GETTING GOING:
generating, shaping and developing ideas in writing
Foreword

The DCSF invited leading English specialist Richard Andrews (then Professor of Education at the University of York) to discuss the development of the productive skills of speaking and writing and to produce a paper which would augment these discussion findings with current research evidence.

During the autumn of 2007, informal interviews with pupils in both primary and secondary schools revealed that many young writers who were struggling to make good progress in English often cited difficulties with the generating, marshalling and shaping of their ideas in writing. They found it hard to get started, rarely saw the point in planning and struggled to orchestrate all the elements of writing simultaneously.

In order to make explicit the link between research and classroom practice, a group of educational practitioners, comprising primary and secondary teachers and consultants, worked together at the Department to develop a range of tried and tested classroom approaches which would append this paper.

What follows is a new model of working with practitioners to develop practical classroom strategies which are underpinned by current educational research.

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April 2008
Getting Going

Part 1

Shifting writing practice: focusing on the productive skills to improve quality and standards.

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Aim
The aim of this paper is to provide a theoretical and historical rationale for more focused attention on the productive skills in English - speaking and writing - with a view to raising standards in writing yet further at all the key stages between now and 2013. The principal emphasis is on writing.¹

The problem
Based on a number of measures, the standard of pupils’ writing has been increasing at key stages 2 and 3 in the last few years. In terms of conversions, for example, those moving from KS1 in 2001-2 to KS2 in 2005-6 improved across the transition. Furthermore, the trend has been consistently upward in writing performance at KS2 since 1997, from 53% of pupils achieving level 4+ in 1997 to 67% in 2006 and 2007 (an advance of 4% on 2005 results, but also stalling or being sustained at that point). Since 2003, writing performance at level 5 at KS3 has improved significantly (those attaining a level 5 in writing between 2003 and 2006 rising from 65% to 76%, though falling to 73% in 2007) whereas reading scores remain between 65% and 70%, without significant improvement (except for 2007, when they moved up to 71%). Writing performance continues to improve from KS2 to KS3, and from KS3 to GCSE, with a significantly better conversion from KS2 to KS4 than for KS3 to KS4. The above advances mark a considerable achievement by pupils and teachers working within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE 1998) and Key Stage 3 National Strategy.

The problem, however, is that for the last ten years, with the exception of the recent improvement in writing at KS3, writing performance has lagged behind reading at all key stages. The gap is narrowest at KS1, though performance in writing has declined since 2003 because of a change in the marking system – there has been a fall in the last two years (2006, 2007). At KS2, the gap between writing and reading performance was 14 points in 1997, reached its widest at 28 points in 2000, and has narrowed to 16 points again in 2006 – an average of 20 percentage points. Only two-thirds of KS2 pupils attain level 4+ in writing in 2006, whereas since 2000 80% or more pupils per annum have attained level 4+ in reading. Not enough pupils gain level 4+ in writing at KS2, or advance sufficiently at KS3 (despite considerable improvements at this stage), to improve beyond 60% of pupils gaining a C or above at GCSE. At KS3, the gap was 8 percentage points in 2005, 9 in 2006 and 2 in 2007: narrower than at KS2. As Ofsted puts it (2006, p55), “many schools are finding difficulty in raising standards in writing.”²

The significance of the problem is at least twofold: a) that pupils are not developing the productive skills of writing sufficiently well to aid their schooling in English and across the curriculum, and b) that if pupils can attain level 5+ at KS3³, they are likely to have a good chance of gaining a C+ at GCSE in English – the generally accepted level of a good working competence in the use of English at the end of compulsory schooling.

Challenges
The problems noted above, along with the sticking points mentioned later in this paper, provide the challenges for the English curriculum, for teachers, teacher trainers, assessment designers and pupils. The major challenge is to reinvigorate writing practice and theory to increase engagement and to improve standards. To do so requires an understanding of the writing paradigm in which we now operate as pupils, teachers, trainers and policy-makers.

The history of teaching-of-writing approaches over the last 50 years can be characterised in four phases (the first two pre-computer, and the second two informed by reciprocal co-evolution with ICT⁴), some elements of which have been and continue to be concurrent in the best practice:

1950s-1960s: an approach to writing which set high store by quality within a limited range of genres derived from 19th century rhetorical categories. Little emphasis on the processes of writing; more on the finished product and on a distanced, ‘academic’ command of language types. Exercises (cf. the Renaissance

¹ It is fully acknowledged that speaking is a productive art in itself, and requires a separate paper or initiative.

