

Writing:

What have pupils covered by the end of KS2?



The National Curriculum for Writing outlines what pupils should be taught in the following elements:

- **Composition** (sentence and text level)
- **Transcription** (spelling, handwriting etc)
- **Vocabulary, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling** (technical accuracy)

Writing experiences:

Pupils will have encountered writing as a key part of all curriculum subjects. They will have experience of short writing tasks, such as a paragraph or response to a question. They will also have had experience of planning and executing extended writing tasks, such as a short story or balanced argument. These tasks will have been undertaken over several days or even weeks. There is no requirement in the primary curriculum for pupils to write under timed or tested conditions. Pupils will have had experience of being tested on their technical knowledge working towards the completion of the end of Key Stage 2 Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test.

Text types:

There are no specifications for which text types pupils must be taught. However, most pupils will have had experience of writing the following text types:

- short stories and other narratives
- non-chronological reports or explanations
- formal and informal letters
- persuasive texts e.g. adverts, speeches
- balanced argument or debates
- poems and playscripts

Spelling and vocabulary:

The National Curriculum requirements for teaching spelling are extensive across Key Stages 1 and 2. Full details can be found in English Appendix 1. Pupils should have a confident mastery of most high frequency words and be able to apply their knowledge of spelling rules to their own writing, particularly prefixes and suffixes. They will have been taught to use phonics as a first strategy for spelling unfamiliar words and to proof read their own work for spelling errors.

Words **most** pupils should be able to spell: experiment, knowledge, question, appear, believe, different

Words **many** pupils should be able to spell: achieve, necessary, temperature, thorough, language, accident

Words **some** pupils should be able to spell: conscience, deceive, embarrass, amateur, accommodate, criticise

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils will have been taught a significant body of technical content and will have had the opportunity to apply this in a range of short and extended writing tasks. The key strands of technical content are as follows:

Composition

- Choose the appropriate form for their writing
- Plan using a brief
- Apply their knowledge of text conventions
- Draft in note form
- Write accurately and with precision
- Evaluate against success criteria
- Edit for impact
- Proof read and correct simple errors

Transcription

- Write legibly, fluently and in joined handwriting
- Apply taught spelling rules, including prefixes and suffixes
- Distinguish between homophones and other words often confused
- Learn the spelling of some words from memory
- Use a dictionary and thesaurus

Grammar

- Understand and use formal and informal structures
- Use the perfect, progressive and simple forms of verbs
- Use a variety of grammatical structures to vary sentences
- Recognise and use a range of grammatical terms and word classes

Punctuation

- Use basic punctuation consistently and accurately (e.g. full stop, capital letter, comma for list and to separate clauses and ! ? () - " ")
- Begin to secure the use of hyphen to avoid ambiguity, bullet points and : ;
- Recognise and correct simple errors in their own writing.

The National Curriculum outlines certain writing attributes that are essential for pupils to master across Key Stage 2. A pupil securely working at Expected Standard will have developed all these attributes:

To achieve Expected Standard by the end of KS2, there are certain writing attributes that are essential:

- a good command of spoken English
- the ability to be self-critical
- knowledge and experience of reading and writing a range of text types
- high levels of accuracy in basic transcription (e.g. spelling, basic punctuation etc.)

As well as a teacher assessed judgement for Writing, pupils also sit a Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test at the end of Key Stage 2. This informs teachers' knowledge of how secure pupils' technical understanding is. The result of this test is not included in a pupils' combined score for Reading, Writing and Mathematics but can be used to support teacher assessment for Writing.

The vast majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 should be able to plan, compose and execute short and extended writing tasks, selecting the appropriate form and conveying their ideas with precision.

An Expected Standard writer should:

- write for a range of purposes and audiences in an appropriate form
- in narratives, describe characters and atmosphere
- use dialogue to advance the story
- choose and use appropriate grammatical structures, depending on the type of text
- write cohesively
- use verb tenses correctly and consistently
- use largely accurate punctuation and spelling

What might be different at Greater Depth?

