

# Information Text Unit Plan



## The Writing For Pleasure Centre

- Promoting research-informed writing teaching

*I don't know what I think until I write it down*

– Joan Didion

### Why write information texts?

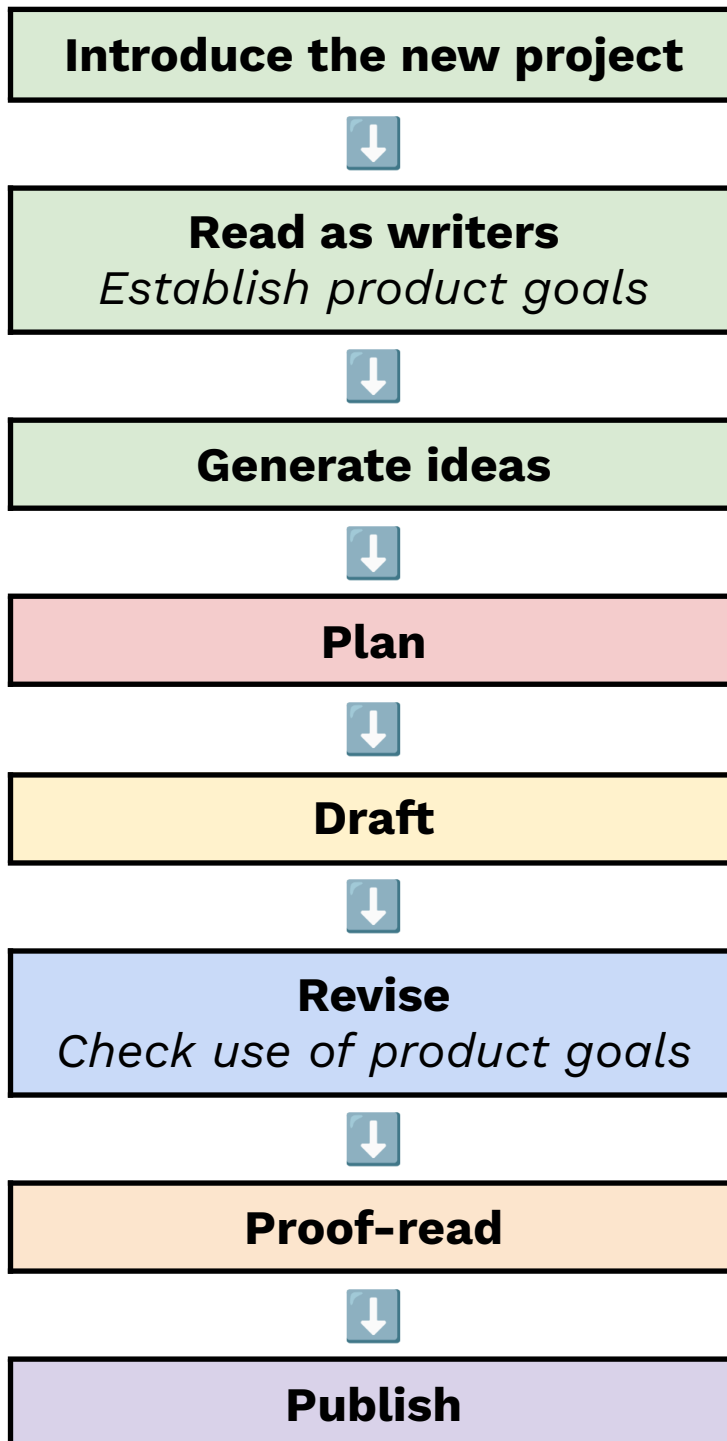
Children accumulate lots of information every single day. It is vital to their development as writers that they are given the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with others and to experiment with the language and organisation of non-fiction genres (see [this article](#) for more details).

This class writing project will show children that they can be knowledgeable about a subject and that sharing this knowledge is an enjoyable, social and satisfying thing to do. You and your class will begin to appreciate the pockets of 'communities' that make up a writing classroom – with children talking and sharing with each other their passions, interests and aspects of their lives (Young et al. [2022](#)). It is important for children to understand the power of writing as information giving but also to experience it as a social resource.