² This does not mean to say there is not a problem in reading performance, which has fallen behind writing performance at KS3 in the last three years.

³ Only about half of level 5 pupils go on to a C+ at GCSE; level 6 is more likely to secure such a grade at GCSE. The implication is that we need to get more pupils to level 6.

⁴ See the introduction to Andrews and Haythornthwaite (2007) for an explication of the notion of reciprocal co-evolution between new technologies and literacy/learning, as opposed to any notion of ‘impact’ of one on the other.
and Elizabethan grammar school practice of *progymnasmata* – rhetorical models and imitation) designed to build up competence. The high point in the teaching of formal grammar in the hope of improving writing quality and accuracy.


**1980s to early 2000s**: a greater understanding of writing processes in expert writers that can be modelled in novice writers, deriving from the work of psycholinguistic and discourse modelling by Graves (1983) and Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987), reified into a formal system for teaching writing (Calkins 1994) (an acolyte of Graves), and now creating an abreaction among schoolteachers and principals in New York and the USA (Harwayne 2001) who believe it to be fossilised. Emphasis on drafting, editing, peer conferencing (aided by use of wordprocessing) but still aiming to capture ‘voice’ in writing. Sometimes linked to or running alongside a widening of the range of written (and spoken) forms – a movement that reacts against the perceived narrowness of the narrative/expressive mode and prepares writers for the world. Such range manifested in the National Curriculum (later versions) and in the Australian (specifically, the Sydney School, e.g. Christie 2002) celebration (and calibration) of a range of genres in writing.

**mid-1990s to the present**, and the model in need of development: a tension between the functions of writing in wider society and those in schooling and assessment. Writing seen within multimodal communication, especially in its relation with the visual (still and moving images) in popular and indeed all culture(s). Writing processes moving from drafting and editing to design (Kress 1995). A move away from the notion of a single personal ‘voice’ to a multiplicity of voices. The advent of the mobile learner, accessing written, visual and audio material any time, any place - an extension of academic and social space, especially for 11-16 year olds. Writing as text-box filling, but not always briefly; much scope for extended writing, both *in-depth* and *functional*. The need for keyboarding skills.

A fifth phase, yet to arrive (but likely to be here by 2015 – the date set by *English 21* as one to work toward for a full-scale review of the English curriculum) will probably see advances in speech recognition technology that might or might not obviate the need for keyboards or writing implements. The emphasis on composing written text (expression, articulation, framing, shaping) will shift towards oral composition, while not abandoning writing. There will be a renewed dynamic relationship between speaking and writing, with each finding their roles in a new economy of communication.
The major challenge posed by the fourth phase, as characterised above, is shaping a writing curriculum for 5-16 year olds between now and 2015 that will:

- recognise fully the place of writing within multimodality
- re-engage and motivate disaffected or unengaged young people by a) bringing the genres of schooling closer to the genres of the wider social world and b) giving writing a range of real purposes
- at the same time, use the power of writing to explore depth in thought, reflection and feeling
- recognise the place of creativity and imagination in non-literary forms of writing, as well as in literary forms
- recognise and exploit the fact that writing and reading are reciprocal
- investigate the similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses of speaking and writing in different contexts and for different functions – and thus re-establish the generative link between speaking and writing.

**Productive skills are the key to overall improvement in English**

Speaking and writing are primarily skills of language production, whereas listening and reading are skills of reception. The word ‘primarily’ is emphasised, as theories and practices of listening and reading do employ active meaning-making on the part of the audience or reader. Meaning, it could be said, is the result of a negotiation between the listener/reader and the text.

However, it cannot be denied that speaking and writing can be demanding in that they require expression, articulation, framing and shaping. To explicate these terms briefly: expression requires motivation to speak or write and the intellectual and motor facility to do so; articulation requires clarity of intention and thought, or at least a move towards such clarity; framing requires selections from the repertoire of socially embedded and generated speech genres and text types (sometimes these genres are hybrid or newly created); and shaping requires the manipulation of language within the chosen frames of reference, often at the point of utterance.

