

How can we ensure children are writing independently every day?



The Writing For Pleasure Centre

- Promoting research-informed writing teaching

The Standards & Testing Agency, rightly, wants schools to develop independent writers (STA [2018a](#), [2018b](#)). However, it's clear that most writing pedagogies being used in schools at the moment aren't always fit for this purpose. They aren't orientated towards teaching children to be motivated and independent writers (Young & Ferguson [2021a](#), [2022a](#)). As a result, there is pernicious underachievement in writing attainment.

To help, we wanted to share how our *Writing For Pleasure* affiliate schools ensure that children are writing independently every day.

1. A culture of independence is built into our whole programme of study ([link](#)). For example, in Nursery, children are being encouraged to write independently every day.
2. Children are taught how to take a germ of an idea and see it through to publication or performance independently ([link](#)).
3. Our schools know that independence starts with children choosing their own topics within the parameters of a class writing project ([link](#), [link](#)). Teachers know that they are going to receive 30+ different pieces of writing by the project's end. No two pieces of writing will look the same.
4. Teachers' daily instruction is built on the principles of self-regulation strategy instruction ([link](#)). Every day, children apply what's just been taught in a way that is relevant to their own writing ([link](#), [link](#), [link](#)).
5. Children write meaningfully and for a sustained period every day.
6. Teachers provide live verbal feedback and responsive individualised instruction daily. Again, the expectation is that children will use and apply, independently, what they've just been taught (Ferguson & Young [2021](#)).
7. Children are taught a whole host of metacognitive and self-regulation writing strategies (Young et al. [2021](#)). Children know what to do when they don't know what to do.
8. Children learn to set themselves goals for each writing session (Young et al. [2021](#); Young & Hayden [2022](#)).
9. Children are taught a whole host of co-regulation strategies (Young et al. [2021](#)). They know how to help one another.
10. English language learners are taught how to be independent writers from their very first day (Ferguson & Young [2022](#)).
11. Children are encouraged to develop their own personal writing projects at school and at home (Young & Ferguson [2021c](#)).
12. Children know how to extract great *craft moves* from their reading and use it in their writing (Young & Hayden [2022](#)).

13. Children develop plans so that they can draft quickly and happily.
14. Children are taught a whole host of fluency strategies so that they can draft largely independently (Young et al. [2021](#)).
15. Children learn revision strategies, and they experiment with *craft moves* on their ‘trying things out pages’ before making the authorial decision as to whether or not to include them in their final composition (Young et al. [2021](#)).
16. Children learn how to proof-read (Young & Ferguson *in press*)
17. Teachers are confident when it comes to moderation and assessment because they know everything that has been written by their class has been written independently. ([link](#)).

Importantly, children know that writing independently doesn't mean writing alone. They live and work every day in a community of writers (Young & Ferguson [2020](#), [2021a](#)). They share their developing compositions with one another every day and they engage in writerly conversations with their teacher every day too.

Finally, and most importantly, children have been taught how they can live the writer's life after they leave school ([link](#)).

References

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