

What does the *National Curriculum* – statutory document say about writing

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading, where it has two elements:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective **transcription**: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
Effective **composition** involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Year 1

Writing during year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.

Reading should be taught alongside spelling, so that pupils understand that they can read back words they have spelt. Pupils should be shown how to segment spoken words into individual phonemes and then how to represent the phonemes by the appropriate grapheme(s). It is important to recognise that phoneme-grapheme correspondences (which underpin spelling) are more variable than grapheme-phoneme correspondences (which underpin reading). For this reason, pupils need to do much more word-specific rehearsal for spelling than for reading. At this stage pupils will be spelling some words in a phonically plausible way, even if sometimes incorrectly. Misspellings of words that pupils have been taught to spell should be corrected; other misspelt words should be used to teach pupils about alternative ways of representing those sounds. Writing simple dictated sentences that include words taught so far gives pupils opportunities to apply and practise their spelling.

At the beginning of year 1, not all pupils will have the spelling and handwriting skills they need to write down everything that they can compose out loud. Pupils should understand, through demonstration, the skills and processes essential to writing: that is, thinking aloud as they collect ideas, drafting, and re-reading to check their meaning is clear.

Writing – transcription

Statutory requirements

Spelling (see [English Appendix 1](#))

Pupils should be taught to:

- spell:
 - words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught
 - common exception words
 - the days of the week

12

English – key stages 1 and 2

Statutory requirements

- 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.

Statutory requirements

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’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Writing – composition

Statutory requirements

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 aloud their writing clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher.

Writing – vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Statutory requirements

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 Appendix 2 in discussing their writing.

Pupils should be taught to recognise sentence boundaries in spoken sentences.

Year 2

In writing, pupils at the beginning of year 2 should be able to compose individual sentences orally and then write them down. They should be able to spell correctly many of the words covered in year 1 (see English Appendix 1). They should also be able to make phonically plausible attempts to spell words they have not yet learnt. Finally, they should be able to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning. It is important to recognise that pupils begin to meet extra challenges in terms of spelling during year 2. Increasingly, they should learn that there is not always an obvious connection between the way a word is said and the way it is spelt. Variations include different ways of spelling the same sound, the use of so-called silent letters and groups of letters in some words and, sometimes, spelling that has become separated from the way that words are now pronounced, such as the 'le' ending in table. Pupils' motor skills also need to be sufficiently advanced for them to write down ideas that they may be able to compose orally. In addition, writing is intrinsically harder than reading: pupils are likely to be able to read and understand more complex writing (in terms of its vocabulary and structure) than they are capable of producing themselves.

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Pupils should understand, through being shown these, the skills and processes essential to writing: that is, thinking aloud as they collect ideas, drafting, and re-reading to check their meaning is clear.

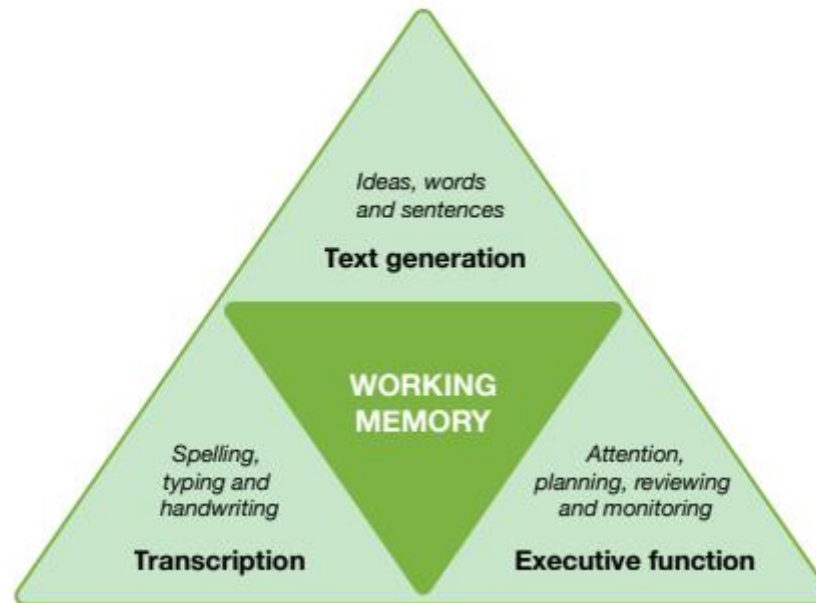
The ***purpose of phonics*** is to quickly develop pupils' word recognition and spelling. This involves:

