

Date of last review	September 2019
Date of next review	September 2020

Big Writing is a whole school initiative to develop children as independent and expert writers. It is part of our continuous drive to raise attainment and progress in writing. It is based on Ros Wilson’s ‘Big Writing’ approach which follows the philosophy that ‘If children can say it, they can write it’.

What is Big Writing?

- Big Write sessions take place over a two week period, usually on Thursdays, with children being encouraged to write at length using skills they have learnt. In this way they will be building their writing stamina and experimenting with a variety of genre from reports, persuasive text and instructions, to character descriptions, creative writing, poetry and story writing.
- In Reception, children take part in ‘Big Talk’.
- Big Writing sessions are split in to 2 parts of an hour and half dedicated purely to talking and writing (one hour in Year 1) with immersion in the writing task through various stimulus.
- Part 1 develops four elements of writing –Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation, through fun and engaging activities games, talk for writing and verbalising a plan for the writing.
- Success criteria are discussed and shared, making explicit the steps/criteria needed to make a good piece of work. This session should be fast paced, active and fun!
- Ideally it will be a culmination of the English being followed in the week to allow reinforcement, independent use and application. However, it may be separate from other English work that week, to allow revisiting and applying different genres (especially important in Y5/6) or to link to a topic area which provides a meaningful context for that genre
- Time is given to allow the children to note down and plan their writing before a break.
- In Part 2, after the break, the children write silently for a sustained period of up to 45 minutes, depending on age. Short ‘brain breaks’ where the children can stretch or check they have included punctuation take place in this time. Once the task is completed children are directed to proof read. This will provide the children the necessary tools to write with confidence across a range of genres.
- To allow children to become immersed in their learning and to ensure genres are studied in depth Big Write focus may be taught over a 2 week period. This ensures children have the opportunity to write at length independently and to review and edit their work.

How Big Writing looks across school

- Foundation Stage children have ‘Talk Time’ where sentences are scribed and punctuation, ‘clever words’ etc. are added. Much of this is ‘incidental’ and will happen through the day rather than at a dedicated time.
- Year 1 have a ‘Big Talk’ session, where ideas are generated and built with the teacher’s support. By the end of Year 1 the children will talk and then write for 30 minutes.
- Year 2 talk and plan for 30 minutes and write for 30 minutes. This will build towards 45 minutes by the end of Year 2.
- KS2 talk and plan for 45 minutes (35 minutes VCOP, 10 minutes planning). Throughout KS2, children will continue to write independently for 45 minutes.

Big Writing Lesson ingredients:

- Familiarity beforehand of a particular text genres chosen for the Big Writing, e.g. story, report, play, recount
- Lively, fun and engaging activities before the independent task that focuses on both the VCOP and generating ideas/ inspiration for the Big Writing.
- Use of VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives/Conjunctions, Openers, Punctuation)

V – Selecting exciting, challenging, varied words and phrases to be used in their writing.

C – Using a range of words and phrases which connect and extend ideas.

O – Story and sentence openers which are interesting and excite the reader.

P – Different kinds of punctuation which adds to the text or story and helps it to evolve

- Use of the Working Wall to share ideas and record ideas, words, phrases, sentences that children can 'magpie' or 'borrow' for their own writing with ideas collected throughout the week and in other relevant lessons
- Modelling the right and wrong way to do things eg through the use of puppets, imaginary friend, other adults, children demonstrating in pairs
- Sharing examples of excellence and models to exemplify what different expectations/standards are like.
- Children identifying successful features of models and suggesting how writing could be improved
- Use of different writing planning formats such as lists, mind maps, varied structured planning sheets, story map, open brainstorm
- Proof reading writing with a partner, editing and up levelling any areas identified
- Talking about how they can make progress, next time they write
- Praise and promotion of self-esteem and confidence
- A positive and stimulating environment for writing through the use of display, candles/adjusted lighting and low volume calm music (Mozart/classical) to create the right atmosphere for learning.

Throughout the Big Writing sessions the children are encouraged to:

- Talk about what they will write.
- Use a 'Posh' writing voice, 'writer's voice'
- Find exciting 'wow' words and use these in their writing.
- 'Borrow' or 'Magpie' exciting words and phrases from other writers.
- Have a go at using varied punctuation.
- Re-read their own writing and find ways to make it better or 'up level'.
- Understand what they need to do next to improve.

Cross curricular opportunities for writing

- Every writing opportunity in the other curriculum areas is used to reinforce personal writing targets and allow time for checking against these eg mini plenary, reminders, prompts
- The same quality and standards of writing as in Big Writing is to be insisted on in all curriculum areas
- Support materials such as the Punctuation Pyramid, and ideas from the working wall are available whenever writing is taking place

Big Talk

Big Writing emphasises talk for writing: "If they can't discuss and verbalise their ideas, how can we expect them to write them down?"

- Children need to be taught to speak [Standard English](#) in order to help them make fewer spelling and grammar mistakes
- Opportunities will be given for talk within lessons, including Talk Partners; modelling and teaching a 'Writer's Voice'.
- Using the core Big Writing principles of VCOP the power of talk is the main focus in Reception.

Big Writing Resources

The following resources are available to support the planning and delivery of Big Writing:

- **Books:** Ros Wilson's Lesson Plans for Big Writing
- **Shared drive electronic/IWB:** VCOP Games, Big Word games, Big Writing Games, The Widget Disk, Big Write Lesson

Assessment

The Oxford Big Writing Criterion Scale is designed to enable accurate, objective summative assessment of writing and to identify the next steps for a child. The Criterion scale is organised into a series of 'Standards' that map to the primary year groups, from Standard 1 (Reception) through to Standard 7 (Year 6).

Each Standard sets out a number of criteria against which children are assessed. The strands of writing that the criteria are assessing are:

- **Features of text type/genre**
- **Handwriting**
- **Spelling**
- **Grammar**
- **Punctuation**
- **Writer's voice**

Assessments against the Criterion Scale are carried out termly selecting different genres over the year.

This informs assessments against the NC expectations entered on Target Tracker (School's tracking system)