

Supporting Your Child with Writing

These are just some ideas that you may like to use in order to support your child with their literacy homework. Although I do know that spelling and handwriting are important, your child needs to make sure that their sentences are varied and exciting – not just playing it safe with words they know they can easily spell. Their writing should be creative and full of gorgeousness!

We are having a major focus on sentence structure, grammar and punctuation in class at the moment.

Varying sentence openers:-

- Using a connective: e.g. While Tom waited, the bus arrived.
- Using a verb starter (ing) e.g. Waiting for the others, Molly stared up at the sky.
- Using a verb starter (ed) e.g. Surprised by the sudden noise, the pony bolted.
- Use a simile e.g. Like a fish, she dived in.
- Use an adverb e.g. Cautiously, she entered the examination room.
- Use 'but' for emphasis e.g. But they were doomed...
- Use a prepositional phrase e.g. At the end of the lane, stood an old house.

A variety of sentence types:-

- Simple sentences e.g. Camels are large animals.
- Compound sentences e.g. Fergus was hungry and Harry was rather full up.
- Complex sentences. The use of comma within this sentence is very important. e.g. After the rain had stopped, they went inside. Although it was raining, the children still played outside.
- Using a question e.g. What were they to do?
- Using one word for effect e.g. Bang!

The children need to think about the 'P A F'

PURPOSE	What is the purpose of this piece of writing? E.g. to persuade, inform, instruct, entertain
AUDIENCE	Who is the audience? Should it have a formal or informal tone?
FORM	The layout of the work e.g. using bullet points, paragraphs, quotations, heading, subheading, text in columns, centred etc

Their work needs to have some sort of cohesion or 'flow' through it. In class we call it a 'golden thread' so their work is not disjointed when it is being read and there seems to be a flow from the start of the work until the end – whether it is in a report (making reference back to the introduction) or in a story (making links with events through use of time connectives) in each paragraph.

Proofreading Work

It is a sad fact that children are not keen on checking through their homework – or school work! Allow them the opportunity to edit and improve it in a different colour if they like – they are checking for ways of improving it (choosing better words), adding missing punctuation and finally checking spelling. It is recommended that your child reads it aloud to check it.

Punctuation is really important – starting with the basics of using a capital letter and full stop; leading onto using commas within sentences (in a list and within a complex sentence), using ? and ! Finally the more able writers can use brackets (containing extra information) and dashes. I'm not a big fan of children using speech in their written work as they tend to lose the interest of the reader, but I do agree that there is a time and place for it. So as a compromise, I will only allow children to use speech three times within a piece of written work (so it needs to be purposeful and meaningful) – but also reminding them that speech marks are invisible walls that surround all the words spoken AND the closing punctuation!

Vocabulary

Children are encouraged to use the best word possible to paint a picture in the reader's mind. Spelling should not hinder your child from using the most interesting word – if they are unsure of a spelling, then they can draw a line underneath it and check it with a dictionary in the 'proofreading' stage.

The written tasks set should not take any longer than an hour to complete – from the planning stage, writing (or typing) stage to the proofreading stage.

I hope you find this useful to use with your child at home.

Mrs D Lewis

