



Big Writing at Hutchesons'

A Parents' Guide to Supporting Children's Writing

Writing is an important part of the curriculum and requires the use of a set of complex skills which will not develop without structured teaching and practice. We use the programme and teaching style called 'Big Writing' developed by Ros Wilson. This approach to writing focuses on the development of the child's 'story-telling voice', regular practice of key writing skills (or core targets) and a weekly focus on writing for an extended time. The formal teaching of grammar, spelling and handwriting retains its rightful importance.

There are four core target areas known as V.C.O.P. and they will be part of every language lesson.

The letters stand for:

- **Vocabulary:** to encourage the children to use more ambitious words in their writing.
- **Connectives:** to use connectives to develop more complex sentences.
- **Openers:** to be able to open sentences in different ways.
- **Punctuation:** to use different forms of punctuation correctly.

Talking is of key importance to the children's preparation for writing. It helps clarify opinions and ideas which may be expressed later in writing. Talking can also motivate and stimulate thoughts for writing. This is the children's 'story-telling' voice.

Throughout the school there is a great emphasis placed on reading - variety, challenge and exposure to high quality writing. Children are then able to use their knowledge and understanding of an author's craft to improve their own writing.

Children will be clear about their writing targets and how to improve their work.

They will be assessed on three pieces of imaginative writing every year. These pieces are tackled independently with very little teacher support. We use these assessments, in conjunction with our assessments of writing across the curriculum (e.g. topic work) to report on your child's writing level at the end of the session. We also use this to track children's progress through the school.

How can you help?

Homework

Talk task

Every week, a 'Talk' task will be given for homework in preparation for the weekly Big Writing lesson. Engage your child in discussion about the set task. This discussion will help your child to be ready for writing in class.

Foster and encourage a love of reading

Children should be encouraged to try new authors or genres, asked to share their opinions of their book, to read aloud their favourite extracts, to discuss how the author made a character interesting or set a scene effectively - use VCOP to help.

The following pages show the HGS Criteria for each stage in the Big Writing framework:

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HGS Big Writing Criteria F4-F6

F4			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	V	Used a range of words: nouns, verbs, adjectives.				
2	Sp	Phase 4 (Letters and Sounds) decodable words spelled correctly, except it's.				
3	Sp	Phase 3 Tricky words spelled correctly.				
4	Sp	Used phonetically plausible strategies, or attempted to spell, unknown polysyllabic words.				
5	C	Used a connective other than 'and'.				
6	O	Used an opener other than I, The and My. e.g. He, She, If, They				
7	P/G	Written four or more simple sentences with accurate use of full stops and capital letters.				
Writing Skills/Style						
8	S	Sentences express feelings and/or ideas to develop the writing task				
9	S	Sentences include sufficient information to make the point clear.				

F5			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	V	Used adjectives to improve description and/or demonstrated some use of topic-specific vocabulary as appropriate to the writing task.				
2	Sp	Phrase 5 (Letters and Sounds) decodable words spelled correctly, except I'm and don't.				
3	Sp	Phase 4 Tricky words spelled correctly.				
4	C	Used two or more different connectives.				
5	O	Used two different sentence openers other than 'I'.				
6	Length	Consider number of words written if appropriate to task set. (At least 100 words for this level)				
Writing Style/Skills						
7	S	Series of sentences are logically sequenced.				
8	S	Writing shows clear sense of who, where, when and/or what is involved as appropriate to the writing task.				

F6			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	V	Used a range of nouns, verbs, adjectives to provide detail and/or demonstrated use of topic-specific terminology as appropriate to the writing task.				
2	O	Link ideas and events in a clear sequence, using words other than 'Then'				
3	P/G	Used one other punctuation mark correctly, other than a full stop/capital letter eg question mark, exclamation mark, comma				
Writing Style/Skills						
4	S	The writing task has a beginning, middle and ending/conclusion as appropriate.				
5	S	Writing avoids significant repetitions and omissions.				
6	S	The story has some description of the setting and/or character to interest the reader. Imaginative only.				

