



WHITLEY MEMORIAL C of E AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Let your light shine' - Matthew 5:16

Writing Overview

At Whitley Memorial Primary School we have adopted "The Write Stuff" by Jane Considine to bring clarity to the mechanics of writing. "The Write Stuff" follows a method called "Sentence Stacking" which refers to the fact that sentences are stacked together chronologically and organised to engage children with short, intensive moments of learning that they can then immediately apply to their own writing. An individual lesson is based on a sentence model, broken in to 3 learning chunks. Each learning chunk has three sections:

1. **Initiate** section - a stimulus to capture the children's imagination and set up a sentence.
1. **Model** section - the teacher close models a sentence that outlines clear writing features and techniques.
1. **Enable** section - the children write their sentence, following the model.

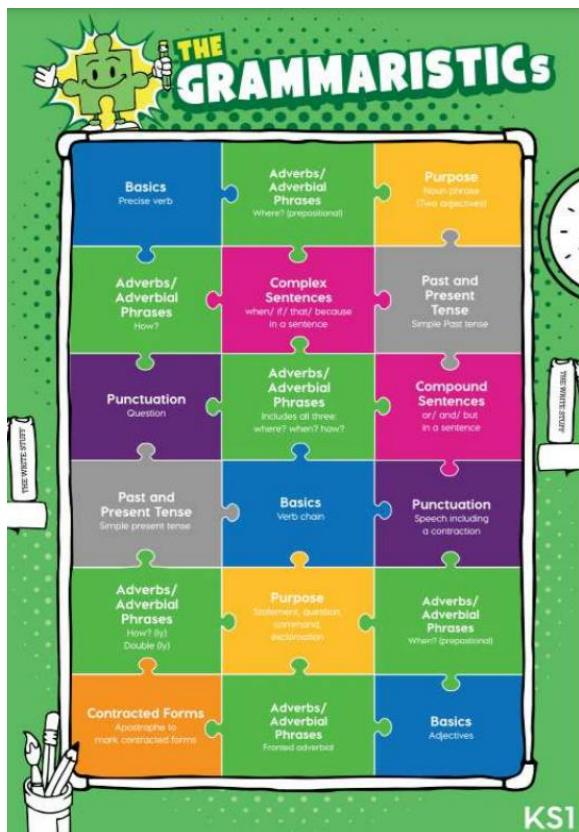
Children are challenged to 'Deepen the Moment' which requires them to independently draw upon previously learnt skills and apply them to their writing during that chunk.

"The Write Stuff" uses three essential components to support children in becoming great writers

The three zones of writing:-

- IDEAS - The **FANTASTICs** uses a child friendly acronym to represent the nine idea lenses through which children can craft their ideas.
- TOOLS - The **GRAMMARISTICS**. The grammar rules of our language system and an accessible way to target weaknesses in grammatical and linguistic structures.
- TECHNIQUES - The **BOOMTASTICs** which helps children capture 10 ways of adding drama and poetic devices to writing in a vivid visual.





An overview of The Write Stuff

The ideas of writing (FANTASTICS)

The ideas of writing are strengthened when children have good imaginations. Their imaginations are improved through rich life experiences and quality texts. Many children get stuck on knowing what to write but if we, as teachers, invest in drama, reading and experiences then children's thoughts about what to write are enriched. We call this 'experience days' and throughout an English unit there will be opportunities where children can use experience to support their writing.

To accomplish skills in this Zone of Writing pupils need to use the cues in the FANTASTIC (FANTASTIC) rainbow.

F-Feeling. Writers who include feelings are richer writers. Pupils need to know one of the important parts of being a writer is giving a reader an internal insight into a character's emotional state. Once pupils are able to reveal the inner emotions of a character, their writing becomes more empathic and engaging.

A-Asking. Dialogue enriches stories and quotes support and strengthen points in nonfiction. Clever choice of dialogue can move the action on and reveal more about a character's motivations and inner thoughts. Children need training on choosing precise quotes for non-fiction that succinctly capture key ideas.

N-Noticing. Writers who are able to build a picture from a character's perspective are more effective. A writer can build rich scenes, settings and details by choosing what to describe and focus on.

T-Touching. Writing is more engaging when it is a multi-sensory experience. The sense of touch is an important lens not to leave out. How things feel to the touch is another way that writing can replicate real life experience. Children need a rich repertoire of texture words to enable them to explore this lens, e.g. smooth, rough.