### Things to bear in mind

- Non-fiction can and should give a sense of personal presence. Children should be able to show their personality and use their voice (see [this article](#) for more details). It is important to encourage children to choose a topic which they are interested in or passionate about, but which they also know enough about to share with the 'community'.
- Non-fiction texts should be kept short throughout primary school – a page to a page and a half is adequate. Children should not be trawling around for information. It's better if they have too much and are required to use their judgement about what to include and what to leave out.
- Children's enthusiasm for writing information texts can often result in their chosen topic being too general. Directing them towards a more focused approach is an important writing lesson. Children often struggle with the generality and sheer size of their initial topic ideas. For example, 'animals' is often a popular topic choice. However, you will find that children initially choose to write about all types of animals. Encourage them to narrow down their topic to, for example, 'dogs', and then maybe to a particular breed of dog. They can even enhance their text by referring to their own dog!
- Often at this stage in their writing development, children will assume that others share the same knowledge of their subject. This results in children often failing to give enough basic information to orientate their reader.
- More experienced writers should not only share information but also reveal something of themselves in their writing. One way of doing this is for children to infuse their information text with aspects of *Memoir* writing. For example, they might add a personal note about why their chosen topic interests them.
- Finally, you may find that children slide into writing which is more in keeping with explanation texts. This is thoroughly acceptable as it demonstrates the beginnings of 'genre hybridising'. You could make this an interesting teaching point.

# 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	Begin reading as writers, studying mentor texts, and establishing product goals
Day 3	Continue to read as writers and set product goals
Day 4	Finalise the product goals for the project
Day 5	Generate ideas by having an <i>Ideas Party</i>
Day 6	Take the <i>Writing Register</i>
Day 7	Mini-lesson on using a planning technique - children plan using the technique
Day 8	Continue planning if required
Day 9	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson - children write their openings
Day 10	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson - children write a small 'chunk'/paragraph
Day 11	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson - children write a small 'chunk'/paragraph
Day 12	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson - children write a small 'chunk'/paragraph
Day 13	<i>Drafting</i> mini-lesson - children write their endings
Day 14	<i>Revision</i> mini-lesson - children 'try it out'/revise the mini-lesson into their piece
Day 15	<i>Revision</i> mini-lesson - children 'try it out'/revise the mini-lesson into their piece
Day 16	<i>Revision Checklist sessions</i> - children check their writing against the class' product goals
Day 17	<i>Revision Checklist sessions</i> - children check their writing against the class' product goals
Day 18	<i>Revision Checklist sessions</i> - children check their writing against the class' product goals
Day 19	Capitalisation - 'proof-reading for capitalisation' mini-lesson
Day 20	Capitalisation - 'proof-reading for capitalisation' mini-lesson
Day 21	Use of vocab 'proof-reading for tense use' mini-lesson
Day 22	Use of vocab 'proof-reading for tense use' mini-lesson
Day 23	Use of vocab (synonyms) - 'cracking open boring words' mini-lesson
Day 24	Punctuation - proof-reading mini-lesson
Day 25	Punctuation - proof-reading mini-lesson
Day 26	Spelling (common words) - children correct any misspelt words
Day 27	Spelling (class' tricky words) - children correct any misspelt words
Day 28	Spelling (temporary spellings) - children correct any misspelt words
Day 29	Spelling (temporary spellings) - children correct any misspelt words
Day 30	Spelling (temporary spellings) - children correct any misspelt words
Day 31	Publishing - write out just a few sections - mini-lesson & pupil-conferencing focuses on handwriting instruction
Day 32	Publishing - write out just a few sections - mini-lesson & pupil-conferencing focuses on handwriting instruction
Day 33	Publishing Party!

## Important! Please read!

- 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 on the previous 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](#)).
- If you feel you need to, we can recommend devoting at least two sessions to planning. After the first session, you can see which plans you think are suitably ready for when children come to draft their pieces. For children who you feel need a bit more time and further instruction, you can meet with them as a group(s) while the rest of the class work on their personal writing projects. For more information on setting up personal writing projects, download [our eBook](#). We also provide far more information on teaching planning techniques in our eBook: *No More: My Class Doesn't Know What To Write Next* ([LINK](#)).
- Whenever children have completed the process goal set for that day's writing time, they should work on their personal writing project for the rest of the lesson. For more details, see [this article](#).
- We can recommend devoting a number of lessons to having 'revision checklist 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 writing projects.
- Make sure you break your proof-reading lessons down into small manageable chunks over a number of days. This allows children to achieve a high level of accuracy. These sessions don't take children very long. Once they've completed their proof-reading for the day, they can work on their personal writing projects. We provide far more information and lessons on proof-reading in our eBook: *No More: 'My Pupils Can't Edit!' A Whole-School Approach To Developing Proof-Readers* ([LINK](#)).
- 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 writing 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 show your class an encyclopaedia and explain that the class is going to make their very own (top tip: keep a copy of this so you can show your new class the following year!). Share this goal with your class at the beginning of the project. We can definitely recommend getting in touch with your local library too and asking them if they will stock a copy of the encyclopaedia in their nonfiction section too.

