

Here at Smarden we use Talk for Writing alongside our reading.

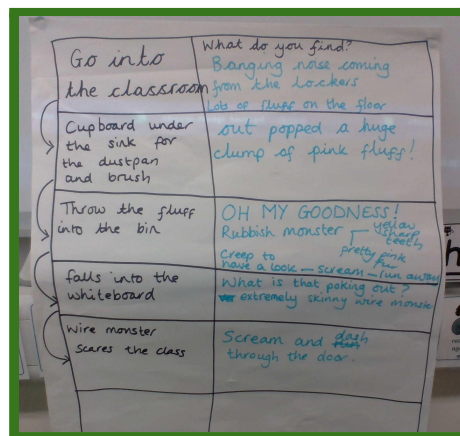
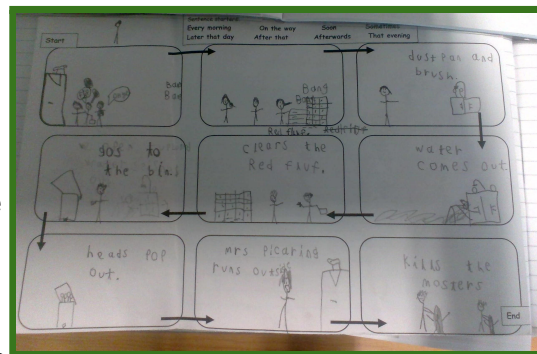
Talk for Writing enables children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic orally before they try reading and analysing it. We teach all of our English through fun activities that help them rehearse the language they need, followed by shared writing to show them how to craft their writing. This enables them to choose the writer tools they want to use in their independent writing, which in turn helps them to develop their own literacy voice. All of our writing is taught with a clear audience and purpose in mind.

There are three stages in the Talk for Writing process:

Step 1 - Imitation

Teachers choose a carefully selected book which links to the current topic. After creating an engaging 'hook' for the topic, the children immerse themselves into the text and are able to internalise the type of language that they need. This is then followed by talking a model text, supported visually by a text map and physical movements to help the children recall the story or non-fiction piece. In this way the children hear the text, say it for themselves and enjoy it before seeing it written down.

Once they have internalised the language of the text, they are in a position to read the text and start to think about the key features that help to make it work. Understanding the structure of the text is easy if you use the boxing-up technique and then help the children to analyse the features that have helped to make the text work. In this way the class starts to co-construct a toolkit for this type of text so that they can talk about the features of the genre.



Step 2 - Innovation

Once the children have internalised the text, they are then ready to start innovating on the pattern of the text. This could begin with activities to get the children thinking about the key words and phrases of the model text so the children can magpie ideas.

Younger children and less confident writers alter their text maps and orally rehearse what they want to say, creating their own version. More confident writers use the boxing up to plan new texts. The key activity in this stage is shared writing, helping the children to write their own by “doing one together” first.

This could begin with using a boxed-up grid (innovating on the model text) to show how to plan the text and then turning the plan into writing. This allows the children to see how you can innovate on the model text and select words and phrases that really work.

At this stage, we use a washing line and working wall to share words and phrases that have been suggested in the shared writing session. Children can then ‘magpie’ these for their own independent writing.



Once they have finished their own paragraph/s children should be encouraged to swap their work with a response partner. Time now needs to be found to enable the children to give their own work a polish in the light of these discussions and perhaps to begin the dialogue about what works by writing their own comment on their work for the teacher to comment on.

Step 3 - Invention/Independent Application

The teacher now has the opportunity to assess the children's work and to adapt their planning in the light of what the children can actually do. This stage could begin with some activities focused on helping the children understand aspects that they were having difficulty with and should include time for the children to have a go at altering their work in the light of what they have just learnt so that they start to make progress.

This stage will continue to focus on the next steps needed to support progress so the children can become independent speakers and writers of this type of text. Additional examples of the text are compared followed by more shared writing on a related topic and then the children can have a go themselves on a related topic of their own choosing. Children use their individual writing ladders to remind themselves of agreed targets based on aspects of writing that they need support with.

Again this section will end with a response partner and whole class discussion about what features really worked, followed by an opportunity to polish your work. This process also helps the children internalise the toolkit for such writing so that it becomes a practical flexible toolkit in the head rather than a list to be looked at and blindly followed. At the end of the unit, the children's work should be published or displayed.