A-Action. Children love to write action-packed stories and their main characters are often running and jumping through the plot. However, pupils need support to build smaller, more revealing action into their stories, as well as the white knuckle cliff-hanger stuff.

S-Smelling. This is a lens used less often by writers, however, when writers do use the sense of smell the impact of it is a three-dimensional experience. Smell can be very evocative of positive and negative experiences in our lives - a waft of perfume or a

whiff of a rotten sandwich. Often neglected but very powerful, a smell dimension in writing can enhance it to a new level.

T-Tasting. It is not always relevant to include a sense of taste. Of course, if there is food in the story then this is the writer's opportunity to describe tastes if they feel it will bring a richness to the plot line. Some writers manipulate the sense of taste and attach it to feelings, e.g. "a taste of fear welled up in his throat."

I-Imagining. Good writers take us on an internal journey to the inner thoughts of a character. Clever writers are able to declare inner thoughts but put dialogue into their mouths that contradicts it. Writing is a mix of expressing the outward influences on a character as well as the internal thinking of the individual.

C-Checking. Crash! Bang! Wallop! Sounds bring a story to life. As a writer we can choose to accentuate certain sounds. Sometimes creating pauses and long moments of silence are just as effective. Sometimes the smallest sounds can be magnified in a story to create tension, e.g. the turn of a door handle.

Techniques of writing (Boomtastic)

It is through the Boomtastic lenses where pupils can showcase their personal voice and writerly style through the techniques they use. If children can conjure up images in a reader's mind, their writing will have more of an impact. Poetic and configurative language are excellent devices to help readers visualise what you are trying to create as a writer. There are 10 Boomtastic lenses.

1. Onomatopoeia

An onomatopoeic word is a word that phonetically imitates, resembles or suggests the source of the sound it describes. Common occurrences of onomatopoeic words include animal noises such as 'oink', 'miaow' (or 'meow'), 'roar', or 'chirp.' Some other very common English language examples include 'hiccup', 'zoom', 'bang', 'beep', 'moo', and 'splash.' Machines and their sounds are also often described with onomatopoeia, as in 'honk' or 'beep-beep' for the horn of a car, and 'vroom' or 'brum' for the engine. Children's earliest picture books are filled with onomatopoeic words. Sometimes they take over a whole page, like the "splash" finale in *The Wide Mouth Frog* after the line: "You don't see many of those around do you." Children love to hear the sounds that things make in books - not only animal sounds but the 'whoosh' of the wind and the 'pfffft' of the flower pushing up through the ground. Children meet onomatopoeia from a young age in books like *Mmm, Cookies!* which is full of sounds bringing food to life. Sugar is sprinkled with a "chik, chik, chik, chik, chik." and washed out of the character's mouth with a "burble, burble, splat, splicht, bwahhh." In *The Perfect Nest* by Catherine Friend there is a "CRACK!" and "Crackety- Snap!" and "Crackety-Crackety-

Boom!" to describe the sounds of baby animals bursting out of their eggs. Sometimes the simplest of sounds evokes the reality of an event, such as the moment in Mary Quigley's book *Granddad's Fishing Buddy* when the "plop" of the fishing line going into the water quickly puts us in the scene. Teaching pupils to be on the lookout for this device in writing will in turn enhance their own writing, as it is a way to get noticed by the reader and is often associated with a change in font, capitalisation or an exclamation mark to draw attention to it. Onomatopoeia is a way to add a dimension to writing that is more sensory and can create interest by breaking up lengthy prose.

2. Alliteration

Alliteration is a stylistic literary device identified by the repeated sound of the first consonant in a series of multiple words or the repetition of the same sounds, or the same kinds of sounds, at the beginning of words or in the stressed syllables of a phrase. This famous tongue twister exemplifies the same sound in the initial position in words and the way in which it heightens the intrigue of language once read aloud: "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?" Alliteration is an effective literary style to add drama and emphasis. It is useful to create mood. In *Jabberwocky* by Lewis Carroll many of the words in the poem are made up, but the poet's use of alliteration is so effective that a reader can still apply meaning, even without knowing the definition of the words. As a reader we can almost hear the terrible Jabberwock come stomping and snorting to meet his death with the repetition of harsh and jarring sounds such as, "gyre and gimble" "the claws that catch" "The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!"

