

Being a Writer



Chapter One

What writing skills need to be taught?

Being a Writer



What is the Writing Skills Ladder?

The Writing Skills Ladder are the age appropriate writing skills for each year group. These key pieces of learning will support pupils in becoming independent writers and should be mapped out carefully during the planning stage. Due to the sequential nature of the grammatical skills and concepts, it is crucial that staff consolidate learning from the previous year group. The Writing Skills Ladder does **not** contain year group spellings or handwriting expectations as these will sit within your school's own procedures.

How might these be used?

The Writing Skills Ladder should be a focus, and be exemplified, during whole class instructional input. Taught within the context of Being a Writer, they help to ensure that pupils make progress as writers and develop skills. Teaching must ensure that skills are modelled and scaffolded and that pupils are given chance to apply these in a range of different contexts. Regular teaching of skills should be taught early in the Being a Writer phase, generally in the Grammar Workshop or Grammar Top Up days, with opportunity for children to rehearse the skill, being applied later during the 'write' sessions, using them within a context.

The Writing Skills Ladder (WSL) has been written using Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing progression document, Lancashire's Key Skills in Writing, The National Curriculum (2014), Primary Advantage Fundamentals, and in conjunction with English SLEs across Primary Advantage National Teaching Schools.

Writing Skills Ladder



Year 1		
Terminology to introduce	Finger spaces, capital letters, full stops, letter, word, question mark, speech bubble, punctuation, bullet points, noun, proper noun, adjectives, verb, singular, plural, conjunction	
Punctuation	Word Construction	Sentence Construction
<p>Spaces word</p> <p>Capital Letters for proper nouns and singular 'I'</p> <p>Full stops</p> <p>Question marks</p> <p>Exclamation marks</p> <p>Speech bubbles</p> <p>Bullet points</p>	<p>Capital letters (proper noun) for: names, places, days of the week, months of the year and singular 'I'</p> <p>Prepositions: inside, outside, towards, across, under</p> <p>Determiners</p> <p>Adjectives to describe: The tall man, The old house, The soft cat etc</p> <p>Alliteration: The furious frog, The smooth snake etc</p> <p>Similes using 'as': As green as an apple, As smooth as glass etc</p> <p>Regular plural noun suffixes – s or –es: Dog, dogs...wish, wishes etc</p> <p>Precise, clear language to give information: First, press the green button. Next, wait for the light etc</p>	<p>Say, and hold in memory whilst writing, simple sentences which make sense.</p> <p>Simple conjunctions: And, or, but, so, because, so that, then, that, while, when, where</p> <p>Also as openers: While..., When..., Where...,</p> <p>Simple Sentences: I went to the park. The tree was tall</p> <p>Embellished simple sentences using adjectives: The frog had slimy skin. The house on the tall hill was haunted. Owls catch tiny mice at night.</p> <p>Compound sentences using conjunctions (coordinating – and, or, but, so): The children played in the park and on the trees. Water can be cold or it can be hot etc.</p> <p>Complex sentences using conjunctions (relative clause- who): There was once a tall man who lived at the end of a haunted road. There are many children who enjoy ice cream.</p> <p>'Run' - Repetition for rhythm: She swam and she swam and she swam.</p>

Writing Skills Ladder



Year 2		
Terminology to introduce	Apostrophe for contraction and singular possession, commas (list), speech marks, verb, adverb, statement, exclamation, question, command, past tense, present tense, future tense, noun phrase, subordinating conjunction, coordinating conjunction.	
Punctuation	Word Construction	Sentence Construction
<p>Demarcate sentences: Capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks.</p> <p>Commas to separate items in a list</p> <p>Comma after –ly opener</p> <p>Speech bubbles and speech marks for direct speech</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark contracted forms of spelling: Don't, can't, I'll etc.</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark singular possession: The giant's beard was long etc</p>	<p>Prepositions: behind, beside, above, along, before, between, after</p> <p>Alliteration: The long lizard, the bouncing ball etc.</p> <p>Similes using 'like': Tall like a tree, Blazing like the sun.</p> <p>Noun Phrase: The old, haunted house..., Owls have sharp, piercing talons.</p> <p>Adverbs for description: Snow fell gently and covered the cottage in the wood.</p> <p>Adverbs for information: Press the button carefully so the timer goes off.</p>	<p>Types of sentences: Statements, exclamations, questions, commands.</p> <p>-ly starters: Quickly, Sam..., Finally, he..., Carefully, the witch... etc.</p> <p>Vary openers to sentences</p> <p>Embellish simple sentences using- adjectives: The boys peeped inside the dark cave. adverbs: The boys peeped carefully inside the dark cave.</p> <p>Secure use of compound sentences (co-ordinating conjunctions): and, or, but, so</p> <p>Complex sentences (subordination), using drop in relative clause: Who, which only</p> <p>The Great Fire of London, which started in Pudding Lane, spread quickly.</p> <p>The Egyptians, who lived many years ago, are famous for their incredible pyramids.</p> <p>Additional subordinating conjunctions: what, while, when, where, because, so that, if, to, until: While the owls moved around, the trees began to shake. When it is Autumn, the leaves fall off trees.</p> <p>Power of 3 for description: He wore long trousers, an old hat and large coat.</p>