Alternatively, children can send their information texts, accompanied with a brief letter, to an expert in their field of study. They could ask them what they think and if they can recommend any revisions or changes. This may require you to help them find the contact details for people who might be suitably qualified to read their texts, but it's well worth it!

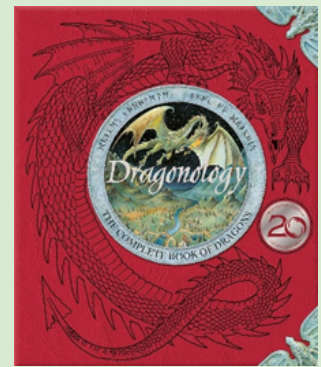
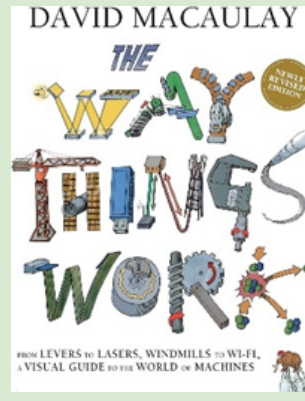
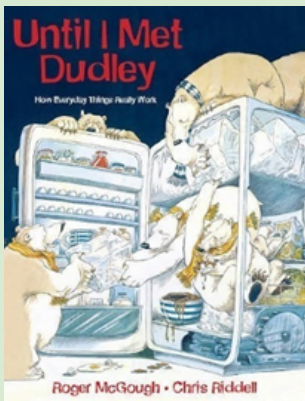
Another way of coming up with a publishing goal for the project is to ask your pupils. For more information on how to do this, download our book *How To Teach Writing* ([LINK](#)).



### Reading as writers and establishing your product goals lessons

When undertaking *reading as writers* sessions, we can recommend having a collection of information texts for the children to read. Make sure children get to read some short information texts you and your colleagues have written and make sure you have a collection of mentor texts (texts which realistically match what you expect the children to produce). For advice on how to write your own information text, and to download our mentor texts, consider downloading the paid version of this planning [KS1](#) or [KS2](#).

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



These are great because they really show children the variety of information texts that are available and the creative things you can do with the genre, including creating 'faction texts'. For more information on the different types of nonfiction, download our book *Reading In The Writing Classroom* [here](#).

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](#)).

### Have an Ideas Party

This is one of my favourite sessions. As a whole class, in small groups, on flipchart paper, come up with as many ideas as you can. The children can work in teams at their desks and you can spend time with each group and take part too! At the end of the session, individual children can circle their favourite idea. Children like to go home and will often continue to think of ideas for the project. Let them. As long as they know what their final writing idea is going to be by time you take the *Writing Register*.

### Taking a Writing Register lesson

This is a nice session. While the children are working on their personal writing projects, go round the class and ask them who they are going to write their information text about and for a working title. Write this down on your *Writing Register*. At the end of the writing lesson, you can share this register with the children and have a chat about which pieces people are most looking forward to reading.

### Teaching a planning technique lesson

It's important to teach children a planning technique. It's even more important that you show children the planning technique you used when you wrote your information text. Teach them the technique and show them your plan before inviting them to use the technique for themselves 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 [KS1](#) or [KS2](#).

### Teaching your revision lessons

Now the children have drafted their writing, you can teach them more sophisticated *craft moves*. They can try the craft move out on their 'trying things out page' and if they like what they've crafted, they can add it into their drafted text. These sessions are really interesting because the children feel free to take risks and enjoy playing around with these more advanced techniques. Remember, model one craft move before inviting the children to use the technique for themselves that day. For examples of what these lessons can look like, consider downloading the paid version for this planning [KS1](#) or [KS2](#).

### Revision checklist sessions

These are lovely sessions. 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 and/or considered the *craft moves* for the project. Any children that haven't, can be invited to show how they might use the craft move on their 'trying things out page'. If they like what they have crafted, they can include it in their final piece. If they don't want to - that's fine. You still have evidence in their books. This also shows that the children are being discerning - one sign of a greater-depth writer.

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

We can highly recommend breaking proof-reading down into small manageable chunks. Over a number of days, you can proofread for *CUPS*. This stands for *Capitalisation, Use Of Vocabulary, Punctuation and Spelling*. 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 projects.

### Publishing party

The project is now coming to an end. It's time for the children to write up their final published version ready for their readers. This is a great opportunity to teach handwriting in context and give children live verbal feedback and additional individualised handwriting instruction. We can recommend doing this over a couple of days.

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You can download a more detailed version of this planning which includes individual lessons plans, resources and mentor texts here: [KS1](#) or [KS2](#).

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

