



Writing in KS2 - Talk for Writing

We teach writing using “Talk for Writing,” developed by Pie Corbett. It is based on the key principles of how children learn and enables them to imitate the key language they need orally before reading and analysing it. Through fun activities and all oral rehearsal, children internalise the text structures and language patterns before putting pen to paper.

Talk for Writing has three stages: imitation, innovation and invention, with the aim of the whole process being to create independent, enthusiastic authors.

Imitation:

A typical Talk for Writing unit would begin with a creative context, for example, a unit on The Spiderwick Chronicles could begin with children going on a Goblin hunt around the school ground and investigating ways to trap them! Children then learn a model text, supported visually by a text map and physical movements. Children hear the text and say it for themselves before they see it written down.

Once the children know the text well, they ‘read it as a reader’. This involves discussions around the text, focusing heavily on vocabulary and oral comprehension. They are encouraged to express opinions on their likes and dislikes regarding the text in order to improve their own writing. Reading comprehension strategies such as: summarising, imaging, predicting and making connections are taught explicitly. Further models are also shared with the children, so they broaden their frame of reference through investigating how the writers tackle this type of writing.

The next stage is ‘read as a writer’ which involves identifying the underlying patterns of both the overall organisation, as well as how the writer creates different effects. The text is boxed up (broken down into key sections) so that the structure becomes obvious and can be used as a basic planner. Writing toolkits are also created and these contain transferable strategies and techniques. During this stage the children are not just bathed in language but specifically notice, rehearse and learn language patterns needed to write powerfully.

Innovation:

Once the children have internalised the text, they are ready to start innovating. Younger children and less confident writers alter their text maps and orally rehearse what they want to say. More confident writers use the boxing up planning tool, then turn their plan into writing. At this stage the teaching is focused on generating and crafting composition. This process enables children to write their own versions of the exemplar text and develop their ability to generate good words and phrases using their inner judge, where they start to decide whether one word or phrase is best. Washing lines are used to collect and display models, words and phrases to support independent writing.

We have found that displaying the teacher modelled writing (I show), the shared writing with children (we show) and children's club published work (you show) provide good-quality scaffolds for all abilities. Children can innovate the model text in a variety of ways including substituting characters and settings, writing prequels and sequels, introducing flashbacks and writing from a different character's perspective. During this time children are expected to edit their work carefully, considering that teacher's feedback and the affect their word choice has on the reader. All teachers marking should lead to action.

Invention:

Finally, children move into invention where they write the text type independently and apply what they have learnt across the curriculum. Several 'inventions' are written and the most successful edited for publishing.

The unit ends with a 'hot write', showcasing how far the children have come, that is assessed by the teacher.

Throughout the process children work daily on spelling, vocabulary building and sentence work in relation to the initial assessments of their writing, as well as the demands of the text type.