S1			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	V	Used interesting and varied word choice (nouns, verbs, adjectives) consistently and used specialist terminology as appropriate to the writing task.				
2	Sp	Common words spelled accurately.				
3	C	Used a connective from Layer 2 or beyond.				
4	O	Consistently varied sentence openers to interest reader. (Must be more than simple pronouns.)				
5	P/G	Accurate when using two other punctuation marks, other than full stops and capital letters e.g. commas, question marks, exclamation marks.				
6	P/G	Agreement of subject and verb.				
Writing Skills/Style						
7	S	Organised ideas, either to develop the storyline, or to inform the reader, as appropriate to the writing task.				
8	S	Written an appropriate beginning and ending/conclusion.				

S2			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	V	Used adverbs to improve description and/or used specialist terminology as appropriate to the writing task.				
2	C	Used a wider range of connectives from Layer 2 or beyond.				
3	P/Gr	Some indents used to indicate new paragraphs.				
4	Length	Consider number of words written if appropriate to task set. (At least 200-250 words.)				
Writing Style/ Skills						
5	S	Produced organised and clear writing with a beginning, middle, ending/conclusion as appropriate to the writing task.				

S3			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	V	Used a range of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs to provide detail and used topic-specific terminology with confidence as appropriate to the writing task.				
2	C	Used connectives from Layer 2 and an example from Layer 3 .				
3	O	Used a range of openers to create flow e.g. Last time, Also, After, Then, Soon, At last, Another thing, As well, as, Later.				
4	P/Gr	Consistently accurate when using full stops, question marks, exclamation marks and commas.				
5	P/Gr	Indents mainly accurate to indicate new paragraphs.				
Writing Style/Skills						
6	S	Used sentences of varying length and structure.				
7	S	The storyline has a developed sense of pace and is lively and interesting. Imaginative only.				
8	S	Included relevant steps which are logically organised to the purpose of instructing the reader. Functional only.				

S4			Term			
			B	1	2	3
1	V	Consistently used a range of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs to provide detail and/or used specialist terminology as appropriate to the writing task.				
2	O	Used adverbs in their range of openers to create flow, e.g. Slowly, Happily, Carefully or used adverbs of time, eg First, Then, Next, as appropriate.				
3	P	Used commas in a variety of ways to make meaning clear e.g. lists, phrases and clauses.				
4	G	Used pronouns to avoid repetition throughout.				
Writing Skills/Style						
5	S	Chosen a good story setting with potential for adventure (through danger or threat) with high point near the end. Imaginative only.				
6	S	Created characters, heroes and villains, which hold the interest of the reader. Imaginative only.				
7	S	Steps are relevant and logically organised to inform the reader. Important information not left out. Functional only.				

S5			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	C	Used examples of connectives from Layer 2 and 3 to create flow.				
2	P	Used range of punctuation which may include inverted commas for dialogue, apostrophes for contractions and for possession if appropriate to writing task. May not always be accurate at this stage.				
3	G	Used paragraphs consistently and appropriately using indent.				
4	Length	Consider number of words written if appropriate to task set. (At least 250-350 words or more.)				
Writing Style/Skills						
5	S	Kept the plot moving, building tension towards the conclusion. Imaginative only				
6	S	Steps are relevant and logically organised <u>with sufficient detail</u> to inform the reader. Important information is not left out. Functional only.				

S6			Term			
Writing Tools			B	1	2	3
1	V	Used range of adventurous or topic-specific vocabulary for a purpose, with some words particularly well chosen.				
2	O/C	Used an opener and/or a connective comparable to Layer 4 .				
3	P	Layer 4 -Punctuation used is accurate, clarifies sentence structure and may also be used to create effect i.e. inverted commas for dialogue in imaginative/personal writing.				
4	G	Used complex sentence structure consistently.				
Writing Style/ Skills						
5	S	Ideas/opinions developed in creative and interesting ways to hold the reader's attention.				
6	S	Selected interesting strategies to move the storyline forward e.g. characterisation and dialogue. Imaginative only				
7	S	The information is complete, well organised and presented clearly without irrelevant detail or repetition. Functional only.				
8	S	The writing is well developed from the beginning and has an effective conclusion.				