



The Writing Process

Becoming a successful writer is a complicated process that requires many years of practice to perfect. At its most basic, however, learning to write is no different to that of most other skills; it only requires the existence of three core principles: an enthusiasm for the subject; a quality example to learn from; and the opportunity to experiment and create within a nurturing environment. For us to ensure that the children at St. Bede's become skilled and confident writers, it is therefore vital that we develop these principles.

The writing process at St. Bede's aims to achieve this through creating a series of 'learning journeys' that are comprised of 3 parts:



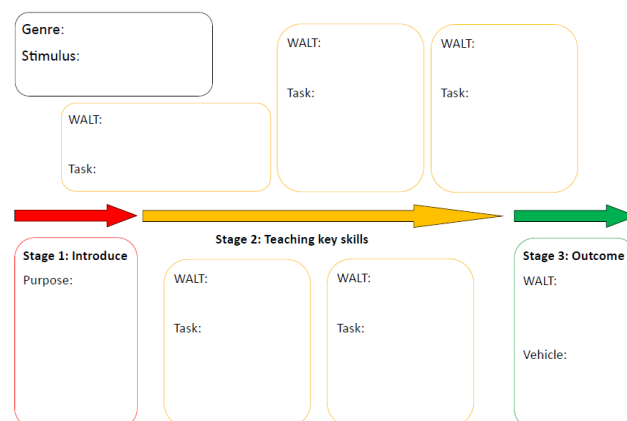
The length of each learning journey (and each section) will vary depending on the content that is necessary to cover, however as a general rule each journey will average at around 2 to 3 weeks.

It is imperative that the entire learning journey is contextualised around a central book and/or theme. This allows the children the time to develop a deep understanding of the subject matter and therefore produce their best writing. The chosen book / theme should run for a half-term or, if appropriate, up to a term. An example of this is below:

Book: Journey to Jo'burg by Beverley Naidoo | Theme: South Africa

Learning Journey Focus	Length of Learning Journey
Writing a diary recounting Naledi's experience at the hospital.	3 weeks
Writing a persuasive letter to F W de Klerk demanding an end to apartheid in South Africa.	3 weeks
Writing and performing poetry based on an animal native to the African savanna.	2 weeks

When planning each learning journey, it is often most productive to do so backwards. Start with deciding on the outcome of the learning journey; from this you can then identify the writing skills that you will need to teach the children in order for them to be successful. The example planning overview below is not required to be completed, however it may be of use to help visualise and plot the learning journey when you are planning.



When completing your planning, it is important to identify the learning process so that you ensure it runs through your teaching. This should be carried out by highlighting each days planning with the relevant colour shown below:



Engage:

This section of the process is designed to capture the children's interest and develop an enthusiasm for the learning that is to come. Having a clear purpose for writing supports this, and so it is important that children understand from the outset *why* they are learning what they are. Giving the children an insight into the planned learning journey is a good way to allow them to take control of their own journey. Some ideas of lessons that could take place to facilitate this are as follows:

- Read the chosen book to hook the children's interest – perhaps by reading it in smaller chunks across the learning journey in order to build suspense and mystery as they eagerly await what happens next.
- Let the children analyse an exemplar of the genre that they will be writing in. They must use it to make a list of skills that *they* think they need to learn or get better at over the coming weeks in order to be able to write one of their own.
- Use drama to allow the children to recreate a scene from the book.
- Explore the book through guided reading sessions, helping the children to see the deeper themes and meanings behind it.
- After reading the text, arrive at the lesson in the role of one of the characters for the children to interview.

Explore:

This section of the process is an opportunity for children to learn and practise the writing skills that will be needed so that they are successful in the 'apply' section. For children to make maximum progress, the class teacher will need to be prepared to both support children in their understanding as well as expertly model good practice. Some key tips for the 'explore' section are as follows:

- The learning should encompass writing skills from a range of domains – transcription; composition & effect; sentence structure; text structure and organisation; vocabulary, grammar and punctuation; handwriting.
- Each lesson should focus on a particular writing skill, e.g. use figurative language effectively.
- When deciding on the writing skill and task for a lesson, ensure that you can say 'yes' to the following two questions:
 1. Will this task allow the children to demonstrate the skill that we are focusing on?
 2. Will developing this writing skill directly support the children when they write their final piece in the 'apply' section?
- The tasks that you choose should be varied, however one that works particularly well is 'Explain, Change, Create'. If you are not familiar with it, there is an example of this type of task in the English folder.
- In a lesson, try not to have unrelated tasks for each attainment group in the class. Instead, use a single task that you adapt appropriately to give more support for those that may struggle, and more challenge for those who may not.
- Use and analyse WAGOLs (What a Good One Looks Like) and WABOLs (What a Bad One Looks Like) with the children as it's a great way for them to clearly understand how to successfully apply a writing skill.
- Using modelled and shared writing with the class on a regular basis is paramount in ensuring that children are being effectively taught *how* to write. When carrying this out, the main focus should always be on the writing skill that is being taught.
 - Modelled writing: the teacher demonstrates writing in front of the children. The teacher explains the choices that they are making aloud. The children do not actively take part but experience the writing process through the mind of a highly skilled writer.
 - Shared writing: the teacher and the children work together as a team to write. Ideas are shared, with the teacher taking a lead role by encouraging the development of choices.

Apply:

This section of the process is specifically designed to mimic that of a professional writer. After having the opportunity to develop their writing skills in the previous section, the children will now be ready to apply their newly acquired knowledge to an end of learning journey piece of writing (exampled in the table above). Generally speaking, within each learning journey the children will plan, write, edit & improve and, if possible, publish their writing. Some key tips for the 'apply' section are as follows:

- Effectively planning and effectively following that plan when writing are difficult skills. These need to be explicitly modelled and taught by the class teacher.
- When the children are writing it is important a 'flow' is maintained, therefore discourage them from using dictionaries and thesauruses to check spelling or improve vocabulary choices. Instead, have them underline in pencil anything that they wish to edit so that they can do so later when they come to the edit & improve lesson.
- Editing & improving your own writing is also a particularly difficult skill. Ensure you model this process to the children. When doing so, focus on improvements that link to the writing skills that have been developed over the current learning journey.
- Use an assessment ladder during and after the children's writing as this will greatly help the children focus on successfully using specific skills. This should *only* contain the skills that the children have been developing over the current learning journey.