Writing Skills Ladder



Year 3		
Terminology to introduce	Suffix, rhetorical question, word family, coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction, clause, subordinate clause, adverb, preposition, direct speech, inverted commas, consonant/vowel, determiner, synonym, relative clause, pronoun, colon, onomatopoeia, rhetorical questions	
Punctuation	Word Construction	Sentence Construction
<p>Colon before a list</p> <p>Ellipses to keep the reader hanging on</p> <p>Secure use of inverted commas for direct speech</p>	<p>Prepositions: Next to, by the side of, in front of, during, throughout, through, because of.</p> <p>Powerful verbs: Stare, tremble, shiver, bolt etc.</p> <p>Specific, technical vocabulary to add detail: Stonehenge is located north of ..., The Tower of London contain over..., etc</p> <p>Use of determiners a or an against vowels (being mindful of exceptions)</p>	<p>Vary long and short sentences: Long sentences to add description of information. Short sentences for emphasis and making key points</p> <p>Embellish simple sentences: Adverb starters to add detail: Carefully, she crawled along the floor of the cave... Amazingly, small insects can... Adverbial phrases used as 'where', 'when' or 'how' started (fronted adverbials): A few days ago, we climbed the highest mountain. Under the mat, the small creatures began moving. Carefully, the giant climbed down the beanstalk.</p> <p>Compound sentences, using coordinating conjunctions: FANBOYS, for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so</p> <p>Develop complex sentences using subordinating conjunctions: whilst, which, if, so that, because, even though, although, despite, however etc.</p> <p>-ing clause as starters: Sighing, the boy sat down to complete his homework. Splashing, the children played in the paddling pool.</p> <p>Drop in a relative clause using: whom, who, whose, that: The girl, whom I remember, had long hair. The boy, whose pen fell out his pocket, is in my class. The Tower of London, which is located near the Thames, is a famous London landmark.</p> <p>Power of 3 for description: The cottage was almost invisible, hiding under a thick layer of snow and glistening in the sunlight. Owls are nocturnal animals, hunt only at night and live in trees.</p>

Writing Skills Ladder



Year 4		
Terminology to introduce	Pronoun, possessive pronoun, relative pronoun, adverbial, fronted adverbial, clause, main clause, subordinate clause, coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction, apostrophe – plural possession	
Punctuation	Word Construction	Sentence Construction
<p>Commas to mark clauses and to mark off fronted adverbials</p> <p>Full punctuation for direct speech: Each new line, new speaker. Comma between direct speech and reported clause: <i>"I'm tired," mumbled mum.</i></p> <p>Apostrophes to mark singular and plural possession</p>	<p>Conditionals: would, should, might etc</p> <p>Comparative and superlative adjectives: small, smallest, large, largest etc.</p> <p>Grammatical difference between plural and possessive –s</p> <p>Standard English forms for verb inflections instead of local spoken forms (e.g. we were instead of we was, or I did instead of I done)</p>	<p>Standard English for verb inflections instead of local spoken forms</p> <p>Long and short sentences: Long sentences to enhance description or information Short sentences to move events on quickly: It was midnight. It's great fun.</p> <p>Start with a simile: As curved as a ball, the moon shone brightly in the night sky. Like a wailing cat, the ambulance screamed down the road.</p> <p>Secure use of simple, embellished simple sentences.</p> <p>Secure use of compound sentences, using coordinating conjunctions: FANBOYS, for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so</p> <p>Develop complex sentences using main and subordinate clauses with a range of subordinating conjunctions: when, whilst, because, if, so, even though, although etc.</p> <p>ed' clauses as starters: Worried, Renee ran straight home to avoid being caught. Exhausted, the Roman soldier collapsed at his post.</p>