- developing a child's phonemic awareness, which is their ability to hear, identify and manipulate phonemes (the smallest unit of spoken language)
- to teach them the relationship between phonemes and the graphemes (a letter or combination of letters used to represent a phoneme) that represent them

RWI – teaching the skills of decoding new words by sounding them out and combining or 'blending' the sound spelling patterns. It is necessary to teach these skills explicitly, but pupils should also have the opportunity to apply and practise these skills outside of phonics sessions during other reading and writing activities. Any practise could include children writing their own sentences using the letter-sound combinations taught. The goal is to improve the fluency (speed) as well as accuracy to the point that it becomes automatic and does not require conscious effort.

Why is it important to see writing as a process, not a single event?

- providing children with a range of writing activities that support the organisation and development of their ideas is a positive way to engage children in writing tasks
- understanding writing as an iterative process, developing understanding about how to improve their work, is key to developing as writers
- teachers looking for opportunities in texts they are reading, or topics the children are enjoying, often find highly engaging contexts, which can provide real purpose and audience for children's work
- providing children with genuine purpose and audience for their writing can be highly effective in terms of motivation to write



Writing is a more challenging skill than reading.

A child's capacity to plan and monitoring their writing depends on whether they have enough cognitive resources available. The **Simple View of Writing** highlights the key groups of skills that work together as children write:

- text generation—which involves thinking of ideas and using oral language skills to put those thoughts into words and sentences;
- transcription skills—which enable the writer to move oral language into written language; and
- executive functions—such as working memory, self-regulation, planning, problem-solving, and monitoring their writing.

The model places working memory in the centre, emphasising how it plays a role in enabling each of these skills to operate.

Working memory is the cognitive process used when people hold information in mind and manipulate it. When writing, for example, working memory enables a sentence to be held in mind while each word is recalled or segmented and the letters are recorded on the page. Working memory has a limited capacity, therefore when children are in the early stages of writing development, they are not able to apply all the skills within The Simple View of Writing to produce high quality writing.





Handwriting

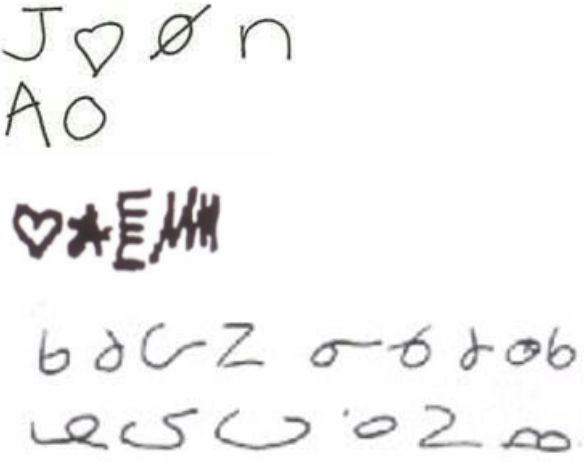


Practice should be extensive—a large amount of regular practice is required for pupils to achieve fluency in these skills. Achieving the necessary quantity of practice requires pupils to be motivated and fully engaged in improving their writing. Ensure practice is purposeful by targeting letters which are frequently formed inaccurately.

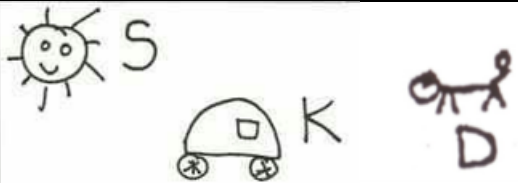
Practice should be supported by effective feedback—teachers can support children to practise effectively by providing opportunities for effective feedback. Feedback should:

