

Stage 1 The model text

You can use the model text to familiarize children with the writing genre or task, sensitize the children to particular themes or ideas, and draw attention to language structures and vocabulary. Each model text has an overall gist question or task to encourage the children to read the model quickly and gain an overall understanding. Texts are not intended for intensive reading practice.

It is a good idea to ask children to read the model text themselves first and answer the gist question. Then ask further questions to check understanding of the content and genre.

Stage 2 Noticing text features

Use these tasks to focus on features of writing such as titles, paragraph headings, linking of sentences, and overall structure. This will help children to understand how to write their own version. Each worksheet has an appropriate task which will help children understand particular features of the task. You could ask children to do this individually or in pairs, depending on the task.

Stage 3 Instructions for the task

Read out the instructions for the writing task to follow. Often children have to imagine they are a character in the story. You could ask them to close their eyes for a moment and visualize before discussing their ideas as a class. Use this stage as an opportunity for oral discussion where children put forward their ideas and make suggestions, as well as using it to clarify the task and answer any questions children may have.

Stage 4 Planning

Each worksheet contains a planning task and space for children to write their notes. These may be in different formats. At lower levels, children may be asked to choose and check from a list of vocabulary. As they progress, children may choose vocabulary from a word bank. These provide models and support for children to copy or check spellings. As children progress further, they will be asked to do freer planning tasks such as lists, completing tables, or mind maps. These tasks could be done individually or in pairs, for children to compare or plan together.

Stage 5 Writing

For the final writing task, children are usually asked to imagine that they are one of the characters from the Reader story, or to interact with one of them. Writing tasks are varied and provide practice in many different writing genres. At lower levels, these include making a minibook, posters, a poem, letters, postcards, and invitations. Some tasks may include drawing, but make sure children do the writing task first and set a time limit so that the drawing task does not go on for too long. Some worksheets contain tasks which can be cut off and used for further tasks.

For levels 3 and 4, children are asked to tackle more creative tasks such as webpages, fantasy stories, newspaper reports, and a movie script.

Teachers can use all of the preparation tasks on the worksheet in class, but you may want to ask children to write out a final version for homework, either in their notebooks or on paper so that work can be displayed or read by other children. Ask children to read each others' work so that their work is valued. You can also build in peer correction. Children could keep their writing work in a separate file to build up a bank of written work which will help you monitor their progress.