

The Writing Framework: a brief overview

'The Writing Framework outlines a common approach to teaching writing based on evidence and existing good practice.'

This non-statutory guidance was published by the DfE in July 2025 and will be updated after the ongoing curriculum review.

Some of the headlines are:

- Teach textual features such as grammar and spelling in context
- There should be a focus upon building and extending sentences and paragraphs with an emphasis on grammar and punctuation in conveying meaning
- In Foundation Stage and early KS1, there should be a focus upon mastering the foundational concepts of transcription such as spelling and handwriting fluency

Sources of evidence - Recent DfE and Ofsted reports

- The reading framework – 2023
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) resources
- Leading literacy – NPQ
- OFSTED research review for English 2022 - Link below
- Telling the story – the subject report report
- Strong Foundations in the early years of school - Link below

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-research-review-series-english/curriculum-research-review-series-english>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school>

Each of the sections in the framework contains an audit document.

Reception: section 2

- The importance of oral composition is highlighted
- Handwriting and spelling should be emphasised
- Children are not expected to produce extended pieces of writing at this stage
- The use of dictated sentences to limit cognitive overload and practise the application of spelling is recommended

The report contains a case study – Sophie – which makes the point that phonics teaching did not continue long enough for her to develop accurate and confident spelling and also the fact that she didn't receive regular and systematic handwriting instructions so her problems continued into KS2. This emphasises the point of reducing cognitive load in FS and early KS1 so that effective transcription can be developed to free up the brain for composition skills later.

Composition : Section 4

There is a big emphasis in this section on understanding sentences for effective composition with recommendations relating to:

- Explicit modelling
- Using voice pitch and timing to emphasise prosody
- The use of sentence stems and frames for scaffolding
- The role of mentor texts and WAGOLLS

Suggested activities to support the mastery of sentences

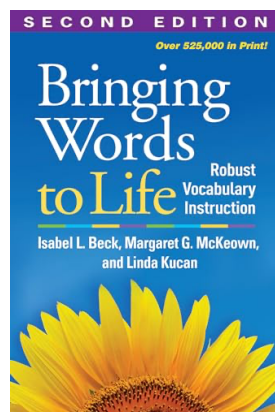
- Combining sentences
- Extending sentences
- Using pictures and animations
- A focus upon the four main sentence types - statements – questions – commands – exclamations
- There are further ideas in the report for developing sentences such as combining sentences, the use of adverbials of when, where and how with some national curriculum exemplification at different age groups using examples from Jack and the Beanstalk

The table below highlights the number of mentions of certain key words in the document. The results speak for themselves!

Sentence(s)	440
Composition	114
Effect	110
Writer	96
Reader	52
Purpose	31
Audience	15

Developing Vocabulary

The usual focus upon the three tiers of vocabulary as exemplified by Beck et al



Other headlines:

- There is a continued emphasis upon the I do/we do/you do approach to scaffolding and modelling
- Writing for audience and purpose is still the key recommendation
- The report suggests developing a whole school policy of planning models for whole texts and suggests a couple of ideas in the ‘burger’ or ‘temple’ model
- Unsurprisingly, there is a section labelled keeping up from the start which involves identifying potential issues early and then providing appropriate scaffolding and support

Writing across the curriculum

This section makes the obvious points about applying English skills in other subjects with the use of consistent planning formats across the curriculum whilst maintaining the emphasis upon the

foundation subject. The fairly new term, disciplinary literacy, is only mentioned in the context of KS3

Leadership and Management of writing

The report recommends that an English lead is appointed to oversee writing and it prefers that this is the same person who oversees all of English. However, if a school has a literacy team then it suggests that they work closely with the SENCO. The same advice applies if it is a single literacy lead.

Summary

There is little that is actually new within the framework. The content echoes the recommendations from the reports listed above from the DfE and Ofsted over the last two or three years. The focus remains very much on developing transcription skills in the early years and then emphasising the role of sentence level work as a route to composition. The audit documents at the end of each section are useful for leaders in assessing the current position of schools with regard to each element.