

The Writing Framework

Practical advice about how to teach writing in response to the July 2025 recommendations



The Writing Framework

In July 2025, the Department for Education released ‘The writing framework’ to support schools in meeting the expectations of the EYFS statutory framework and the national curriculum. It gives practical advice about how to teach writing in reception, KS1 and KS2.

At The Literacy Company, we understand the demands of teaching writing and the importance of mastering the fundamentals as well as ensuring pupil engagement and enthusiasm. The writing framework states, ‘The best way to teach pupils to write is to master sentences’. This principle is a cornerstone of our training and products.

We’ve produced this guide to support schools, both with a summary of the framework, and also to share how **Pathways to Write** meets the guidance and expectations it sets out.



10 Key Messages for Schools

1. Writing is important for school and life for opportunities, developing thinking, communication or fostering creativity.
2. Both transcription and composition are necessary for proficient writing; however, this places demand on working memory.
3. Oral composition and mastering transcription should be the focus in reception. The reception year builds the foundations for writing.
4. Transcription (handwriting and spelling) is important. Pupils should gain automaticity through explicit teaching, extensive practice and effective feedback.
5. The best way to teach pupils to write is to master sentences.
6. Pupils create coherent texts through mastering sentences then paragraphs; a gradual release from teacher to pupil develops competent writers.
7. Teachers and leaders need to be ambitious for all pupils, ensuring high quality teaching and an understanding of specific barriers.
8. Writing should be taught in the wider curriculum - this will prepare pupils transferring to secondary school.
9. Writing leads should be experts in the school's writing curriculum which should be effective and well-sequenced from reception.
10. There are several statutory assessments throughout primary school. Although the KS1 tests are non-statutory, the STA will continue to develop materials and guidance.

The Importance of Writing

Learning to write is one of the hardest challenges pupils face in school but it is vitally important. Pupils who find it difficult to express ideas in writing are likely to struggle across the curriculum.

Writing is a key skill throughout school and life; it opens doors for education and employment.

Writing offers opportunities to express attitudes, opinions, judgements and ideas.

It helps thinking and learning; pupils consider information more deeply when writing and it helps cement learning in long-term memory.

Writing is important in social communication: emails, messages, social media and in developing relationships.



Writing is a highly creative process that allows pupils to create imaginary worlds, entertain others and paint with words. It is a form of self expression.

Pupils must be taught dialogue, drawing on a vocabulary and grammar beyond spoken language, to develop critical thinking skills and be able to write with increasing complexity.

Reading enhances pupils' grasp of the craft of writing but writing also helps pupils better understand the authors they read through the study of complex sentence structures.

To be a proficient writer, pupils must develop both composition and transcription. The 'not so simple view of writing' highlights the importance of planning and reviewing, considering audience and purpose.

The Importance of Reception

School leaders should understand the important role that reception plays in building the foundations for writing. These foundations support children throughout primary school and eventually underpin their success in the end of key stage tests in year 6, preparing them effectively for secondary education.

Teachers should introduce regular, structured handwriting lessons early in reception, progressing from motor skills development to fluent letter formation (taught separately from phonics).

Teachers should focus on building the foundations: transcription and composition. This means keeping things simple and doing things well.

Teachers should use writing dictation tasks to help pupils focus on transcription skills rather than composing.

Teachers should encourage pupils to compose and punctuate simple sentences orally before writing them down.

Effective writing begins with mastering transcription (handwriting and spelling) and oral composition. These should be the focus in reception, rather than introducing complex tasks too early.

How does Pathways to Write meet the recommendations in EYFS?

A focus on oracy

3- and 4-year-olds outcome: To draw/make a bus and be able to talk about where the Naughty Bus went

Children in reception outcome: To create a new journey for the Naughty Bus by creating a story map and writing captions/sentences describing the journey of the bus

Opportunities to focus on phonics application in sessions

3- and 4-year-olds: Model labelling the characters and ask children to identify the initial sounds. In a small group, children could choose to give some of the characters their own name and tell you the letters you need. Ask children to make their name using magnetic letters or by writing it.

Children in reception: Using magnetic letters, choose some of the characters to label. Ask the pupils to come out and do the same. Encourage them to segment the words and show their understanding of each part e.g., by adding sound button or physically representing graphemes and diagraphs using phonic strategies.

Sentence building activities

Give the pupils images of other characters that could be queueing at the bus stop linked to their current phonic phase e.g., fish, cow, sheep, dog.
The pupils can choose 2/3 images and draw themselves and a friend waiting for the bus. They will need cards with the words I, am, at, the, bus, stop, we, are, all. Ask them to build a sentence using the cards and segment for spelling when writing the character label/ name.