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Year 4		
Terminology to introduce	Pronoun, possessive pronoun, relative pronoun, adverbial, fronted adverbial, clause, main clause, subordinate clause, coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction, apostrophe – plural possession	
Punctuation	Word Construction	Sentence Construction
		<p>Expanded -'ing' clauses as starters: Grinning menacingly to himself, he slipped the treasure into his rucksack. Hopping speedily towards the pool, the frog dived underneath the leaves.</p> <p>Sentence of 3 for action: Mohammed rushed down the road, jumped on the bus and sank into his seat. The Romans enjoyed food, loved marching but hated the weather.</p> <p>Dialogue - verb + adverb - "Hello," she whispered shyly.</p>

Writing Skills Ladder



Year 5		
Terminology to introduce	Parenthesis, bracket, dash, modal verb, determiner, cohesion, ambiguity, metaphor, personification, coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction, main clause, subordinate clause.	
Punctuation	Word Construction	Sentence Construction
<p>Dashes</p> <p>Brackets, dashes, commas for parenthesis</p> <p>Use of commas to clarify meaning of avoid ambiguity.</p>	<p>Metaphor</p> <p>Personification</p> <p>Empty words: Something was there, someone knew something.</p> <p>Develop technical, precise language.</p> <p>Indicating degrees of possibility using modal verbs (e.g. might, should, will, must) or adverbs (perhaps, surely)</p>	<p>Secure use of simple, embellished sentences.</p> <p>Secure use of compound sentences.</p> <p>Develop complex sentences with full range of subordinating conjunctions and begin to move clauses around: I took my coat outside because it was raining. Because it was raining, I took my coat outside.</p> <p>Drop in -'ing' clause: Tom, laughing at the teacher, fell off his chair. The tornado, sweeping across the city, destroyed the houses.</p> <p>Expanded -ed clauses as starters: Worried about the noise, Jamal hid beneath the school table. Exhausted by the long and arduous trip, George fell to his knees.</p> <p>Elaboration of starters using adverbial phrases: Under the blanket of the night sky, Ramone saw the glint of something in the distance. Beneath the wooden table, Sam sat uncomfortably whilst listening to the action around.</p> <p>Drop in -'ed' clause: Poor Lucy, exhausted by so much effort, ran home. Hannah, tired by the adventure, fell to sleep as soon as she arrived home.</p> <p>Stage directions in speech (speech + verb + action): "Stop!" he bellowed, picking up the stick and running after the thief.</p>

Writing Skills Ladder



Year 6		
Terminology to introduce	Active and passive voice, subject, object, hyphen, synonym, antonym, colon, semi-colon, clause, phrase	
Punctuation	Word Construction	Sentence Construction
<p>Use of semi-colon, colon and dash to indicate a stronger subdivision of a sentence than a comma.</p> <p>How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity: The light-blue house rather than the light blue house.</p>	<p>Manipulating literary features for effect and imagery (similes, metaphors and personification).</p> <p>The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing: said versus reported, alleged, or claimed in formal speech or writing etc.</p>	<p>Secure use of simple, embellished sentences.</p> <p>Secure use of compound sentences.</p> <p>Secure use of complex sentences with full range of subordinating conjunctions and begin to move clauses around: I enjoy PE due to the fact it keeps me healthy. Due to PE keeping me healthy, I enjoy it!</p> <p>Moving sentence chunks (how, when, where) around for different effects: The siren echoed loudlythrough the lonely streetsat midnight</p> <p>Active and passive verbs to create effect and to affect presentation of information: Active: Ben threw the chair. Passive: The chair was thrown by Ben. Active: The sun scorched the ground. Passive: The ground was scorched by the sun.</p> <p>Expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely: The boy that jumped over the fence is over there, or the fact that it was raining meant the end of sports day.</p> <p>The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures appropriate for formal speech and writing: question tags- He's your friend, isn't he? Or the use of the subjunctive in some very formal writing and speech- as in If I were you.</p>