

Rationale:

Mastering the craft of writing is complex and challenging for children with it becoming more technical and abstract as pupils move through the school. As writing becomes more complex and children are faced with harder writing tasks, it becomes much more difficult for pupils to manage their ideas and communicate them fluently. [*Alex Quigley – Closing the Writing Gap*](#)

Whereas reading can be reduced into two main strands – word reading and language comprehension – writing is much more complex to construct. Children learning to write must learn the act of physically shaping letters, which draws on fine motor skills. They must also develop skill in spelling, punctuation, grammar, generating ideas and understanding the best way to communicate these ideas, as well as drawing on vocabulary knowledge. Managing all this places incredible cognitive demands on young learners. And, unlike with reading, these demands do not reduce as writers gain more experience.

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

[*DfE – English National Curriculum, 2014*](#)

Year 1 National Curriculum Expectations:

Transcription	Composition
Writing – spelling Pupils should be taught to: • spell: • words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught • common exception words • the days of the week • name the letters of the alphabet: • naming the letters of the alphabet in order • using letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound • add prefixes and suffixes: • using the spelling rule for adding –s or –es as the plural marker for nouns and the third person singular marker for verbs • using the prefix un– • using –ing, –ed, –er and –est where no change is needed in the spelling of root words [for example, helping, helped, helper, eating, quicker, quickest • apply simple spelling rules and guidance, as listed in English appendix 1 • write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs and common exception words taught so far Handwriting Pupils should be taught to: • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place • form capital letters • form digits 0-9 • understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these	Writing - composition Pupils should be taught to: • write sentences by: • saying out loud what they are going to write about • composing a sentence orally before writing it • sequencing sentences to form short narratives • re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense • discuss what they have written with the teacher or other pupils • read their writing aloud, clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher Writing - vocabulary, grammar and punctuation Pupils should be taught to: • develop their understanding of the concepts set out in English appendix 2 by: • leaving spaces between words • joining words and joining clauses using ‘and’ • beginning to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark • using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun ‘I’ • learning the grammar for year 1 in English appendix 2 • use the grammatical terminology in English English appendix 2 in discussing their writing <i>Available to download from: DfE – English National Curriculum, 2014</i>

YEAR 1

WRITING

Name: _____

Working at towards the expected standard (WTS)							
The pupil can after discussion with the teacher:	Evidence (including date and text type)						Criteria Met
sequence sentences to form a short narrative with limited support							
demarcate some sentences with capital letters and full stops							
segment many simple spoken words into phonemes and write the graphemes corresponding to those phonemes							
use spaces to separate most words							
spell some of the Year 1 common exception words							
correctly form and orientate some letters and digits							

Y1 Autumn Term	Confidently write labels and captions I know that a list is words written one after the other to help us remember something. I know that a label is a word that tells us what something is. I can say out loud what I am going to write about. I can compose a caption orally before writing it. I can leave spaces between words I am beginning to use capital letters and full stops. I can use capital letter for names and for 'I'.	Write a simple sentence I know that a sentence is a group of words that are put together to mean something. I know a good sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. I know a good sentence has spaces between each word. I can say out loud what I am going to write about. I can compose a sentence orally before writing. I can discuss what I have written with the teacher.	Sentence writing I can compose a sentence orally and remember it in my head. I can write a full sentence. I can begin to write a group of sentences (3 sentences) I can read aloud my writing clearly enough to my teacher. I can punctuate a simple sentence with a capital letter and a full stop.
Y1 Spring Term			
Y1 Summer Term			

Year 1 Weekly Timetable:

Autumn Term:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Handwriting Input (15 minutes)	Handwriting Input (15 minutes)	Handwriting Input (15 minutes)	Handwriting Input (15 minutes)	Handwriting Input (15 minutes)
Quality Text (15 minutes)	Quality Text (15 minutes)	Quality Text (15 minutes)	Quality Text (15 minutes)	Quality Text (15 minutes)
Oral re-telling	Remember the sentence <i>Dictation</i>			

Spring Term:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Handwriting Input (15 minutes)	Handwriting Input (15 minutes)			
Quality Text (15 minutes)	Quality Text (15 minutes)			
Oral re-telling	Remember the sentence <i>Dictation (2 sentences)</i>			

Summer Term:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5

Year 1 Handwriting Expectations



These are the four-letter families and the order that they are taught:

Long letters	Curly letters	Bouncing ball letters	Zig-Zag letters
			v, w, x, k, z

Autumn 1	Spring 1	Summer 1
Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters		Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters
Autumn 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Digits 0-9 Learn to write surname independently Use and apply in writing activities	

Year 1 Spelling Expectations

Most children need systematic teaching, with opportunities to practise and reinforce their spelling knowledge. As with handwriting, spelling teaching should be explicit, cumulative and engaging. It should be regular and consistent, taught in small steps, with lots of opportunity for practice. [DfE – The Writing Framework, July 2025](#)

The National Curriculum sets out the spelling rules to be taught in Year 1, and these should be taught explicitly. This document provides a suggested review of those spelling rules, with opportunities to contextualise them within the teaching sequence outlined in this handbook.

