

The Write Stuff

Intended Design and Impact of The Write Stuff



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The Training Space

Transforming teaching and learning

What is the research evidence on the teaching of writing?

This document brings together the current research evidence on learning and writing in one place. The information has been organised into four sections: Teaching Sequence, The Lesson, Differentiation and Independent Writing. The purpose of this document is to sharpen our thinking as a profession on the most important things that will make learning happen and improve our approach to the complex task of teaching writing. It tracks key scientific findings that have been shown to positively improve teaching and learning outcomes. Against this backdrop of scientific understanding, The Write Stuff has been designed in such a way to maximise learning benefits for pupils.

Teaching Sequence

Key Idea	Research Evidence on Learning/Writing	Quote for Consideration	Intended Design and Impact of The Write Stuff
ENJOYMENT - Pupils who enjoy writing are higher attainers.	Clark, 2012; Weiner, 1985	"Students emotional response to performance can profoundly effect future motivation." - Paul A. Kirschner and Carl Hendrick	Experience days are built into The Write Stuff teaching sequence to enhance enjoyment, raise excitement and preparedness for writing.
WRITING VARIETY - Teach pupils to write a variety of types of writing/ a range of story types and non-fiction genres.	What Works Clearinghouse, 2012; Gillespie and Graham, 2010; Andrews et al, 2009; Graham et al, 2011; Santangelo and Olinghouse, 2009; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021; Development Matters, DfE, 2020	"Purpose and audience are central to effective writing." - Education Endowment Foundation "Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way." - Development Matters, DfE	The Write Stuff medium term view for teaching English provides a balance across teaching story types, e.g. adventure/science-fiction, non-fiction types, e.g. balanced argument/ persuasive letter and poetry. The Write Stuff approach also considers curriculum coherence through making cross-curricular connections to history, science, geography etc.
FROM ZOOM OUT TO ZOOM IN - Sequence pupil learning moving from the big picture down into more detailed areas to focus on.	Barak Rosenshine, 2010	"If teachers in the relevant discipline can break these complex activities down into 'fine grained' stages, they'll be more effective in explaining them to their students." "Providing models is a central feature of giving good explanations." - Tom Sherrington	Large narrative and non-fiction maps are displayed visually for pupils to represent the current 'zoomed out' writing journey so that pupils are aware through this schema how their writing will be constructed.
SEQUENCE - Organise the writing teaching sequence carefully so that it builds and connects with previous learning so that it is coherent.	Muijs et al, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE; Kirschner and Hendrick et al, 2020; Development Matters, DfE, 2020	"Carefully sequenced and explicit modelling of tasks is more effective than unstructured, naturalistic modelling experiences." - Kirschner and Hendrick "The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time." - Development Matters, DfE	The Write Stuff breaks the learning pathway down into a logical sequence from complete whole, shown as a map, then into plot points (narrative) or way points (non-fiction), that are taught as paragraphs or meaning domains respectively. Over time, these sections join up to make a complete piece that lead into independent writing.

The Lesson

Key Idea	Research Evidence on Learning/Writing	Quote for Consideration	Intended Design and Impact of The Write Stuff
<p>EXPERTISE - Showcase your teacher expertise. Anticipate and address misconceptions.</p>	<p>Adams and Englemen, 1996; Baumert and Kunter, 2013; Barak Rosenshine's principles, 2010</p>	<p>Expertise in teaching requires an understanding of “the didactic and diagnostic potential of tasks, their cognitive demands and the prior knowledge they implicitly require” - Baumert and Kunter</p>	<p>The Write Stuff lesson relies on teacher expertise, specifically the explicit transferring of knowledge and information to construct writing in a certain way. As an expert teacher, misconceptions are always predicted and are used as explanation points e.g. is it an 'an' or an 'a' before the item boat.</p>
<p>DIRECT TEACHING - Active and direct teaching Present and communicate new ideas clearly with concise, appropriate and engaging explanations.</p>	<p>Creemers et al, 2013; Adams and Englemen, 1996; Stockard et al, 2018; Barak Rosenshines principles, 2010</p>	<p>Direct instructions “are most effective in teaching skills necessary for basic literacy competence.” - Cathy Watkins 1997</p>	<p>The Write Stuff approach relies on clarity of categorisation. Teachers are always refocusing pupil thinking to and from 'The Writing Rainbow' and carefully refining and scripting explanations to visibly showcase the thinking of a writer.</p>
<p>THE WRITING PROCESS - Teach pupils the writing process.</p>	<p>What Works Clearinghouse, 2012; Gillespie and Graham, 2010; Andrews et al, 2009; Graham et al, 2011; Santangelo and Olinghouse, 2009; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021</p>	<p>“Writing can be thought of a process made up of seven components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning; • drafting; • sharing; • evaluating; • revising; • editing; and • publishing.” 	<p>The Write Stuff enables pupils to understand the different functions of writing. When working on the 'The Thinking Side' they learn to understand this is the space for quick jottings and vocabulary building. In turn, 'The Writing Side' is a space to practise their sentence construction via the support of the teacher's model. They also understand this is part of a larger process of getting ready to show strength in their own independent writing as they move from planning, drafting and editing.</p>