Links to wider curriculum areas

Mathematics	Understanding of the World	Expressive Arts and Design
• Sorting vehicles • Number parking bays for vehicles • Build London/town and explore 3D shapes • Make a 3D London bus • How many people on the bus? How many if 1 gets off? • Paying for bus fare using coins and matching numicon	• Make a pond in the builder's tray and explore floating and sinking • Have a class fish to observe and look after • Take Naughty Bus outside into school grounds. What plants and mini beasts does he see on his adventure?	• Singing different songs: The wheels on the bus/London Bridge is falling down • Driving vehicles through paint and on to paper • Use junk modelling to make London buses • Home role play - add images and props from the book

Improving Transcription

Transcription—handwriting and spelling—is a foundational part of writing and should be taught explicitly, regularly and in a carefully sequenced way from the start of reception. Writing fluency depends on pupils being able to transcribe quickly and accurately, and pupils should not be expected to write at length until transcription is secure.

"The importance of handwriting in developing pupils' writing cannot be overstated."

Building writing foundations
Ensure pupils have good posture, pencil grip and control from reception.

Teach handwriting clearly and consistently
Expect consistently high standards and address incorrect letter formation before moving on.

Support individual needs
Handwriting can be taught effectively to the whole class with additional support during practice time for those who need it.

"Most children need systematic teaching, with opportunities to practise and reinforce their spelling knowledge."

Start with phonics
Systematic phonics teaching from reception provides the foundation for accurate spelling and should continue throughout primary school.

Use dictation regularly
This helps pupils practise applying their spelling knowledge in context and strengthens memory recall.

Teach spelling patterns and word structure
Build pupils' understanding of orthography, morphology and etymology to support long-term spelling accuracy.



Pathways to Spell

Pathways to Spell is designed for whole class teaching of the primary national curriculum objectives for spelling from year 1 to year 6.

It is a comprehensive and progressive programme with a clear, research-based teaching sequence. Each week combines consolidation of previously taught spelling patterns and rules alongside new teaching with opportunities to reflect on learning. This approach supports pupils in developing key metacognitive strategies.

Find out more about Pathways to Spell and download a sample pack

Composition

Effective writing requires strong sentence control, purposeful use of grammar and punctuation, and rich vocabulary. These elements work together to support composition, enabling pupils to write with clarity, purpose and impact. The framework advocates integrated teaching where grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure are taught through relevant contexts and real writing tasks with meaningful purposes and audiences.

"Only once the concept of a sentence is understood will paragraphs and longer pieces of writing make sense."

Support pupils to understand sentences

Sentence level teaching that focuses on developing pupils' understanding of how to construct sentences should be a fundamental component of your writing curriculum.

Quality is more important than quantity

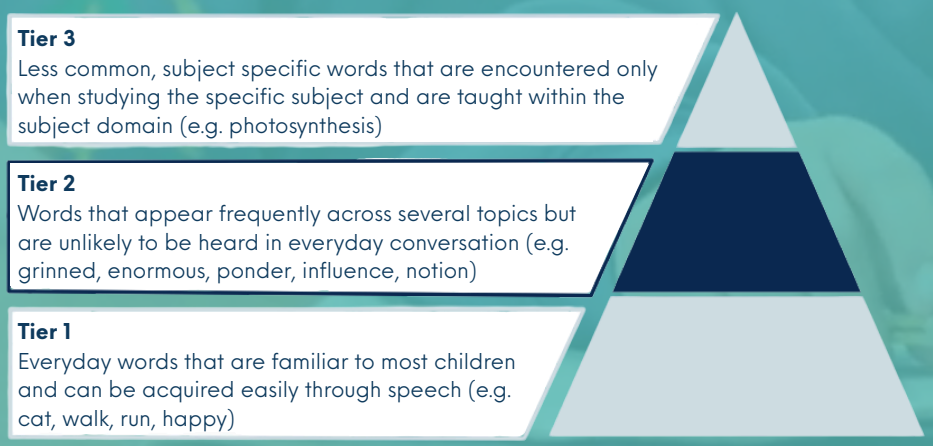
Pupils need to master the foundations of writing – handwriting, spelling and sentence construction. They should not be expected to write at length before they are ready.

Encourage oral composition and oral rehearsal

Composing orally before writing reduces cognitive demand.

