

# 'Big Writing'

How to support your child in their  
writing

# Why?

- The method is based on fast, fun and lively teaching of the 'writing voice' through oracy. It gives pupils confidence to talk and write without worrying about things like spelling and grammar.
- This is important as not all primary aged children are ready for the level of technical knowledge and understanding required to be able to write in a more complex way but can speak confidently.

# What's the basic idea in school?

- Having a 'Big writing' session with a focus on games and developing language that then feeds into a writing session.
- Building up displays and word banks that are referred to throughout the week.
- Encouraging speaking and listening activities in all subjects.

# Big Writing

- Children cannot learn to write before they can 'speak' their writing. Therefore we need to be doing more TALK
- The idea of 'Big Writing' is to improve children's basic skills through a variety of methods.
- USE the VCOP!

# VCOP!

- Vocabulary
- Connectives
- Openers
- Punctuation

# Vocabulary

- 'Wow' words- i.e Adventurous and exciting language that they can use in their speech and writing.
- Find 'wow' words in reading and then ask them to record them.
- Start building up vocabulary banks at home.
- Have a word of the day.

# Vocabulary

- When they write a sentence, see if they can add a 'wow' word to the sentence.
- Ask them to identify the use of wow words in their speech, reading and writing.
- RULE:- Only use a 'wow' word once, try to vary them.
- For older children, when they edit their work, check for this in a particular piece.

# Connectives

- Words that join 2 sentences together.
- Words such as and, but, so, then, however, meanwhile
- Practice by joining any sentences together orally and in writing.

# Openers

- Linking/time/sequential words
- Power openers
- Connectives- but, despite, as well as
- 'ly' words- slowly, quickly, unfortunately
- 'ing' words- walking, laughing, running...

# Punctuation

.

. ?

. ? , !

. ? , ... ! ' ""

- . ? , ... ! ' "" : ; ( )

- **Different punctuation taught and used as children progress through the school**

# 'Up-levelling' writing.

I have a dog.

I have a cat.

I do not have a baboon

and

but

so

also

because

although

sadly

See what sentences you can make by firstly adding connectives to join sentences and then by moving them around and maybe adding an opener.

# Helping children improve their writing.

## **Change the opening**

Provide a simple sentence and ask the children to extend it by adding a chunk on at the beginning. Build up a repertoire of different ways to vary the opening to sentences, e.g. use an adverb (how), a time connective (when), an 'ing ' or 'ed' chunk, one word, a simile, a prepositional phrase (at the end of the lane - where), an adjective, etc.

**Bertie dug a deep hole.**

Might become:

*After tea, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

*In the garden, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

*Carefully, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

*As fast as a ferret, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

*Hoping to reach Australia, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

# 'Up-levelling' writing

- A man walked quickly down the castle steps. He walked as fast as possible towards the forest as if he did not want to be seen. Harry recognised him. It was Snape. Where was he going?
- *How could we improve that paragraph? Remember your VCOP!*

# From a Year 6 child

The trees were getting thicker and the darkness was enclosing him in a sheet of blackness, nevertheless, Harry couldn't lighten the way for Snape might notice him. The only light was from Snape's wand. The trees seemed to creep nearer, as if trying to swallow him.

Luckily, when Snape had gone through the womping willow he had cast a spell on it, therefore it did not harm him. Harry crept on, not making too much noise. Could he hear noises or was it his imagination?

They came to a small, crumbling building made of wood. The massive trees towered over it, making it seem like the building was rather small. Snape entered through a doorway ( the door was hanging off its hinges) and Harry followed. They strode through a corridor, ignoring the doorways on either side.

They went to the end of the dark, menacing corridor. There was a door at the end. It was a simple wooden door with a brass door handle on it. Snape went through the door and suddenly Harry's scar burned.

# Actual text

- A hooded figure came swiftly down the steps of the castle. Clearly not wanting to be seen, it walked as fast as possible towards the forbidden forest. Harry's victory faded from his mind as he watched. He recognised the figure's prowling walk. Snape, sneaking into the forest while everyone else was at dinner- what was going on?

# So how can you help at home?

- Talk to your children and help them become good speakers to become good writers.
- Have a list of new words they come across at home. For younger children it may be. vocabulary stuck to things, for older children it could be a word bank that they can refer to.
- Look out for good VCOP.
- Before they start writing, ask them to tell you what they are going to write, then let them write it.