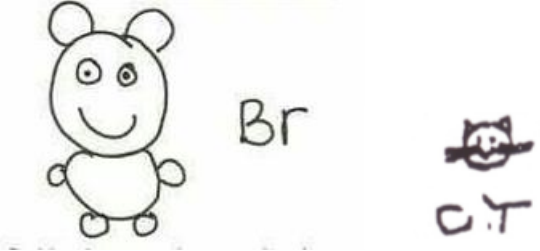


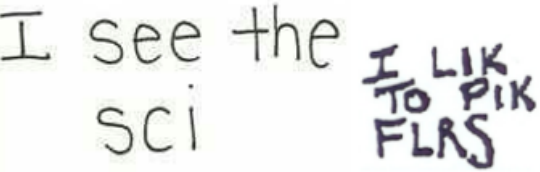
- be specific, accurate, and clear (for example: ‘It was good because you joined up your letters correctly’ rather than ‘Your handwriting is getting neater’);
- compare what a pupil is doing right now with what they have done wrong before (for example: ‘I can see you focused on making sure you crossed your “t”s, as you remembered more often than last time’);
- encourage and support further effort;
- be given sparingly so that it is meaningful; and
- provide specific guidance on how to improve rather than just telling pupils when they are incorrect (for example: ‘Next time, you should make sure that all of your “t”s are crossed. This is where you put the cross’).



It is important that children can form the letters of the alphabet correctly. This means knowing the correct starting point for each letter and following the correct movement pathways. Errors in letter formation are often the source of handwriting difficulties in children, but are not always obvious to a reader after the event of writing. Observations of the child’s process of letter formation need to be undertaken so that incorrect patterns do not become embedded, leading to difficulties with fluency later on. Ten letters seem more susceptible to formation errors and may require additional attention: i, j, a, d, g, r, n, m, h, and z.

Developmental stages		What the child might do	What it may look like	What to model and teach next
1 A/B/C	Random scribbling	Create marks starting any place on the page		Mark making left to right
2 A/B/C	Controlled scribbling	Marks made progress from left to right Resembles writing		Circular shapes going anti-clockwise where appropriate
3 A/B/C	Circular scribbling	Creates circles or ovals		Drawing simple images to convey a meaning verbally and share
4	Drawing	Pictures tell a story or convey a message		Holding a pencil correctly Good posture Listening to children carefully talk about images they have drawn

5	Mock letters	Can be personal or conventional symbols or attempts at letters with extra/incomplete lines or markings		The first letter of their name as a capital
6 Ditty	Letter string	Conventional letters formed moving left to right and progressively downward No separation or correlation with words or sounds		Continuing learning letter formation Good posture Pencil grip Supporting hand
7 Ditty	Separated attempts at words	Groups of letters with space in between to resemble words		Modelling sentence-like structures Hear and identify initial sounds using complete phoneme frames Labelling pictures with initial sounds

8 Ditty	Picture labelling	A picture's beginning sound is matched to a letter		Copying print Ensuring modelled print and labels in correct font Treasure/scavenger hunt for words to copy (labelling words so it is in context)
9 Red	Awareness of environmental print	Environmental print copied	desk door	Full first name practise through copying Correct letter formation
10 Red	Copies print	Name copied	RINT	Initial sounds identified and secured with possible two word phrases
11 Red	Transitional stage spelling or invented spelling	First letter of a word is used to represent the word	IWTNM	Continue with a phrase focusing on initial sounds without phoneme frame Listen to oral segmenting and identify end sound
12 Red	Uses first letter of word in group of words	First letter of a word is used to represent the words	I H A S (I have a sister)	Using phoneme frames identify ending letters orally and visually Using visuals a means of context so words are not in isolation

13	Uses beginning letter and ending letter to represent a word	Labels drawings and pictures with beginning and end sounds		Continue with a phrase focusing on initial and ending sounds without phoneme frame Listen to oral segmenting and identify medial sound Using phoneme frames identify medial letters orally and visually Using visuals a means of context so words are not in isolation
14	Hears a medial sound	Writes beginning, medial and ending letters medial sound being consonant		Develop accuracy in spelling for 3 to 4 sound words using phoneme frames in context
15	Medial vowel in correct position	Incorrect vowel written		Groups of words to create a phrase linked to first person or description that are not abstract
16	Beginning , medial and ending letters	Writing groups of letters with some inaccuracies to represent words		Groups of words to create a phrase linked to first person or description that may be more abstract Subject/verb agreement

17	Phrase writing/sentence-like form	Plausible phonic attempts with some spacing	<p>My nis dres</p> 	<p>Rabbit in The Sun</p>	Subject/verb agreement
18	Whole sentence writing develops	May use punctuation Known words spelled correctly or words using known sounds/letters	<p>This pumkn is min</p> 		Grammatically accurate sentence editing
19	Grammatically accurate sentence writing	Construction of words into sentence formation writing is legible and uses punctuation			