One possible reason for the fact that writing performance lags behind reading for the most part is that when listening or reading, the material is given. The intellectual load on the audience or reader might be said to be lighter than when composing in speech or writing, though that load will vary with content and substance in each case. It is generally accepted that writing is the most difficult, if not the most complex, of the four language skills, requiring solitary, creative, thoughtful, accurate and focussed compositional energy; plus a higher degree of reflective thinking and (usually) personal engagement.

Much has been done, for example, to introduce pupils to non-fiction text-types, and to improve their control of stylistic features associated with them. Where practice is weaker is in generating the motivation and purpose to write; without such direction, pupils know how to write but not why they write, how to start or how to engage an audience and how to generate and marshall ideas. Producing such writing of quality, along with other text-types, is one of the keys to overall improvement in English.

**The relationship between speaking and writing**

The relationship between speaking and writing is complex, and must be seen within the broader picture of how the language skills relate to each other. Essentially, the relationship between speaking and writing is generative in that both are productive skills, and they can complement each other by directly giving rise to expression in the other. The means of communication in each case are, however, different.

The relationship between writing and reading (like that between speaking and listening), on the other hand, is reciprocal: in these relationships, the means of communication (e.g. print or speech) are the same, but the difference is between productive and receptive actions within the mode.

Teacher-talk continues to dominate pupil-talk despite efforts to the contrary and initiatives, have given precedence to writing and reading over speaking and listening. The latter two skills have been seen as more reciprocal than the first two, resulting in more curriculum time being given to writing and reading separately though not necessarily to their reciprocity and proportionately less to speaking and listening (which are almost always seen as going together) (Ofsted 2005). Often, speaking has been seen as a means to support writing and reading, rather than as an object of instruction in its own right (Cameron 2002, Myhill and Fisher 2005)

How can speaking continue to support writing, while at the same time establishing its own stronger presence in English and across the curriculum? The key is in seeing the generative relationship between speaking and writing as two-way.

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1 Expression and articulation are part and parcel of the current curriculum but both need to be re-emphasised. Framing derives from sociological and discourse theory (see, for example, Ó坚or 1993) as a way of making sense of the demands of meaning-making at text level; shaping derives from Britten’s notion of ‘shaping at the point of utterance’ (Britten 1980), i.e. giving credit to the fact that much oral and written communication is not pre-planned, but is shaped as it happens.

2 According to Hemingway, ‘prose is architecture, not interior decoration’. To raise standards of writing we need to spend more time on the architecture.

3 See CRE 2001a, c; 2002a, b and c; and CRES 2003b, for example.
First, speaking can be an important rehearsal for writing. Ideas can be discussed in pairs, small groups, in whole-class discussion and in larger forums, then distilled, translated and developed in writing. Such writing can be dialogic as well as monologic. Dialogic writing includes planning for Socratic dialogue (question-and-answer format), colloquia, playscripts and other dual- and multi-voiced text-types. Monologic writing includes the more conventional forms such as essay, story, letter and report, where translation from the multiple voices of speech to the single authorial voice of the writer can be more difficult.

Second, writing can be a rehearsal for speech. Individual and/or joint composition in writing can prefigure delivery in speech, as in the making of a speech, the production of an oral narrative, the composition of a persuasive case, or the scripting of a (radio) play or advertisement. Speech as a product in these cases is more than mere performance: it is part of a dialogue that invites response in spoken, written and other formats. It is in such transformation between different means of communication and different genres within those means that the day-to-day practice of English in classrooms takes place.

Lesson planning and curriculum design, then, need to cater for speaking to come both before, during and after writing. Such bridging between speaking and writing will require imagination and consideration of the strengths of each skill in classroom, school and wider contexts.

The problem of insufficient space for sustained speaking and writing is compounded by assessment practices.

It is the case that speaking and writing are used to provide evidence of the quality of listening and reading, i.e. they are used to assess listening and reading as well as assessing themselves. The dearth of extended speaking and writing across the curriculum and in assessment across the curriculum may well have contributed to the relatively poor production skills of learners as they move through schooling. Pupils are not being given enough opportunities and enough support or incentive to discourse at length. As Britton pointed out as long ago as the 1960s (Britton 1967, pxiii-xiv) “a rough measure of [the teacher’s] success in promoting the right kind of talk might well be the length of the span that can go on without word from him “[sic].

