectives for the topic.
- Give pupils hints about improving their style and expression. Every week, analyse a well-turned sentence from current work on the board and explain what you admire about it.
- Encourage pupils to reflect on the way they express sophisticated ideas and arguments in talk and how they might transfer this to their writing.
- Scaffold the writing, especially at first – e.g. by using writing frames, sentence starters and suggested connectives.
- Encourage peer drafting and editing.

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