	Autumn 1		Autumn 2		Spring 1		Spring 2		Summer 1		Summer 2	
	Vowel digraphs and trigraphs: ai, ay, oi, oy, a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e, ar, ee, ea (<i>sea</i>), ea (<i>head</i>), er, ir, ur, oo (<i>food</i>), oo (<i>book</i>), oa, oe, ou, ow (<i>now</i>), ow (<i>blow</i>), ue, ew, ie (<i>lie</i>), ie (<i>chief</i>), igh, or, ore, aw, au, air, ear (<i>dear</i>), ear (<i>bear</i>), are											
NC Objective	The sounds /f/ /l/ /s/ /z/ and /k/ spelt ff, ll, ss, zz and ck The /n/ sound spelt n before k								Adding the endings –ing, –ed and –er to verbs where no change is needed to the root word			
Word lists				adding s and es cats dogs buzzes fizzes	i/ee as y very happy party fly cry dry						tch catch fetch Compound words football playground	
Common Exception Words	the to I no		are was you they		do said so were							

Remember the Sentence (Dictation):



Remember the Sentence

Remember the Sentence is an activity used to help children retain to memory the sentence they have read, heard or created. Children need repeated practice to help remember a sentence, so it is accurately transcribed. Building in sufficient opportunities for oral rehearsal is essential, as children must demonstrate that they have committed the sentence to memory before being expected to write it down.

Beyond teaching spelling in phonics lessons, schools rarely use dictation as a way for children to practise spelling without having to compose sentences themselves. With plenty of practice in writing from dictation, children will find it easier to write independently.

Then they can begin to write down their ideas. However, expecting children to write at length early on results in cognitive overload and might damage their motivation to write, both at this stage and later. Extra time for writing is unnecessary at this early stage. [DfE – The Reading Framework, July 2023](#)

The purpose of this activity is to ensure children:

- form letters correctly,
- use finger spaces,
- segment words to spell,
- demarcate punctuation.

Lesson overview:

- 1) Teacher says the sentence (linked to the quality text the children have been reading).
- 2) Using My Turn Your Turn, children repeat sentence.
- 3) Teacher models writing the sentence using flipchart paper. The focus of the modelling must be on transcription skills, finger spaces and punctuation.
- 4) Check the modelled sentence together. Then cover.
- 5) Children are asked to remind their partner of the sentence.
- 6) Children write the sentence.
- 7) Teacher checks the sentence and offers feedback based on transcriptional skills, finger spaces and punctuation. Children act on this feedback.
- 8) Where appropriate, towards the end of the lesson, the original modelled sentence is displayed again for children to check and correct.

In the early stages of Year 1, you may wish to write dictated sentences in smaller groups as you establish good writing habits in your class. Consider the length of each sentence carefully so that pupils can retain it in their memory. Teachers must also be mindful not to alter words, word order or other details during oral rehearsal and modelling. Where multiple sentences are dictated, use mini plenaries to support retention, or chunk the lesson so that pupils remember and write one sentence at a time. Once the first sentence is completed, the next can be modelled and discussed. This approach helps to prevent cognitive overload.

When considering the content of dictated sentences, they should only contain sounds and/or spelling patterns in which the children are already familiar with. The *Remember the Sentence* lesson is also an ideal opportunity to integrate some of the recent teaching points around grammar and punctuation as the year progresses, as these aspects can be included in the dictated sentences; for example, a sentence requiring a question mark or including the conjunction 'and'.

SAMPLE

Example Planning:

Autumn Term 1 Week 1:

Day 1  Re-telling	Handwriting: 'l' Quality Text: How to Catch a Star by <i>Oliver Jeffers</i>. Read the story to the children. Discuss the parts they enjoyed. Would they like to go in a rocket to space? Create a story map from the key events in the text. Model how to use the story map to re-tell the parts of the story and/or the whole story. Children's Activity: In groups, re-tell key events from story map. Provision activities could include: star cutting, star counting, rocket building, playdough stars, character puppets.
Day 2  Remember the Sentence	Handwriting: 't' Quality Text: How to Catch a Star by <i>Oliver Jeffers</i>. Read the story to the children. Discuss the parts the children enjoyed. How would they go about catching a star? Act out some of these ways where possible. <i>Using the image from the book of the boy holding hands with the star by the beach, children complete the following activity:</i> Remember the sentence (Dictation): Dictate the following words to pupils: <i>star, sand, hand</i>
Day 3  Polish the Sentence	Handwriting: 'j' Quality Text: How to Catch a Star by <i>Oliver Jeffers</i>. Re-read the text. Ask the children to act the story out while it is being read to them. After reading, explain this is a story and what this means. Share that a story has a beginning, middle and end. Explain that you have read the story from beginning to end. <i>Using the image from the book of the boy reaching for the star in the golden sun, model the polish the sentence activity:</i> Polish the sentence: (Whole Class): <i>Using the image from the book of the boy at the pier trying to find the star, children complete the following activity:</i> Polish the Sentence: (Children's):

For more information

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