What is clear is that speaking and writing are central to learning in formal education because they afford the learner the ability to reflect, think, compose and re-arrange as well as respond spontaneously (particularly in the case of speech). Furthermore, as Meek (1983) proves, such emphasis on the productive language skills can be the key to improvements and even breakthroughs for weaker learners not only in speaking and writing themselves, but also in reading and listening as a result of increased motivation, commitment and investment in making meaning in language; and increased awareness and exploitation of the reciprocity between writing/reading, speaking/listening, mentioned at the start of this section.
What we know about writing practice – what we’ve been doing well and where the sticking points are

Speaking and writing share the following characteristics as productive skills, as mentioned earlier in this paper. Here, these elements are elaborated further.

Expression is important because it engages the self or personae and releases what may be felt and/or thought. It affords channels of communication and creates contact with others.

Articulation aims to make such communication clear. In speech terms, articulation is associated perhaps most readily with surface features like clear enunciation of utterances; more importantly, the notion of articulation (‘joining’) is about logical or a-logical connections between ideas, thoughts, feelings and language, in speech and/or writing. Andrews et al. (2006b), in a systematic review of research on the teaching of argumentative writing at KS2 and 3, draw attention to the need for cognitive as well as linguistic work in improving writing in this mode.8

With framing and shaping the emphasis needs to move from a focus on the end-products – the frames (pedagogic ‘scaffolds’, genres, text types, forms) and shapes that language uses and that need to be learnt – to the act of framing and shaping that is at the heart of composition (literally, putting things together). Such a move will entail thinking more deeply about the early stages of composition: how ideas are formed; how they are framed; how inspirational ideas are supported by a climate for learning and development; how choices are made, early on, about the medium or media in which it is best to convey the message; how drafting and editing can be improved by critical dialogue and reflection at the deeper levels of composition (structure, voice, position, tone); how momentum and interest can be sustained; how speaking, reading and listening can contribute to the composing process in writing; how issues of design, balance and elegance (‘when is a piece finished?’) can be taught and learnt; and how a community of learners (speakers/writers/makers) can support such committed and high quality composing.9

One of the considerable achievements of the National Curriculum, especially in its version since 2000, is in the range and balance of spoken and written forms that pupils must engage in. There is now, for example, a much better balance between informative, argumentative and narrative texts than was the case in previous versions of the English curriculum in 1989 or 1995, as well as a wider range of speech genres. However, there are a number of sticking points that partly derive from such success:

• an undue emphasis on form (and pedagogic techniques like scaffolding that induct pupils into these school genres), which can lead to a somewhat static and formalic conception of what language can do10

• a reluctance on the part of teachers (and thus pupils) to experiment with hybrid forms

• insufficient engagement by pupils in their writing

• too limited a sense of audience and function, so that writing becomes an activity that serves assessment requirements in school (‘school writing’) and the educational system, rather than a form of communication that can make a difference in the world

• insufficient pace and verve in exploiting the potential of multimodal communication (verbal plus visual literacies, moving image, the advent of high quality sound in combination with words) and of seeing writing’s place and special function within these multimodalities, i.e. what writing can and cannot do11.

Many of these sticking points might be seen to come under the banner of the need for ‘creativity’. As All Our Futures (DCMS/DfES 1999) suggests, creativity should not define itself to ‘creative writing’ but should be pervasive across English and the rest of the curriculum. If creativity means the ability and capacity to make, shape, invent and articulate new meaning. The present English curriculum may have swung too far towards a catalogue of required forms of writing since the 1980s; but it does not have to swing back to a stereotypical creative formlessness/expressiveness. Neither polarity represents (or ever represented) the best of English writing teaching, which marries expression with structure, articulation with feeling/thought, and a range of linguistic competence with depth in engagement and imagination12.

The generation and marshalling of ideas for writing, mentioned in an earlier section, need more attention. Ideas for writing come from speech (e.g. a story told can then be written); in response to other writing and other media; commissioned for particular purposes; and out of the air. Providing a rich supporting context where a range of writing can be inspired and nurtured will require an appreciation of the written word. To develop such a climate, teachers and pupils will want to read and generate writing that gives pleasure (e.g. because it is funny, moving, well-crafted) and that makes a difference to personal lives and in the world. The early stages of the writing process – nulling an idea, developing the seed of an idea, trying various ‘voices’ or styles, gathering evidence via research, allowing a gestation period for the rhythm of a piece to identify itself – are important to share and discuss so that

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8 The findings of this report are mirrored in a recent report by the US-based Alliance for Excellent Education – see Graham and Perle (2006) which, based on a meta-analysis of research studies, concludes there are 11 strategies for improving writing in middle and high schools, including writing strategies, summarising, collaborative writing, specific product goals (audiences), word-processing sentence combining (cf. grammar review by Andrews et al., 2006a), pre-writing (planning), inquiry activities (research) and a process writing approach.

