

How to...

# Support the writing process

*'In most cases, don't give answers, give/reinforce strategies.'*

Each time you **give** the answer, you are making that pupil more dependent on you.

Writing frames etc. can be a very useful support if pupils are new to a particular type of writing.

However, pupils should become independent as soon as possible.



## Supporting the writing process

	Strategy	Why use it?
1	Provide a 'real life' example of the kind of text pupils will be expected to write.	Many pupils do not have experience of the range of texts they are expected to write in school. Unless they are given a good example, they may well be working in the dark. Success criteria can be created from a good example.
2	Provide an example of another pupil's work on this text type, which has good features.	If pupils develop their list of success criteria by looking at the work of peers, they are more likely to be able to reach a similar standard.
3	Provide an anonymous example of another pupil's work, on this text type, which has typical mistakes.	If pupils see where others have gone wrong, they are more likely to avoid these mistakes themselves. They may well pick up good points from the example as well.
4	Provide/generate success criteria for this piece of writing.	If pupils are clear about the ingredients for success, they are far more likely to be successful!
5	Provide/generate speaking frames, and get pupils to say the sentence patterns aloud.	Pupils will be far more fluent in their writing if they can <b>hear</b> the sentence patterns in their head. This will only happen if they have heard these sentence patterns spoken aloud by themselves/others, and have absorbed these language patterns.
6	Provide a tiered approach to progress in the writing task and share each step with the pupil.	If pupils can see how they are progressing, they will also be able to see what the next step for improvement should be. Marks, grades, levels etc. are a distraction from a focus on how to improve. Positive comments to identify progress are essential.
7	Encourage pupils to refer to the success criteria at regular intervals. Give selective ongoing oral feedback/support where appropriate.	If pupils only refer to the criteria at the end, it will be far more difficult to make improvements. Ongoing additions/alterations/improvements are far more manageable and motivating for pupils to tackle.

8	Ensure pupils know what text-type is expected: <i>recount, information, explanation, instruction, persuasion, discussion</i> (or a combination). Ensure they use the appropriate text-type skeleton/diagram.	Pupils will be working in the dark if they are not made clear about the audience/purpose of their writing. Learning six basic patterns is much less daunting than believing there are endless variations, and pupils can make useful links and connections between writing in different subjects.
9	Encourage the use of a plan for their writing, e.g. using a skeleton/diagram until they are confident.	If pupils have a visual overview of the task, they have a much better sense of where their writing is leading and how to make sense of it.
10	Ensure pupils know the connectives suitable for the text type(s) required.	Connectives provide the vital key to the language patterns expected in this context: e.g. 'because' is invaluable for <i>explanation</i> , 'On the other hand' is useful for <i>discussion</i> .
11	Encourage pupils to expand their vocabulary. Discourage the use or repetition of overused words. Encourage the use of appropriate technical terms.	Precision in writing comes from being able to choose from a wide vocabulary. 'Dumbing down' can result from a lack of appropriate challenge. Pupils will have a greater sense of achievement if their writing sounds convincing/powerful.
12	Use teacher/peer/self-assessment and insist pupils <b>use</b> the assessment to improve their writing.	Pupils will only improve if they know explicitly how to. Making a change for the better boosts self-esteem and helps to convince some pupils that they can improve.

All non-fiction writing is based on just six main formats: recount, information, explanation, instruction, persuasion and discussion. In your supporting role, you will help pupils develop strategies to write in these six formats.

An overall checklist of things to think about, like the following, can be useful. This can be adapted to suit your own context.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>What am I trying to achieve?</b>	Recount (e.g. write about what happened) Inform (e.g. describe a place/person/object) Explain (e.g. write about why something happens/happened) Instruct (e.g. write about how to do/make something) Persuade (e.g. write your views on a topic) Discuss (e.g. write about different views on a topic)
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Who am I writing for?</b>	Friends/relatives Peer group Adult expert General public Private/public
<b>Layout/structure</b>	<b>What is the best way to organise?</b>	Headings/subheadings Bullet points Diagrams Letter Essay Chronological/non-chronological etc.
<b>Style/tone</b>	<b>What kind of language should I use?</b>	Formal/informal First/third person pronoun (I, he, she, it) Past/present tense Active/passive verb

Adapted from DfEE National Literacy Strategy poster.

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