Pupils benefit from explicit vocabulary instruction

Being able to draw on a broad and deep vocabulary when writing allows pupils to communicate accurately, concisely and creatively.



The Writing Process

Understanding that the writing process involves different phases will aid pupils further in composing. Writing is not a linear process and pupils do not need to apply every phase of the writing process for all types of writing or at all times. They will often move back and forth between phases, altering their plans and revising as they go.

Planning



Generating ideas, setting goals, gathering information.

Drafting



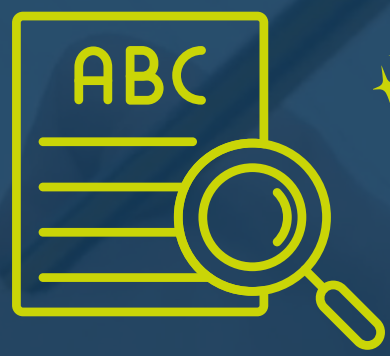
Writing down key ideas, setting out a structure for writing.

Revising



Making changes in light of feedback and self-evaluation.

Editing



Making changes to ensure writing is accurate and coherent, checking spelling and grammar.

Sharing



Presenting work for the target audience.

How can Pathways help?

Pathways to Write is a proven methodology built around units of work which develop writing composition skills through the mastery approach. The units, for use with pupils from EYFS to year 6, provide clear detailed lesson plans and resources, linked to high-quality texts to ensure engaging and purposeful English lessons.

Supporting Every Writer

It is essential that pupils who find the writing process difficult have access to high-quality teaching, well-structured lessons and tailored scaffolds to ensure they are given the best possible opportunity to achieve.

Identifying these pupils as early as possible is crucial to prevent gaps in learning from widening. Regular formative assessment should be used to anticipate difficulties before they arise, ensuring a clear and targeted support plan is implemented promptly.

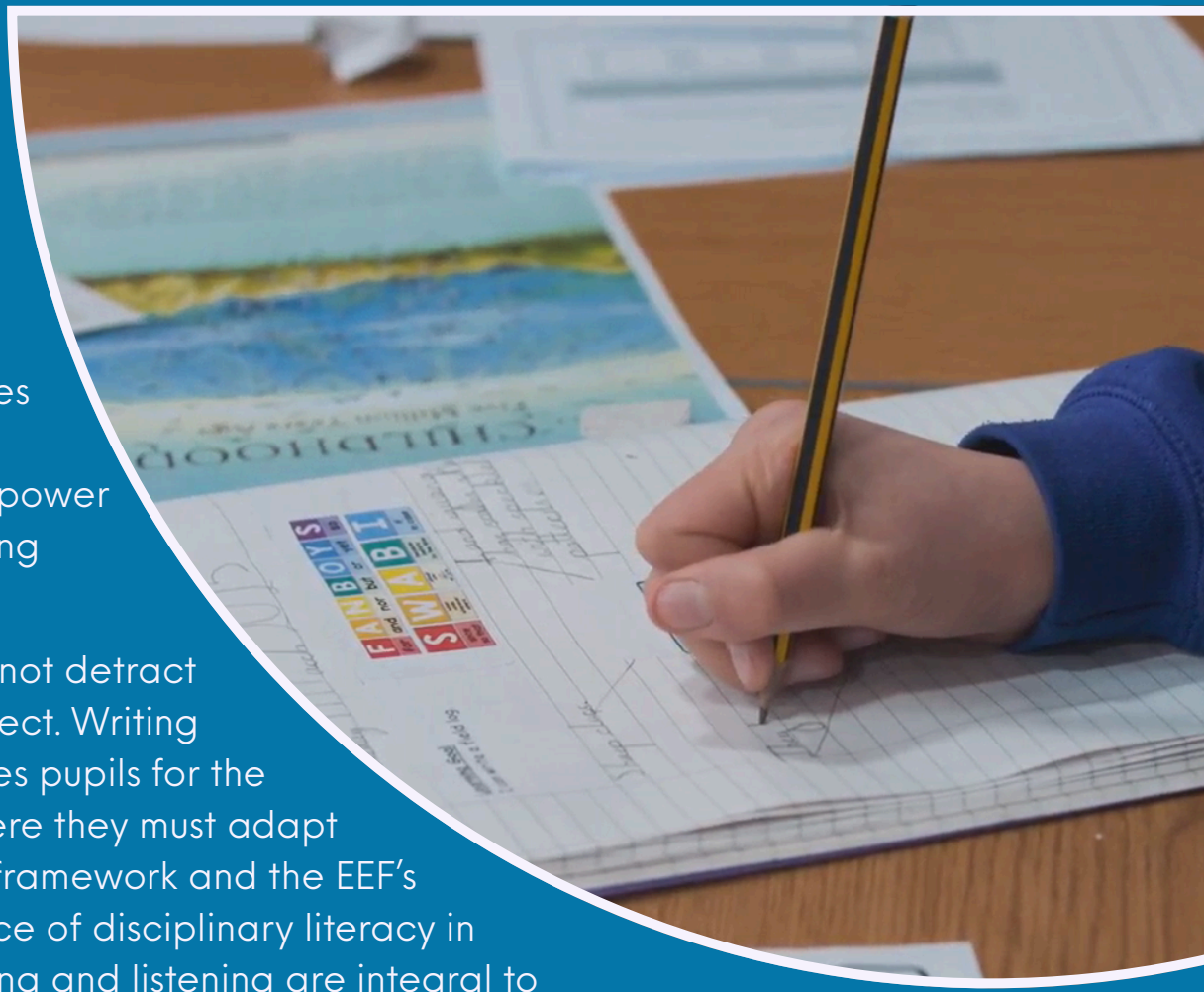
Pupils with specific writing difficulties and more complex needs should continue to be taught writing through effective, inclusive teaching that maintains high expectations and provides appropriate support to help them succeed.

