

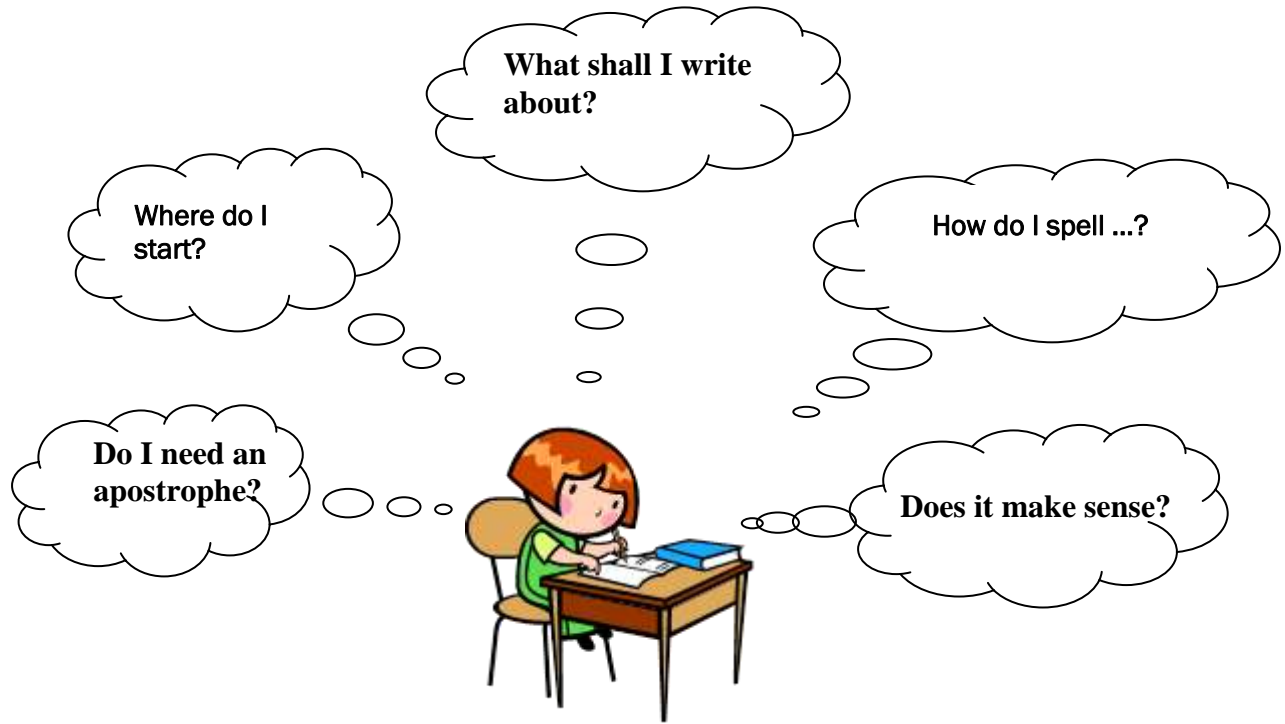
How to help your child with writing



St Martin's Primary School

Mavis Humphreys – Primary Literacy Consultant

How to help your child with writing



Many children find writing difficult because there are so many things to think about at the same time!

In the early stages of learning to write, children are only able to focus on some aspects. For example - a child concentrating on writing an exciting adventure story may temporarily 'forget' handwriting or spelling. As they improve, the skills will become better integrated.

Handwriting



- Know the school's handwriting model
- Prompt your child to use the school's handwriting model at home
- Do a little handwriting practice.

Good handwriting can be helped by:-

- Sitting in a comfortable position
- Holding pens and pencils correctly

Spelling

- **Phonics** - Help your child to hear the sounds in words
- **Rules and conventions** - Encourage children to see links between new words and words they already know how to spell
- **Sight Vocabulary** - The more children read the greater their sight vocabulary becomes
- **Independent Strategies** – Try using mnemonics, e.g. because, -ould
- **Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check!**



Spelling activities - Make it fun!

Don't under estimate the impact of playing games.... Scrabble, Upwords, Hangman, I spy, Wordsearches, Crosswords, etc.

Countdown

Use magnetic letters on fridge
 Child requests 7 letters – mixture of vowels and consonants
 Has to make longest word(s) can think of.



Action spellings – replace letters with actions, e.g.

'e' – clap hands 'i' – click fingers 'r' - hands on head

Car registration words

Take letters from car registrations – think up word with letters that appear in the same order e.g. DCY – decidedly, HSL – hospital,

Shannon's Game - What comes next?

A version of Hangman, but letters must be identified in the correct order. It aims to secure knowledge of sequential letter patterns.

Could be <small>(as in...)</small>	<u>T</u> <u>R</u> <u>E</u> <u>A</u> _ _ _ _	Couldn't be
Te (team) Ta (tank) Tra (train)	(Build up picture of mouse/cat when a 'couldn't be' suggestion is made) (Word = treasure)	c j b

Media Search:

Using a newspaper or magazine you have 15 minutes to look for your spelling words. Circle them in different coloured crayon. Which of your spellings words was used the most times?

