



# Shared Writing

## Key principles of Shared Writing

**Shared Writing demonstrates the following:**

- what being a writer means: the composing, the oral rehearsing, the writing and re-reading;
- how the writer orchestrates all these skills at the point of writing;
- how the writing system works at word-, sentence- and text-level in the range of different written forms.

The teacher works with the children to demonstrate, explore and discuss the choices writers make. The writing is based on the range of text types specified for the term in the *Framework*.

The shared experience scaffolds the writing process, helping children understand and apply specific skills and strategies. Explicit links are made between reading and writing by using written texts as models for writing.

The objectives selected will determine the specific teaching focus and the type of writing produced. In Reception and Year 1, this may be limited in extent, e.g. a two-sentence caption, a list, a rhyme, a brief recount of a visit, or a simple character description.

The writing modelled will be beyond the level of the majority of children's independent writing in order to demonstrate the way that writers work.

## Developing children's independence as writers

Writing is a complex activity, and children need a scaffold to enable them to become more independent as writers.

Shared Writing is a blend of demonstration and participation, enabling children to understand what being a writer means.

Talk underpins Shared Writing and is the medium for children to practise composition and explore the writing process through active involvement.

Over time, children will begin to incorporate into their writing, in a broad range of contexts, the strategies modelled for them.

## The role of the teacher

**During Shared Writing it is important to:**

- establish an audience and purpose for the writing and discuss, at an appropriate level, how this will determine the structure, grammatical features and content;
- focus the teaching on specific, limited objectives;
- demonstrate within a constant flow of talk;
- rehearse sentences before writing them down, thus giving insights into how to compose in sentences;
- encourage the automatic habit of basic elements, e.g. capital letters and full stops;
- constantly and cumulatively re-read to gain a flow from one sentence into another and also to check for errors and make improvements;
- explain the decisions and choices writers make;
- keep the session well paced to ensure children's attention is not lost;
- check for misconceptions and deal with them;
- occasionally make deliberate errors, using this strategy sparingly to reinforce specific teaching points.

# Shared Writing: teaching sequence

## Identify objectives

- Drawn from the *Framework* and translated into pupil targets.



## Establish purpose and context for writing

(WHOLE CLASS)

- Teacher uses a shared text, cross-curricular learning or a shared experience to generate talk as preparation for writing.



## Shared Writing

(WHOLE CLASS)

- **Demonstration** – teacher models the process of writing.
- **Teacher scribing** – teacher and children collaborate to compose.
- **Supported composition** – children compose, write and show teacher as part of whole-class session.



## Independent and Guided Writing

(INDIVIDUALS, PAIRS OR GROUPS)

- **Independent** – children write, applying what they have been taught.
- **Guided** – teacher works with ability groups, focusing on specific group targets.



## Plenary

- Teacher reviews key objectives and decides whether they have been achieved.
- Teacher involves children in reflecting on their own progress.



## Application

- Teacher provides opportunities for the learning to be applied in independent writing across the curriculum and in a range of contexts.
- Teacher establishes the expectation that children will apply what they have learned to their independent writing.



## Identify objectives

If, for example, you have identified these objectives from Year 1 Term 1 of the *Framework*...

*Sentence 8 To begin using full stops to demarcate sentences.*

*Sentence 9 To use a capital letter for the personal pronoun 'I' and for the start of a sentence.*

the pupil target will be:

*I can write a sentence using a capital letter and a full stop correctly.*

## Establish purpose and context for writing

### Using a shared text

You have, for example, read *Where's My Teddy?* in Shared Reading and talked with the children about what it feels like to be lost or to lose something.

Tell a simple story about losing something precious and ask the children to finish it orally, before you move into writing.



# ice and teaching strategies

## Cross-curricular links

As part of a cross-curricular topic on toys, for example, you have been looking at information books in Shared Reading sessions and have drawn the children's attention to captions and their function.

Introduce a purpose for writing by talking about an unusual toy that you have brought in and by thinking of a caption for it that could be used in a display.

## Shared experience

For example, an author has visited the school as part of Book Week. You have taken photos and now want to make a class book to record the event.

You show the photos to the children and talk about what they can remember, structuring the talk to produce a simple recounting.

## Shared Writing: Demonstration

You have a clear idea of what you are going to write before starting, and as you are writing you articulate the process and emphasise specific teaching points related to your objective.