- Greater precision in the selection of vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Deliberate choices about punctuation for impact
- High degree of accuracy in spelling
- Consistent selection of appropriate register
- Draws on reading to inform writing

The example below is typical of the level of an Expected Standard writer at the end of KS2:

On the morning of their coronation, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth hired someone to kill Banquo, as he knew Lady Macbeth and Macbeth had killed the king. Macbeth hired someone because he couldn't take the excruciating pain of ruining Macbeth and Banquo's friendship. In fear of their own lives, King Duncan's sons ran away! After their coronation Macbeth and Lady Macbeth trudged back to the misty murky moors where Macbeth and the late Banquo saw the cackling witches. Suddenly three ugly hags appeared, the same ugly hags that read the prophecy.

Taken from the KS2 Exemplification portfolio for Morgan, Expected Standard

The example below is typical of the level of a Greater Depth writer at the end of KS2:

Every dancer has unique feet with a varying length, shape, arch, flexibility, extension and strength; consequently, most pointe shoe companies make more than one model of a shoe. Sometimes they are custom tailored for the best shoes. Occasionally ballerinas can go through more than one pair in one performance. There are two main parts of a pointe shoe:

- The box - the front end of the shoe that supports the dancer's toes.
- The shank - rigid material to stiffen the sole to support the arch for going en pointe.

Taken from the KS2 Exemplification portfolio for Frankie, Greater Depth Standard

The Test:

The Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test assesses pupils' security in the taught technical content of the Key Stage 2 curriculum. This is made up of a Spelling paper and a mixed

practice paper. Pupils need to achieve around 36/70 for Expected Standard and around 55/70 for Higher Standard. Many questions are multiple choice or 'identify an item in a sentence' questions.

Writing:

Likely gaps and misconceptions



Every pupil will have different strengths and areas for improvement in writing by the end of the primary phase. Some areas of writing are notoriously more challenging for pupils to embed than others. Listed below are some of the most common misconceptions and gaps in understanding for pupils in Writing by the end of Key Stage 2:

Oral language structures

Pupils' writing quality is often compromised by habitual misconceptions in their spoken English. These are some of the most common:

- double negatives (e.g. can't not)
- commonly confused word pairs (e.g. them/those)
- use of a/an
- relative pronouns (e.g. who, which, that)

Verb forms

Also commonly arising as an issue in spoken language, many pupils' written work is undermined by inaccuracies in selection of verb forms. Here are some examples of common errors:

- was/were
- done/did
- seen/saw
- bring/brought
- run/ran

Spelling

The quality of pupils' spelling is notoriously variable and is an important life skill for future education and employment.

Often, pupils will learn a spelling rule or pattern and become proficient in a tested context but not be able to apply this in their writing. Pupils can also struggle to spot their own errors when proof reading their work.

Concision and precision

For some pupils, while they are able to confidently convey their ideas and thoughts, they struggle to do this concisely or with the precision that is required of academic writing in secondary education. Teaching pupils to reduce their ideas, selecting the most precise vocabulary and grammatical structure, is an important part of learning to write for an audience.

Tone and register

Pupils are immersed in informal language structures throughout the primary phase, through a rich diet of predominantly narrative early reading texts and informal interactions with their peers.

This can make learning the grammatical structures and conventions of formal or academic writing more difficult to grasp.

Composition and cohesion

All pupils will have had regular opportunities to complete short and extended writing tasks throughout Key Stage 2 but, for some pupils, composing and executing an entire text independently is more challenging. This can result in parts of the text – usually the ending – being rushed or not fully explained. It can also compromise the overall flow and cohesion of a text.

The Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test also gives us an idea about those areas of technical knowledge that pupils find particularly difficult to grasp. These include:

- recall of grammatical terms and word classes
- application of basic concepts in different types of task (e.g. insert, identify, rewrite questions)
- recognising and using a wide range of subordinating conjunctions (e.g. since, although)
- explaining the impact of punctuation on the meaning of a passage

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