Tasty Words:

Try and find tasty things to spell your words with, like raisins. Then when you spell them right you get to eat them!

Story Time:

Write a short story using all your words. Don't forget to check your punctuation!

Speed Writing:

See how many times you can write the word correctly in one minute.



Ideas and imagination



- Interact with your child
- Take time to talk and reflect on experiences
- Go on visits
- Share a wide range of books / texts
- Share stories

Give your child lots of opportunities to read:

- stories and poems
- information books
- signs and notices
- newspapers, magazines and comics
- instructions (recipes, games, etc.)
- teletext and internet

Games to strengthen the imagination



Word association

Give a word – 1 minute to write as many words as you can related to that word.
e.g. Snow – white, cold, crisp, frozen, etc – count the number of words.

Repeat – imagining scene first – e.g. bonfire.

Imagine – stand close, feeling the warmth on your face, smell the smoke, hear the crackle of the wood, flames licking round the wood, etc.

1 minute to write as many words as you can related to *bonfire*. Count the number of words.

Read and Draw

Find a short passage from a story that describes a person, place or event. Read it aloud and ask the children what they 'see'. They draw an illustration for the

Predictions

Read the opening of a story and ask the child to 'imagine' what might happen next.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Think it.

Say it.

Write it.

Read it.

Check it.

- Know your child's targets in order to provide extra focused support at home
- Discuss the writing task and your child's ideas before s/he prepares to write.
- Stress the importance of rereading during writing to check for flow of ideas. Proof—reading the work aloud will enable your child to hear whether the writing flows well and whether any words have been omitted.
- Ask children whether they think that they have met their targets in this piece of writing.
- Celebrate the writing and give lots of praise!



Sentence structure games

Human sentences - Re-constructing sentences

I

like

chocolate

cake.

Reading together

Take it in turns, reading one sentence each.

Oral re-telling of familiar stories – one sentence each – traditional tales (Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks, The three little pigs, etc)

Oral composition of own stories

Make up own stories, taking it in turns to say one sentence each. (Game for car journeys)

Rainbow sentences

Write a story/paragraph using a different coloured pencil for each new sentence

Change that sentence!

Dice game – Throw the dice and make the appropriate changes to the given sentence.

E.g. The old man walked slowly.

1. Add an adjective
2. Change the noun
3. Change the verb
4. Change the adverb
5. Change an adjective
6. Create a completely new sentence.



Random words

Choose a book. Ask for a number – turn to the page of that number. Ask for another number – that gives you the line. Then ask for a small number – that gives you a word. Think up a sentence using that word. Same process can be used to select randomly two or three words. Child has to try to make up one sentence containing all three words.

Animal alliteration game

Make a list of animals. Use the animal list to create alliterative sentences – one per animal (e.g. *The tiny tiger tickled the terrified terrapin's two toes with torn tinsel.*)



Openers and connectives games

Collect sentence openings

When reading together, build a bank of *when, where, how* sentence openings.

e.g. *When* - time connectives – *After tea, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

Where - adverbial phrases - *In the garden, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

How - adverbs – *Carefully, Bertie dug a deep hole.*

'Dropping in'



Add some description to a sentence by 'dropping in' a phrase or clause

The dog buried the bone. – The dog, *with a smart red collar*, buried the bone. The dog, *which was covered in mud*, buried the bone.

Adding in or on

Extend a basic simple sentence – in turn make one addition to the sentence by either 'adding on' a word, phrase or clause at the beginning or end of the sentence or 'adding in' a clause, by 'inserting it into the middle of the sentence.

E.g. The dog barked.

The fierce dog barked.

The fierce dog barked very loudly.

The fierce dog, which had been tied up all day, barked very loudly.

The fierce dog, which had been tied up all day, barked very loudly at the burglar.

Purpose and audience

It is important that children see writing as a means of communicating to real people for a real reason.



- Be a writing model – let them see you writing in lots of different contexts
- Encourage your child to write alongside you – composing letters, messages, emails, reports - even text messages!
- Create real writing opportunities such as shopping lists, labels, letters, birthday cards, messages, emails or invitations.
- Children enjoy writing creatively. Your child may wish to write stories, poems, posters, descriptions
- Encourage your child to make his/her own little story-books or diaries, such as holiday diaries or scrapbooks.

Try to provide your child with a variety of writing equipment

e.g. pens, pencils, chalk, crayons, sharpeners, rulers, rubbers, staplers



notebooks, post-its, paper of different sizes and colours, etc.



What can you do to help your child?

- Talk, talk, talk!
- Read, read, read!
- Be a writing model
- Create real opportunities for writing
- Focus on content - don't dwell on mistakes
- Talk through writing and model the reading and checking processes.
- Praise – show that you value your child's writing
- Make it fun!

