

My Book Of First Words Unit Plan



The Writing For Pleasure Centre

- Promoting research-informed writing teaching

Why teach this unit?

It makes sense to invite children to make a book of first words as this is probably one of the first books they've seen and read themselves growing up. I would hope that you would have similar books in your classroom library too. Children like these kinds of 'list books' – where something different is shared on each page. They also see it as an opportunity to share about the things they know about or that are important to them. It's nice to invite children to make their *Book Of First Words* for an audience younger than them. For example, babies and toddlers.

The journey of a class writing project



Example project plan

Day 1	Introduce the new project - establish/share publishing goal - share what their texts are going to look like
Day 2	Read like writers - studying a mentor text - establish product goals
Day 3	Continue to read like writers and set product goals
Day 4	Have an <i>Ideas Party</i>
Day 5	Make the front covers for your book
Day 6	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson – make page one
Day 7	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson – make page two
Day 8	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson – make page three
Day 9	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson – make page four
Day 10	Revision checklist session - children check they have used all the product goals in their book
Day 11	Proof-reading - check the <i>Is My Book Finished?</i> checklist
Day 12	Publishing Party!

Important! Please read!

- When teaching this project, we can recommend giving children blank picturebooks. The idea being that children make a page of their book a day – and apply the craft move their teacher has just modelled to them. For more information, download our eBook: *Getting Children Up & Running As Bookmakers in the EYFS & KS1* ([LINK](#)).
- This is just an *example plan*. Therefore, you should use your own professional judgement to plan your own class writing projects. For example, you should either add or remove sessions based on your own class' needs and the amount of time you want to spend on the project. For more information, download our eBook *How To Teach Writing* ([LINK](#)). To create your own unit plan, you can download a blank version of the proforma used at the top of this page [here](#).
- Remember, you should plan your mini-lessons based on the product goals your class comes up with when you're *reading as writers*. For more information on how to do this, download our eBook *How To Teach Writing or Reading In The Writing Classroom* ([LINK](#)).
- Whenever children have completed the process goal set for that day's writing time, they should continue making their own personal books until the end of the session. For more details, see [this article](#).
- We can recommend devoting a number of lessons to having 'revision checklist sessions' and 'is my book finished? sessions'. This allows you to meet with your class in small groups and give them quality verbal feedback on their compositions. The rest of your class work on their personal books.
- The more time spent on a project, the better the final outcomes will be. If you rush a project, you get rushed outcomes.
- It's important to remember that this is not the only writing children should produce. Children should also have their personal project writing, their writing in the wider curriculum subjects, and the writing they produce in their reading lessons.

Publishing goal lesson

A great publishing goal for this project is to give the children's books to any new-borns or toddlers you know in the parent or school community. That way, your class can teach them some new words!

Alternatively, the children can come up with their own publishing goal for the project. For more information on how to do this, download our book *How To Teach Writing* ([LINK](#)).

Reading as writers and establishing your product goals lessons

Make sure children get to read some pieces you and your colleagues have written and make sure these mentor texts realistically match what you expect the children to produce. To see the mentor texts we wrote for this project, download the full planning [here](#).

It's important that children get to see examples of high-quality texts too. We can certainly recommend these:

- First 100 Words - Heather Amery
- First 100 Animals - Friggens, Munday & Oliver
- 100 First Dinosaur Words - Dawn Sirett

These are great because they really show children how to write a *My Book Of First Words*.



A little top-tip. Keep some of the best pieces your children write for this project so that your class can study them next year.

While undertaking your *reading as writers* sessions, you are going to want to establish your product goals (success criteria) for the project. For more information on how to do this effectively, download our book *How To Teach Writing* ([LINK](#)).

Teaching a planning technique lesson

If your children are making picturebooks, planning still counts. We recommend giving children a session to work on their front cover. This front cover often acts as a child's early form of planning. Show children the front cover you made for your book for inviting them to do the same for their books that day.

If you need more help with this, download our eBook: *No More: My Class Don't Know What To Write Next...* ([LINK](#)). It has loads of great planning techniques in it.

Teaching your drafting lessons

At this point in the project, you are going to want to teach and model one *craft move* from your product goal list before inviting the children to use the move for themselves that day. Of course, these craft moves can be grammar or sentence-level moves. To see examples of what these lessons can look like, consider downloading the paid version for this planning [here](#). The idea is children draw a picture on their page and then write about their picture underneath. These pictures are important as they are acting as a plan of what it is the child is going to want to write about that day.

Revision checklist sessions

These are lovely sessions. You can either meet as a whole class and do this session on the carpet or else meet with your children in small groups. Make sure everyone has a copy of the product goals you established at the beginning of the project. With the group, check whether people have used the craft moves in their books. Any children that haven't, can be invited to give it a try during that day's writing time.

When undertaking these sessions, the rest of the class can be working on their personal writing projects. For more information, download our eBook: *How To Teach Writing* ([LINK](#)).

Proof-reading sessions

These are lovely sessions too. Again, you can either meet as a whole class and do this session on the carpet or else meet with your children in small groups. Make sure everyone has a copy of the *Is Our Book Finished?* checklist. With the group, check whether people have done all the things listed on the checklist. Any children that haven't, can be invited to do it during that day's writing time. For more information on how to conduct these sessions, download our eBook: *No More: My Class Can't Edit!* ([LINK](#)).

These sessions don't take the children long. Once finished, they can work on their personal writing books.

Publishing party

This calls an end to the project and it is an opportunity for celebration. You can undertake an extended *Author's Chair* and class sharing session, have a bit of a party, and even send their books off in the post to the people they wanted to share their books with.

For more information on conducting *Author's Chair* sessions, see this article ([LINK](#)).

You can download a more detailed version of this planning which includes individual lessons plans, resources and mentor texts [here](#).

Remember, all our planning is free to our members. To become a member, sign up [here](#).