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<p>KNOWLEDGE - Have a deep and fluent knowledge of the content you are teaching. Teachers knowledge and conceptual understanding of content is a good predictor of pupil learning.</p>	<p>Muijs et al, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Baumert et al, 2010; Hill et al, 2005; Hill and Charalambous, 2012; Lynch et al, 2019; Sadler et al, 2013; Great Teacher Toolkit Evidence Review, 2020</p>	<p>“Teachers’ knowledge and conceptual understanding of specific content they are teaching do have some predictive power for their students’ learning.” - Great Teacher Toolkit, 2020</p>	<p>The Write Stuff relies on strong teacher knowledge of writers through the ages and a key understanding of sentence construction. This deep and fluent knowledge of different ideas (the FANTASTICs), grammar (the GRAMMARISTICs) and techniques (the BOOMTASTICs) are modelled in context according to the type of writing that is being constructed.</p>
<p>CONCEPTS - Imagery is used to support thinking and learning/use models/ representations to help learners visualise concepts and release them to what they already know.</p>	<p>Dunlosky et al, 2013; Weinstein, Y., Sumeracki, M., & Caviglioli, O. 2018; Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE</p>	<p>“Using concrete representation of abstract ideas, (e.g. making use of analogies, metaphors, examples and non-examples.)” - Early Career Framework</p>	<p>The Writing Rainbow acts as a colourful and concrete representation of writing strategies that can be deployed by the pupils. This enables pupils to file information and, through worked examples, create a deep understanding of different techniques, e.g. metaphor.</p>
<p>SCHEMAS - A cognitive structure that is powerful and enables information to be organised and stored in long term memory.</p>	<p>CESE, 2017; Sweller, 1994; Booth et al, 2017; Braithwaite and Goldstone, 2015; B. Bloom, 1984</p>	<p>“A combination of advance organisers at the beginning of a new topic, further organisational aids during the unit, as well as appropriate questions, summaries may have a substantial effect on the student’s learning.” - B. Bloom</p>	<p>There are many schemas that are central to The Write Stuff - The Writing Rainbow is the central piece. It acts as a mind-frame and categorisation system for strengthening deep thinking. However, there are other schemas, such as The Shade ‘O’ Meter, that enables pupils to rehearse their ‘thesaurus thinking’ and understand the intensity of synonyms.</p>

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<p>WORKING MEMORY - Learn how to avoid overloading working memory/increase likelihood of material being retained. Limit the number and complexity of new elements as the working memory can only handle so much at any one time.</p>	<p>Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE; Sweller et al, 1998, 2019</p>	<p>“In presenting material, teachers should pay attention to the ‘cognitive load’ it presents: limiting the number and complexity of new elements; breaking complex ideas or procedures into smaller steps...” - Great Teacher Toolkit</p>	<p>The Write Stuff lesson is organised into three learning chunks and within those chunks there is a smaller sequence of delivery. It has been organised in this way so that ‘short burst’ chunks of learning can occur to avoid overloading of a pupil’s working memory. This increases the likelihood of material being retained and also enables pupils to revisit certain aspects e.g. short sentence for impact but applied to a new writing scenario.</p>
<p>SCAFFOLDED INSTRUCTION - Use explicit, interactive, scaffolded instruction in planning and composing writing/make good use of expositions.</p>	<p>Daly, 2003; Estyn, 2008; DfES, 2007; Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE; P. Kirschner and C. Hendrick, 2020</p>	<p>“The effective teacher will perform an ‘idealisation’ on the task to be performed. By elaborately performing the task, the teacher allows the child to more easily imitate the steps required.”</p>	<p>The heart of the matter for The Write Stuff way of teaching is that the teacher makes good use of explicit instruction and composition writing ‘live’ in the classroom. Scaffolding is a highly complex process requiring great skill and deftness from the teacher knowing ultimately that their support pulls away as children move into the teaching sequence for independence.</p>
<p>MODELLING - Model writing clearly and effectively using a repertoire of appropriate explanations. Provide worked examples to introduce new ideas.</p>	<p>Adams and Englemen, 1996; Creemers and Kyriakides, 2011; Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE; Sweller et al, 2019</p>	<p>“By making the implicit explicit, teachers are supporting students to form their own mental models, gaining confidence with the decisions they make.” - Tom Sherrington</p>	<p>At every learning chunk point during The Write Stuff lesson, the teacher will model the writing process. Pupils will see during this time two things at once. In the first instance, a sentence unravelling before them as well as the internal writing voice of the teacher who is making the invisible process of constructing writing visible.</p>

