

How to support your child with writing

Writing is one of the most challenging things we ask children to do. Below are some simple ideas that will support writing skills that are taught in each school phase. They are easy ways to support your child's writing development at home.

One of the most important ways to support and develop writing is to encourage your child to read regularly (to an adult) for a minimum of 15 minutes each day. Reading reinforces sentence structures as well as developing vocabulary, spelling and sparking imagination. Children also love being read to, so if you can, try to fit this into a daily schedule. Reading also supports an overall feeling of well-being.

Foundation Stage

Early years are where the foundations of writing skills are developed. It is important to build positivity around writing so that your child enjoys the experience. Be led by your child and write during play, so as not to put them off by expecting too much too soon. Drawing activities, chalk patterns, cutting out shapes and tracing patterns and pictures are all important skills needed to develop fine motor control for writing. Have pens, pencils, paints and paper available to play and experiment with during play.

Phonics practise will help support letter formation, pronunciation and spelling. Lots of praise will encourage your young child in developing phonetic knowledge. To encourage your child to have a go themselves, demonstrate to your child that writing is a useful skill - this is one of the best things that you can do. Involve your child with shopping lists, job lists etc. and encourage them to write lists of their own, such as favourite toys, games or foods.

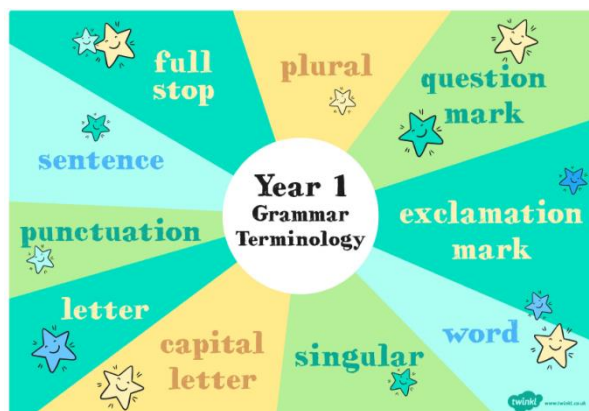
Useful websites to support Foundation Stage:

[Phonics Play](#)
[EYFS Literacy Activities](#)
[CBBC Puzzles](#)
[Oxford Owl](#)
[Dough Disco](#)

Key Stage 1 (years 1 and 2)

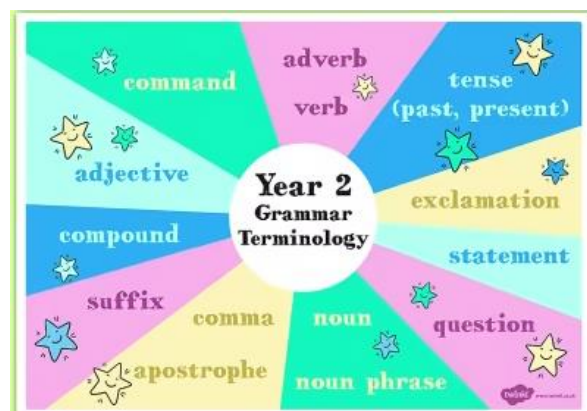
Children at this age find it difficult to sit for prolonged periods of time, so writing activities are best kept short, and where possible, active. Try and link any writing activities to practical activities that they have done; such as making a drink or healthy snack, retelling a game they have played or writing a set of instructions. Instructions use short sentences with little detail therefore children find them easier to follow. This helps teach them about chronology and writing sentences for an audience. Instructions start with imperative verbs (e.g. put, take, find) which direct the reader. Simple letters, such as 'thank you' letters, are also a good way to introduce writing for a purpose.

When writing make sure that your child uses full stops, capital letters and finger spaces between words. Once they have mastered this, help check that their sentences develop by adding in effective action words (verbs) and adjectives to describe the noun. E.g: The dog ran to her owner. The excited dog sprinted to her owner.



Useful websites for years 1 and 2:

[Oxford Owl](#)
[BBC Bitesize](#)
[Oak Academy](#)
[Literacy Trust](#)
[Handwriting Help](#)



Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)

Grouping sentences into paragraphs is a skill that is developed in lower key stage 2. Encourage your child to use books and the internet to research subjects they are interested in as this helps develop their understanding of the structure of non-fiction texts and how paragraphs are built up. Look at how paragraphs usually develop just one or two main ideas. A new paragraph introduces a new idea or a new scene (in a story). When writing non-fiction, encourage your child to use headings and subheadings to help organise their writing. Encourage your child to edit and improve their work, looking at sentence structure and vocabulary choices.

Children will be developing their understanding of conjunctions to join a main and subordinate clause:

e.g. The book was very interesting. The book was very interesting *because* it was about cycling, *which I am really keen on*. Check that pronouns are used (they, their, he, she etc.) so that writing is not repetitive e.g. Zebras live in Africa, they are black and white and their favourite food is grass.



Useful websites for years 3 and 4:

[BBC Bitesize](#)
[Oxford Owl Year 3](#)
[Oxford Owl Year 4](#)
[Oak Academy Year 3](#)
[Oak Academy Year 4](#)



Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6)

Children in upper key stage two need to develop their own voice, being aware of the purpose of their writing as well as their audience. Often, children engage in writing about specific issues, such as conservation, pollution, climate change etc. Encouraging your child to write persuasively is a great way to motivate them to write. Technology can help your child find information to take notes from and to look at pamphlets etc. to obtain ideas from, for layout and content. Encourage an upper key stage 2 child to use words such as might, should, could, will, may (modal verbs) to help make persuasive points. Sentence structure is important in KS2 and children should be experimenting with using different clauses within their work: As the rain continued, the garden became too wet to play on (subordinate clause, main clause). My bike, which is very old now, is broken (embedded clause). Support your child to use a variety of punctuation used in KS2 (commas, exclamation marks, questions marks, brackets, semi-colons and colons), as well as editing their work to improve their word choices. Variety of vocabulary can really develop children's writing, a rich and varied language comes most naturally from reading a range of age-appropriate books.



Useful websites for years 5 and 6:

[BBC Bitesize](#)
[Oak Academy Year 5](#)
[Oak Academy Year 6](#)
[Oxford Owl Reading for Pleasure](#)
[Malorie Blackman: tips for story structure](#)