9 Further evidence to support the above four points will need to be gathered. The current list is based on anecdotal accounts from teachers, Ofsted reports and document analysis.

10 The current draft report from QCA define creativity as ‘using imagination to create settings, moods and characters and quirky themes, ideas and arguments; drawing on a rich experience of language and literature to make fresh connections between ideas, experiences, texts and words; using inventive approaches to making meaning, playing with language and using it to make new effects’. This definition conflates itself largely to creating innovative language. It could add that creativity contributes to problem-solving such as projections of scenarios, and that the generation of ‘fictional worlds’ (Flavel 1996) can apply to both fictional and non-fictional settings.
the writing process is made more evident (and thus open to discussion and development). Writing the first draft is usually a solitary act, requiring a high degree of concentration; but it is helpful to make the process public at significant stages, so that pre-writing, editing and proof-reading can play their part.

Implications for the pedagogy and assessment of writing

From a pedagogical point of view, techniques for improving writing will include practice in writing by the very teachers who are teaching it. In other words, English teachers will need to be accomplished writers in themselves, not only of literary and fictional genres but in informational and argumentative genres too. They will not only be able to produce final products in this range of genres (“Here’s one I made earlier…”), but also to reflect on and model the processes of writing in the classroom. It is probably true to say that most English teachers are already accomplished readers as degrees in English and related disciplines are principally an education in advanced reading skills in literature. Writing receives less attention.

Like all good teaching, engagement of the pupils at whatever age will be crucial. It is probably true to say that lesson planning has moved away from initial and sustained engagement (which is much more than stimulus) towards learning outcomes, compliance with the curriculum, and comprehensiveness. Some of the excitement may have been lost from routine teaching, so a new balance needs to be struck between meeting targets and outcomes on the one hand, and generating impetus and significant communication on the other. Too much emphasis on atomistic targets out of context tends to devalue the learning experience itself; we are more likely to attain targets if we concentrate on the substance and quality of what we need and want to do.

Following from engagement will be a much greater willingness to go into depth in whatever kinds of writing are being taught. This will require commitment, time and imaginative energy. It involves critical engagement on the part of the teacher with the emergent written texts of pupils before and during the compositional process as well as after it. It also requires the engagement of the pupils as thinkers, establishing in them a purpose and giving them a sense of their independent choices and voices as writers. Greater consideration to different types of planning and composition will be required, e.g. argumentative writing requires hierarchical and sequenced planning (Andrews et al. 2006b), as well as a sense of what mode(s) of communication (speaking, writing, reading, listening) is/are best for what purpose.

Dialogic teaching (Alexander 2006) will be an important element in improving the quality of interaction and thought on the part of pupils in the classroom. Dialogic approaches to teaching can support both speaking and writing, though it is not always the case that productive and purposeful talk translates directly into writing of such quality. As suggested earlier, we need to look not only at the transition from talk to writing (and vice-versa), but also at dialogic forms of writing in themselves, thus adding to the repertoire of largely monologic written forms that dominate the school curriculum and assessment regimes.
Finally, audiences and purposes need to be diversified so that communication has meaning (and is thus motivating) rather than a performance in empty or purely academic ‘school genres’ (Sheeran and Barnes 1991) served up for assessment. The writing across the curriculum of the mid-1970s understood this principle in its promotion of writing that made a difference in the world: such insight was continued in TVEI initiatives in the 1980s, getting English beyond the classroom.

In all the above aspects, provision will need to be tailored for the differing contexts of primary and secondary schooling; at the same time, progression, personalised learning and attainment will need to be seamless across the primary/secondary transition. There is a task for the Primary National Strategy, the Secondary National Strategy and in post-16 provision (as well as the 14-19 agenda) for reinvigorating the approach to the teaching and learning of productive skills of speaking and writing.

