



St Christopher's

Reading and Literacy Bulletin

Half Term 2 | October 2023

'The reading and writing of Standard English, alongside proficient language development, is the key to unlocking the rest of the academic curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read struggle in all subjects and the wonders of a knowledge-rich curriculum passes them by unread.'

Ofsted Reading Framework 2021

The theme of this half term's bulletin is how we move forward in our literacy strategy, reinforcing existing practice on vocabulary, and how we model great writing in our classrooms to develop independent learning through the gradual release of responsibility.

Re-visiting Vocabulary Techniques

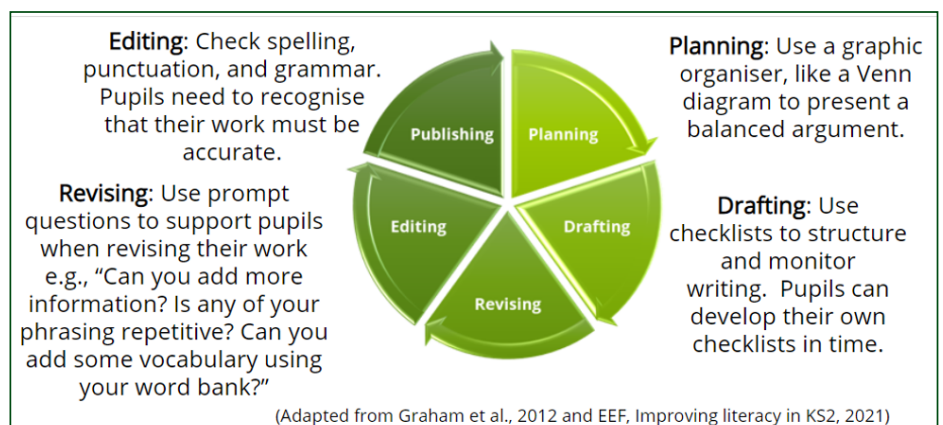
How do we support closing the vocabulary gap in the classroom?

1. **Bespoke definitions:** Introduce words through explanations in everyday connected language rather than dictionary definitions.
2. **Purposeful variation:** Provide several contexts in which the word can be used purposefully or for alternative meanings.
3. **Immediate interaction:** Build opportunities for pupils to interact with word meanings right away e.g., pair two target words, to support interaction with words in novel contexts: 'can splendour ever be unpleasant to look at?'
4. **Deep processing:** Develop activities that require students to process the meanings of words in deep and thoughtful ways e.g., getting pupils to think hard about meanings, by identifying and explaining appropriate word usage.
5. **Active interest:** Provide examples, situations and questions that are interesting and create discussion.
6. **Repetition, repetition, repetition:** Provide many encounters with target words, including through various contexts and retrieval activities.

Developing the Writing Process

For some, implementing this vocabulary in the writing process may come naturally. But for many it takes time to develop complex and extended writing and will need us as teachers to support their work throughout each phase of writing.

Consider this KS2 resource and how it is still applicable in our own setting when developing extended writing. You may find that the core skills are not dissimilar to the issues we face supporting our KS5 students! Read more on three key techniques that support this [here](#).



With the above graphic in mind, here is what Graham et al have to say about the writing process:

'Writing is not a linear process, like following a recipe to bake a cake. It is flexible; writers should learn to move easily back and forth between components of the writing process, often altering their plans and revising their text along the way. Components of the writing process include planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, and editing. An additional component, publishing, may be included to develop and share a final product.'

(Graham et al. 2012, p.14).

Less is more: why developing independent writers is our goal

One aim of our practice is to develop independent learners, particularly in writing. The EEF suggests that...

'a lack of independence is related to many of the challenges teachers face each day. From the perennial challenges of homework and revision to tasks in the classroom, like extended writing, we are always seeking to scaffold towards greater independence.'

It is important to avoid misconceptions around how best to cultivate children's independence. It is key to recognise that pupils don't just develop self-sufficiency by being given lots of tasks to work on alone. It is a process that is purposefully supported through explicit modelling and teaching. Eventually, novice pupils go on to develop strategies for themselves by recognising similarities and differences between things they have seen and done before.

When this move from dependence to independence occurs, pupils are more successful in our classrooms. It also means they are better equipped to face the challenges which life might throw at them outside of school, which is exactly what we want for our pupils.'

Consider this process from the EEF around modelling independence as a process to support independent writing in your classrooms:

Stage	Pupil/Teacher	Habits that support independence
1. Activating prior knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When planning a learning sequence, identify the learning that has come before. Structure tasks and questions that help identify knowledge gaps and misconceptions. Ensure any gaps are addressed before moving on. Begin a learning sequence by using a range of techniques to activate prior knowledge.
2. Explicit strategy instruction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share intended learning outcomes with pupils. Present new material in small steps and talk through implicit actions. Use visual representations, illustrations, and diagrams to represent and explain new information. Be considerate of pupils' working memory - using pause, repetition, processing time.
3. Modelling of learned strategy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use worked examples to guide pupils through each step of a problem. Use a 'Think Aloud' to share reasoning and model each stage of the metacognitive process (plan, monitor, evaluate). Use a 'Think Aloud' to model how pupils can manage their emotions throughout the learning process.
4. Memorisation of strategy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a range of diagnostic assessment tools (hinge questions, low stakes quizzes) to assess pupil readiness to move on. Ask questions that help pupils to make links with prior learning. Respond to pupil feedback by either moving on to guided practice OR providing more modelling or instruction.
5. Guided practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make time for pupils to rehearse new material through rephrasing, elaborating, and summarising. Use worked and partially worked examples to scaffold learners towards greater independence. See FAME tool for further information. Use flexible groupings to support the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. Question and observe pupils as they work, to get feedback on the success rate of the class.
6. Independent practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set tasks with an appropriate level of challenge for pupils to complete independently. Use questions that encourage pupils to plan, monitor and evaluate as they work. Give feedback that addresses misconceptions and errors. Provide appropriate scaffolding for those who need it.
7. Structured reflection		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask pupils to reflect on the success of the learnt strategy, providing modelling, questions and prompts where necessary. This Questioning tool could be used to support this. Provide opportunities for pupils to share their reflections with others. Ask pupils to reflect on how they managed their emotions and behaviours throughout the task, providing modelling, questions and prompts where appropriate.

Source:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eeef-blog-modelling-independence-the-seven-step-model-planning-tool>

Further reading:

- [Great article from Alex Quigley on revising writing and why it matters](#)
- [EEF Report on 'Metacognition and Self-regulation: Evidence Review'. Published: May 2020](#)
- [Government report on 'What is the research evidence on writing?'](#)

Check out our Library resources:

[Recommended Reading for KS3](#) | [Challenging Reading for KS3](#) | [A Guide to Support Reading at Home for Parents](#)