

A tool to help you evaluate different writing schemes & approaches



The Writing For Pleasure Centre

- Promoting research-informed writing teaching

As teachers, we can be inundated with writing schemes and approaches which promise a lot but rarely deliver in the long-term. To help you make informed decisions about which writing approach is best for you, we've created this simple tool.

The tool is based on our work around The Science Of Writing ([2022a](#)), Writing Realities ([2022b](#)), what the research evidence has to say about the most effective writing teaching ([2022c](#)) and what it is the best performing writing teachers do that makes the difference ([2022d](#)).

The tool is split into the following four areas and includes 22 individual statements.

Conceptions of writing and the writer

The approach or scheme:

1. Values children's funds of knowledge, identities and language and makes them a central part of writing projects.
2. Ensures children learn about all the reasons we are moved to write (to entertain, to teach, to paint with words, to persuade or influence, to reflect, to make a record).
3. Offers writing projects which are authentic and purposeful. They are not pseudo-authentic nor are they based on artificial stimuli.
4. Offers writing projects which aren't only devised for teacher evaluation but also serve other genuine audiences too.
5. Ensures reading instruction doesn't end up dominating the writing classroom.
6. Would have a reciprocal and supportive relationship with your reading approach.

Relationship between teacher and pupil

The approach or scheme:

1. Values the social and collaborative aspects of writing and being part of a community of writers.
2. Provides support for developing teachers as writers. Shares how teachers can use their own processes, experiences and craft knowledge profitably in the classroom.
3. Teaches children how to use their own volitional reading and life experiences to find subjects for class writing projects.

Content of the writing curriculum

The approach or scheme:

1. Encourages classes to study mentor texts (including mentor texts written by their teacher and other children) which match the requirements of the class writing project.
2. Supports intertextuality and teaches children how to write in personal and collective response to their reading and their learning in other subjects.
3. Grammar and sentence-level instruction is taught through a functional approach i.e. grammar is taught and applied in the context of developing a real piece of writing.
4. For teachers of early writers, it makes connections between phonics, encoding and spelling.
5. For teachers of early writers, it provides information on how [emergent writing](#) develops.
6. Provides information on how to support children with English as an additional language.

Teaching strategies

The approach or scheme:

1. Encourages teachers and children to set goals for class writing projects. This includes: product goals (what they want their writing to do, include and achieve), process goals (the things they have to get done each day), and publishing goals (who they are going to give their writing to at the end of the project).
2. Writing instruction regularly aligns with the principles of [self-regulation strategy instruction](#) (SRSD instruction).
3. Provides craft lessons which cover aspects of the writing process. This includes lessons on being a productive and happy writer, generating ideas, planning, drafting, revising, proof-reading and publishing.
4. Provides craft lessons which share how to write great stories, memoirs, poems and non-fiction texts.
5. Ensures children receive writing instruction and have an opportunity to write meaningfully for a sustained period every day.
6. Provides guidance on how to help children productively read, think, talk and share what they've been writing.
7. Provides information on how teachers can deliver effective and efficient verbal feedback and individualised responsive instruction.

It is essential that whatever approach you choose, it helps you develop a coherent and well-constructed vision for teaching writing. Choosing your vision for writing should be guided by theory and the best scientific evidence available. It's also important to acknowledge how, as teachers, you need to bring your own knowledge, gained through experience, to the process of choosing an approach or scheme that is right for you too.

We hope this tool can help you make informed, judicious, and intelligent decisions about your writing teaching.

[DOWNLOAD THE SPREADSHEET TOOL](#)

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Finally, you may find the following links useful when considering which writing approach is right for you:

- The importance of a whole-school vision for writing ([link](#))

- What sort of writing teacher are you? ([link](#))
- Guidance on teaching writing and the new Ofsted framework ([link](#))
- Response to Ofsted's research and analysis. Curriculum research review series: English ([link](#))
- The Education Endowment Foundation's improving literacy in KS2 guidance report: our review and implications for teaching writing ([link](#))

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