In terms of assessment, the range of skills tested will need to keep up with the actual learning requirements for assessment that reflects engagement, depth, range of audience and communicative impact. Such assessment may need to look beyond conventional forms to reflect and log progress (‘portfolio assessment’); and use digitisation to reflect an enriched, wider and deeper range and quality of writing.

The current generic statement on the use of ICT across the curriculum does not recognise the nature and functions of writing within multimodality. The new primary framework is already established; and a review of e-English and the impact of new technologies on the nature of texts and assessment possibilities is underway as part of English 21 (QCA 2005, 2006); ICT both affects the process of composition and the products which are created and assessable.

The strategies, as set out in the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE 1998), the Primary National Strategy, the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, (DfES 2003a, DfEE 2001a), the Secondary National Strategy and the more recent Primary Framework (see http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframeworks/literacy/) provide objectives and guidance for raising literacy standards. These frameworks provide detailed guidance on processes and forms of speaking and writing. They have been successful in raising standards, but for further progress in breaking through to higher levels of performance, teaching needs to be more consistently good and more focussed on engagement with and on the quality of speaking and writing in the curriculum. The key is to enable teachers to help pupils to see that speech and writing are powerful forms of expression and vehicles for thinking; and to encourage experimentation and judgement in finding the right forms for the meanings that are to be conveyed10. The Primary and Secondary frameworks and CPD materials will support teachers to enhance the provision for the teaching of speaking and writing.

10 See also previous materials and resources from the National Strategies that have been influential and, separately, QCA (1999).

The implication of the above is that a coherent and lively programme for pre- and in-service teachers of how to teach writing (and speaking) would be welcomed, taking into account the challenges set out above and developing some of the emergent themes from the English 21 consultation. The present paper requires discussion and exemplification by practising teachers, and the support of Teachers’ TV in order to showcase good practice.

The likely impact of a greater emphasis on productive skills

Being productive in modes of language like writing and speaking can prepare the ground for advances and breakthroughs in the receptive skills – reading and listening. If the biggest gap in attainment is still that between pupils on free school meals and the rest, then one way to close that gap is to give all pupils the motivation, access and tools by which to express themselves, to articulate better, and to frame and shape via language within their lives and in society. Such an emphasis on engagement, production, and quality will benefit all students, and contribute to a general improvement of literacy skills in the school population at GCSE and beyond.

It has been noted above that a focussed emphasis on improving writing can have direct effects on the generative relationship between speaking and writing. Recognition that we learn to develop the range and depth of our writing through its direct effects on the generative relationship between speaking and writing. Recognition that we learn to develop the range and depth of our writing through its direct effects on the generative relationship between speaking and writing. Recognition that we learn to develop the range and depth of our writing through its direct effects on the generative relationship between speaking and writing. Recognition that we learn to develop the range and depth of our writing through its direct effects on the generative relationship between speaking and writing.
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Create a supportive context for writing by:

- Drawing on pupils’ own experiences and interests, allowing them to write about what they know and are interested in. Provide them with real or simulated experiences as a basis for writing in more formal or less familiar genres, for example, setting up a mock trial in the classroom prior to writing a balanced argument helps pupils to get inside the mind of the opponent and anticipate objections.

- Using a shared text as a stimulus for writing, for example, asking pupils to write from the point of view of a different character in a class novel or writing an extra section in the same style as the author. Invite pupils to produce a non-fiction text in response to an issue in a novel, play or poem or ask them to recast a text in another form, such as rewriting a scene from a story as a newspaper report or an explanation text as a PowerPoint presentation.

- Using drama techniques, such as placing ‘texts’ within a tableau created by selected pupils. Ask the rest of the class, in pairs, to create a piece of text that could appear in the frozen scene, for example, a crumpled letter or a telegram bearing bad news. Two identical versions of the text are produced, one of which is placed within the scene. Once all the texts have been placed, the frozen characters ‘come to life’ and pick up each text, then freeze whilst the writer reads aloud from the second copy. For more details, see the Drama objectives bank (Key Stage 3 National Strategy 2003).

Help pupils to build their stamina for sustained writing by:

- Playing a range of sentence games, such as dropping different types of clauses into a sentence to create the building blocks for longer texts.

- Asking pupils to draw up five consequences of a hypothetical situation, for example, What if money didn’t exist? and three sub-consequences of each consequence in order to encourage speculation and development of ideas.