*Now I'm going to write the story that I told you. I'm going to have three sentences in my story. I'm going to use a capital 'I' because we always use a capital 'I' when we are writing about ourselves ... I have written my first idea so I'm going to put a full stop at the end. Let me read that back to myself to see if it makes sense.*

## Shared Writing: Teacher scribing

You involve the children in the composition by asking for their ideas and structuring opportunities for talk. Take ideas from the children's paired talk and involve them in refining the ideas before you scribe.

*You said 'in the garden'. I could say 'I found it in the garden'. Which one of those sounds like a sentence?*

## Shared Writing: Supported composition

This strategy can be used after teacher demonstration or teacher scribing, or both, to give children an opportunity to write in a very structured context before they 'have a go' independently. It would usually take place on the carpet, with children sharing whiteboards with a partner.

*Talk to your partner for two minutes about the thing you're going to write about that you've lost. ... Now*

*I want you to each write a sentence starting 'I lost my ...'. Read your sentences to each other and check that they make sense.*

## Independent Writing

Give the children the opportunity to put what they have learned into practice as soon as possible.

*Yesterday you drew a picture of your favourite toy. Now you are going to write a caption for your picture. Remember to say the whole sentence to yourself before you write, to use a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end.*

## Guided Writing

This provides opportunities to focus in on children's particular needs or group targets. You may decide to:

- work with children who are below the level of the majority of the class to 'hold them in' by reinforcing key objectives covered in whole-class sessions;
- work with children who are above the level of the majority of the class to challenge and extend their writing;
- work with children who have completed some independent writing, responding to their work and guiding them to make improvements or corrections. Children can review their progress towards their group targets.

As the children are writing independently, you observe, monitor and prompt them to use the skills and strategies they already know.

## Application

Children have written labels in Shared Writing and are asked to label their own models as part of a class display.

After writing instructions in Shared Writing, children then write instructions in the role-play area, e.g. how to cook a pizza.

After planting seeds, children are asked to write three or four complete sentences to explain what they did, checking that sentences make sense and capital letters and full stops are used.

# Engaging all pupils in Shared Writing

Shared Writing should involve plenty of interactivity, particularly with young children. The following strategies offer opportunities for developing children's speaking and listening skills, and for helping them to be involved and engaged in group and whole-class sessions.

## Paired talk

Give the children a minute or two to share ideas with a partner.

- *What do you think the final phoneme is?*
- *Where do you think the full stops should go?*
- *Make up a sentence that tells us what the troll is like.*



## Drama

Use drama to lead into writing.

- For example, act the part of the troll while the children ask the character questions.
- Re-enact Mrs Wishy-Washy using children instead of the animals.
- Wear masks to explore character; try using voice and adding gestures.



## Story props

Use cut-outs, puppets, toys, etc., to support the talk.

- Re-tell part of a story using stick puppets, children playing parts.
- Put a series of pictures in the correct order when writing a recipe.



## Show me

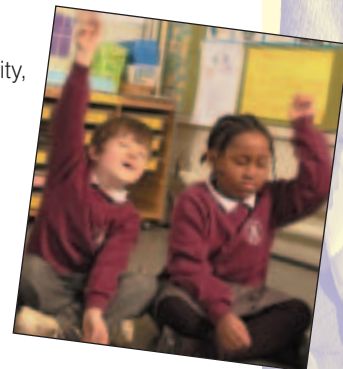
Give the children a quick task to which they can all respond, and you can instantly check understanding.

- *Use a whiteboard to write an idea.*
- *Say a word, count the phonemes, hold up the correct number of fingers.*
- *Write a letter with your finger in the sky.*
- *Close your eyes, listen for the sentences, put up your hand when you hear the end of the sentence.*

## Attention-holders

Give children a 'quick fire' activity, which calls for an active response, to catch and retain their attention.

- *Clap the syllables in this word.*
- *Count the number of words and spaces in this sentence.*
- *Look out for the full stops while I am writing. Make sure I write three whole sentences.*



Particular questions can be directed to specific children to ensure their involvement.

## Get up and go

In addition, children could come to the flip chart and 'have a go' at spelling a word or correcting a deliberate error, providing this does not affect the pace of the lesson. Children could also:

- make a human sentence from words on cards;
- put the full stops in, using a piece of plasticine or a repositionable note.



This pamphlet supports the Shared Writing section of ELS training day 1. See fliers 'Developing Early Writing' and 'Engaging all Pupils, Talking in Class'; NLS 1999 training module: *Teaching and Learning Strategies* (with video); additional handout 'Opportunities for Drama in the Framework of Objectives';

● [www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/literacy](http://www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/literacy)