High-quality teaching across the curriculum helps reduce the need for extra literacy support. However, some pupils will still require additional help to make progress, through through high-quality, structured and targeted interventions.

Pathways to Progress is a writing intervention programme designed to be delivered in addition to pupils' English lessons.

The programme provides targeted CPD each half term on the key skills to be taught. Sessions will initially focus on consolidating the previous year's learning objectives, but as the year progresses, they will support pupils in achieving age-related expectations with some pre-learning included.

Writing Across the Curriculum and KS3



The writing framework raises the importance of teaching writing not only in the context of English lessons, but also across the wider curriculum. Writing across the curriculum offers pupils useful opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills more independently and with less scaffolding than in dedicated English lessons. Teachers should ensure that approaches such as handwriting, planning and terminology are consistent across subjects. Embedding the power of writing as a tool for thinking and remembering throughout the curriculum is essential.

However, writing tasks in other subjects should not detract from the intended focus of learning in that subject. Writing across the curriculum in primary school prepares pupils for the challenging transition to secondary school where they must adapt their writing skills for each subject. The writing framework and the EEF's Improving Literacy both highlight the importance of disciplinary literacy in secondary education. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are integral to understanding and engaging with the full range of subject areas in secondary school.

Supporting KS3 with disciplinary literacy

- Support whole-school teams in developing fluent reading skills
- Explore progression in the core reading comprehension skills
- Deliver research-based reading training for teachers
- Model lessons and example planning
- Implement recommendations for vocabulary teaching
- Develop a consistent approach to writing across the school
- Embed disciplinary writing skills

Leadership and Management of Writing

A positive writing culture "should emphasise a commitment to the success of all pupils, ensuring that none falls behind."

The framework recommends that a subject leader becomes an **expert in the school's writing curriculum**. They need to understand both the physical and cognitive aspects of writing development, how to assess pupils effectively and how to address the next steps this process reveals. To develop the expertise and skills, they must have time to fulfil the role.

To support leaders with this, **Pathways to Write** provides a robust but flexible writing curriculum that allows for consistency across the whole school whilst empowering teachers. Subject leaders can use the overviews to choose high quality texts that reflect the wider curriculum, the locality of the school and the interest of the pupils. It is clear to see where skills and genres are studied and how progression is built in.

How does Pathways to Write ensure consistency across a whole school?

- 15-session structure within each unit of work
- Mastery approach
- Built-in progression within and across year groups
- Shared terminology embedded across the school



Assessment

“Both formative and summative assessments are essential for a comprehensive understanding of pupils' writing and for supporting their development effectively.”



Formative	Summative
• Delivering daily classroom activities • Providing ongoing feedback • Identifying additional support needs • Informing teaching	• Establishing a clear picture of pupils’ progress against a set of standards • Using assessment to inform planning and teaching • Building summative assessment points into each year group

Further documentation is provided on our platform to support whole school consistency and assessment:

- Unit overviews with clear skill progression
- Wider curriculum links overview
- Assessment materials
- Exemplification for all year groups at EXS and GDS to clarify expectations
- Materials to guide planning adaptations
- Progression documents to support development of genres
- Further training available to teachers, teaching assistants and subject leaders

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