3. Rhyme

"Where are you going to, little brown mouse? Come and have lunch in my underground house." However, this is not the only way to lean on rhyme in story and non-fiction as it can also be embedded within sentences and paragraphs to enhance flow and interest. Good rhyme is fun to read out loud. Good rhyme is enjoyable to listen to and can make the piece lively or clever.

The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss has embedded both rhyme and repetition in its opening line for effect: "The sun did not shine, it was too wet to play, so we sat in the house all that cold, cold wet day. I sat there with Sally. We sat here we two and we said 'How we wish we had something to do'." The word "sat" is repeated three times to emphasise how bored and fed up the children are on this rainy day. Alongside this there is rhyme between "play" and "day" as well as "two" and "do".

4. Repetition

Repetition is the simple repeating of a word or phrase within a sentence in order to secure emphasis. Notice how repetition of the word "away" sharpens our empathy as the reader and makes the central character's need to run away more poignant: "I'm going away from this place. Away from the angry teacher, away from the lonely playground and away from the staring eyes." As pupils experiment with a wider range of writers' techniques, they use the power of repetition to strengthen the nonfiction and the emotion in a narrative. Books they will meet from an early age include *Funnybones* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. This is a clever tale that builds up suspense using "dark" as an adjective twice before all nouns in the story. Children enjoy finding this pattern and replicating it in their own writing: "This is how the story begins. On a dark, dark hill, there was a dark, dark town." Sometimes the repeated part does not have to be that significant to impress on a reader. Here in *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* by Joan Aiken the reusing of the word "dusk" with the added "winter" as an adjective helps us visualise how cold and dark this dusk is: "It was dusk, winter-dusk." Repetition is not just applied to moments of suspense or times when texts need to be slowed down, but also to create humour and rhythm. A great example of this is in the opening of *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl. The text repeats "farms", "men" and "nasty" and reveals one new bit of information as the opening builds. The humour is further reinforced by the silly alliterative names of the farmers. "Down in the valley there were three farms. The owners of these farms had done well. They were rich men. They were also nasty men. All three of them were about as nasty and mean as any men you could meet. Their names were Farmer Boggis, Farmer Bunce and Farmer Bean."

5. Simile

Simile A simile directly compares two things through the explicit use of connecting words such as 'like', 'as', 'so' and 'than.' Of *Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck has a memorable, highly evocative simile that compares a man to a dying fish. The use of alliteration strengthens the simile: "Curley was flopping like a fish on a line." *My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks* by Hanoch Piven is a fabulous book to use with Key Stage 1 pupils as a starting point when teaching similes. The girl in the book uses household objects to capture her family members. Her dad is represented by a collage picture and has string for a mouth because he is: "as stubborn as a knot in a rope." Once pupils are shown how to identify similes they are able to find them quite easily in their writing. *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell is a good example of how the initial simile is further strengthened by the subsequent verb that personifies the wind: "July had been blown out like a candle by a biting wind that ushered in a leaden August sky."

6. Metaphor

A metaphor's function is to make an even stronger image in the reader's head by describing a place, subject or object as something unlikely: "The teacher was a witch." "A sea of chaos." "Drowning in self pity." Often two nouns are compared and contrasted

to each other, with the verbs 'is', 'are', 'was' being dominant. "I am a storm." "Her eyes are glistening jewels." "The world is a stage." (William Shakespeare).

7. Pathetic Fallacy

The phrase pathetic fallacy is a literary term for the attributing of human emotion and conduct to all aspects within nature. It is a kind of personification that is found in narrative writing when, for example, 'clouds seem sullen', 'trees tremble', or 'when rocks seem indifferent'. It gives human emotions to inanimate objects of nature – for example, referring to weather features reflecting a mood. This device is used to strengthen a match between a central character's emotion and a link between the weather, or something in nature or the physical environment, that correlates to amplify this feeling. Pathetic fallacy is fascinating because it offers human beings a different way to begin to understand and comprehend the natural world. By projecting human thought and behaviour onto elements of our environment, we make understanding it more accessible; we are comparing it to something we already know and understand. The film of Holes (2003), based on the children's novel (published in 1998) by American writer Louis Sachar, also provides a good live action example of pathetic fallacy. The part of the film (based on Chapter 29) that begins "there was a change in the weather. For the worse" shows the tension at Camp Green Lake slowly building as the weather becomes hotter and hotter. It's not until the tension is broken that the rain comes. Pathetic fallacy can really set the atmosphere of a scene and help to bring out themes and motivations. In particular, effective pathetic fallacy can draw you into the central character's dilemma.