- Providing pupils with a closed question, for example, “Should Hero marry Claudio?” or “Should school uniform be banned?” Pupils then have to follow a yes/no flow diagram which they have to evidence. They must use connectives such as unless, except, if, but, so until every possibility is exhausted.
Support pupils at the point of writing rather than retrospectively by:

- Modelling a short piece of writing in front of the class, explaining and verbalising your language and organisational choices as you go. Teacher demonstration of the writing process prior to shared composition is a powerful way of enabling young writers to understand what good writers do at the point of writing.

- Using guided writing sessions to support small, targeted groups of pupils as they apply the skills they have been taught. For example, you might focus on planning to write, on the composition of a short piece of writing, perhaps paying particular attention to sentence level skills or on reviewing a piece of writing completed in a previous lesson.

- Reviewing the learning objective at regular points during the lesson, through targeted questioning or mini-plenaries, and then acting on the information gained by adapting your short term planning if pupils are making slower or faster progress than anticipated.

Draw on the reciprocal nature of reading and writing by:

- Providing good models or exemplars of texts and exploring their conventions before asking pupils to write in the same genre.

- Showing pupils how to write a well-structured story by exploring the narrative structure of a story shared in class and then linking this to their writing by chunking it into an effective opening, developing plot, complication, crisis and resolution.

- Exploring the way a particular technique, such as building suspense, can be created in a moving image text and a written text before asking pupils to create the same effect in their own work.

Exploit the potential of ICT by:

- Encouraging pupils to compose and edit on screen, using word-processing tools such as select all, cut, copy, paste and undo, highlighting and track changes.

- Using Digiblu cameras, for example, to take still images around the school to create a storyboard or to produce promotional material for a new school prospectus.

- Showing an image from a short film on an interactive whiteboard, using the spotlight tool to focus on a particular feature, for example, a character’s face or an environmental feature. Gradually zoom out, using probing questions as you reveal the whole image. Invite pupils to add thought bubbles onto the image and hot seat the character or director prior to writing.

Invest in planning by:

- Providing a wide range of planning models and strategies, for example, double bubbles, fishbone diagrams, tree diagrams, timelines, for and against grids and modelling their use, ensuring that pupils understand there is no single way to plan. Explore the way different planning models can suit different text types and different learning styles. Ask pupils to try out one or more planning formats in preparation for their writing. Once the writing is finished, ask them to explain how it helped.

- Showing pupils how to plan a story using images on a storyboard or a story mountain linked to narrative structure.

- Presenting a controversial question such as, “Should bootcamps be banned?” Then ask pupils to write negative and positive reasons on red or green cards and sort them into their order of importance. The process of classifying, ordering and rank ordering can help pupils to consider ways of sequencing non-chronological ideas.

Use talk to support writing by:

- Encouraging oral rehearsal of ideas prior to writing, especially in shared writing where pupils can be given limited time with a partner to orally compose the next sentence before offering it as a contribution to the shared composition. Use the shared writing process to support pupils in adapting their oral language to the more formal requirements of written text.

- Holding a debate about a controversial issue before asking pupils to write a piece of argument or advocacy to enable them to rehearse and articulate a range of ideas prior to writing. To support the transition to writing, place fragments from their debate as well as those from an exemplar written text onto a washing line or continuum from the informal to the very formal and draw out the differences.

- Making use of response partners. Provide pupils with specific success criteria to peer assess a piece of writing and ask them to provide verbal feedback to their partner, perhaps in the form of a question such as, “Can you develop your description of the character’s feelings?” Give pupils time to edit their writing in light of their partner’s feedback.
Create a learning environment which supports writers by:

- Displaying different models of planning alongside drafts and polished pieces of writing.
- Creating interactive working walls so that pupils can capture ideas, vocabulary, key connectives and sentence starters prior to writing as well as during writing, making sure that the wall demonstrates work in progress or exemplifies a process or skill.
- Ensuring that you have the physical resources to have a 'planning' classroom, e.g. flipchart paper, pens, sticky notes etc.
- Having a 'Cool Wall' in your classroom where pupils can decide where an item/quotation/character should be placed – cool or not cool.
- Ensuring that pupils know how to make full use of the learning environment, for example, by making sure that they know where to go and look for support at appropriate points in a lesson.

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