8. Pun

Pun relies on the double function of language. 'Sweet' and 'hard' can refer to the physical properties of things but also to the psychological properties of people. Puns are an extremely high order skill and require a mastery of language and a clear understanding of the functionality of homophones. A sentence can be weighted in meaning with a deliberate use of a pun. Consider this sentence that provides information: "The boy wore a blue jumper, he was sad." If the same essence of meaning is captured but a pun is used, playing on the duality of meaning of the word 'blue', referencing both colour and state of mind: "The boy wore a blue jumper just like his mood." Suddenly, the sentence gains more presence and showcases the writer's skill.

9. Personification

Personification is a type of figurative language that creates desired effects in writing. Specifically, personification is when you give an object human characteristics (emotions, sensations, speech, physical movements): "The cruel waves screamed and swallowed the boat." Here, the writer describes the waves using the human attributes, "cruel" and "screamed". The waves are also given a human physical process, swallowing, when waves cannot literally swallow something.

10. Symbolism

"It is that ability to summarize and encapsulate that makes symbolism so interesting, useful, and - when used well - arresting. You could argue that it's really just another kind of figurative language. Symbolism exists to adorn and enrich, not to create a sense of artificial profundity. It can serve as a focusing device for both you and the reader, helping to create a more unified and pleasing work." Stephen King, 2000. Symbolism is based on taking one idea and extending it across a whole piece of writing. For example, if a pupil was writing a persuasive holiday brochure to promote and sell Mauritius and a reference was made to it being "the jewel of the Indian ocean", a metaphor will have been established linking the island to precious stones and jewellery. This could then be a starting point for an ongoing symbol to be established.

Tools of Writing (Grammaristics)

Children need to be in control of their grammar choices to improve the precision and the impact of their writing. Technical control of grammar means that pupils can show readers that they have good understanding of the English language and that they are able to manipulate it for their own desired outcomes.

1. Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases. E.g. How, where, when, how often and why?
2. Basics-E.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, determiners, phrases and conjunctions.
3. Complex sentences-E.g. Coordinating, subordinating clauses.
4. Dialogue and contracted forms
5. Purpose. Having a clear focus on the purpose and function of your writing enables choices to be made that ensure meaning matches genre. Ultimately, the core purpose of most writing is to be interesting and create desired effects.
6. Paragraphs. Teaching children how to group ideas together for similarity is the first step for shaping paragraphs. Whether through narrative or non-fiction, children can block information for theme and content. New paragraphs should be created for new time, event, place or person.
7. Passive/Active voice. Active Voice The noun or noun phrase of a sentence is normally the object of an active sentence, e.g. Our teachers won the race. Passive Voice The noun or noun phrase of a sentence appears as the subject of the sentence, e.g. The race was won. Equally, this would also be classed as a passive voice sentence, e.g. The race was won by our teachers.
8. Tense. Tense is tricky for children to understand and is interconnected with standard English. For actions that have happened in the past there are certain verbs and constructions that will be used, e.g. has taken, took. For actions happening now in the present tense, constructions such as 'took' are used or verb forms ending in _ed.
9. Punctuation

Year 1: Separation of words with spaces. Introduction to capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences. Capital letters for names and for the personal pronoun 'I'.

Year 2: Use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences. Commas to separate items in a list. Apostrophes to mark where letters are missing in spelling and to mark singular possession in nouns [for example, the girl's name].

Year 3: Introduction to inverted commas to punctuate direct speech.

Year 4: Use of inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech (for example, a comma after the reporting clause; end punctuation within inverted commas: The conductor shouted, "Sit down!"), apostrophes to mark plural possession (e.g. the girl's name, the girls' names) and use of commas after fronted adverbials.

Year 5: Brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis. Use of commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity.

Year 6: Use of the semi-colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses, e.g. It's raining; I'm fed up. Use of the colon to introduce a list and use of semi-colons within lists. Punctuation of bullet points to list information. How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity, e.g. man eating shark versus man-eating shark, or recover versus re-cover