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EXPLANATIONS - Explanations are carefully refined and scripted.	Daly, 2003; Estyn, 2008; DfES, 2007; Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE; Great Teaching Toolkit Evidence Review, 2020	“Explaining: presenting and communicating new ideas dearly, with concise, appropriate, engaging explanations.” Great Teaching Toolkit	At every point during The Write Stuff teaching, there are clear explanations of expectations and how to ‘get there’. Large visual maps of story, non-fiction or poetry intentions are displayed like large jigsaw puzzles for pupils to see how they are going to build a piece of writing. During individual lessons, a plot point/way point will be constructed through short burst learning chunk lessons that are concisely explained, thought through and refined by the teacher with more Write Stuff experience.
GRAMMAR - Teach pupils to become fluent with sentence construction. The contextualised teaching of grammar has a significantly positive affect on pupils writing development.	Myhill et al, 2011; Graham and Perin, 2007; Fogel and Ehri, 2008	Teaching “grammar as a meaning making resource” benefits more able writers. - Myhill	The Write Stuff approach insists in teaching grammar in context. It includes the National Curriculum requirements for grammar at Key Stage 1 and 2 that are revisited regularly, systematically and through a variety of worked examples in a whole host of different writing circumstances. This enables pupils to understand what a fronted adverbial would be like in an adventure story and a persuasive letter for example.
SMALL STEPS - Present new material in small steps with pupil practise after each step.	Barak Rosenshine, 2010; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021	“Rosenshine suggests that more effective teachers recognise the need to deal with the limitations of working memory and succeed in breaking down concepts and procedures into small steps.” - Tom Sherrington	The Write Stuff is built on high expectations of quality for writing. Each small step that is explained and modelled during the teaching sequence allows for practise time so that pupils can refine and rehearse their own personal writing style.

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<p>SENTENCE - Teach pupils about the arrangement of words and phrases to create well formed sentences (syntax). Break down the complex activity of writing into smaller sentence components clarify how they are built and keep practising them until they are fluent and proficient.</p>	<p>Myhill et al, 2011 Andrews et al, 2004; Ericsson, 2009; What works Clearing House, 2012; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021; Development Matters, DfE, 2020</p>	<p>“In another study, teachers explained and modelled the use of a specific sentence - combining strategy, and then student pairs practised the procedure. This study found positive effects on measures of writing quality.” - Clearing House (Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers) “Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.” - Development Matters, DfE</p>	<p>The point of writing is making meaning and meaning is made at sentence level. The focus for The Write Stuff approach is to gather words and vocabulary appropriately to the subsequent sentence that is about to be built. Everything about this writing approach is about timely creation of appropriate language that will support pupils’ thinking and constructing for the sentence they are about to build.</p>
<p>QUESTIONING - Use questions and dialogue to promote elaboration and connected, flexible thinking among. Encourage learners to use questions to categorise, compare and contrast encourage ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. The power of ‘Kind Calling Out’ to engage more pupils.</p>	<p>Kennedy, 2016; Barak Rosenshine, 2010; Shimamwa, 2018</p>	<p>“...more effective teachers ask more questions, involving more students, probing in more depth and taking more time to explain, clarify and check for understanding.”</p>	<p>‘Kind Calling Out’ has been designed to involve as many pupils as possible in generating vocabulary for writing meaning that less pupils are allowed to hide, dominate or be overlooked. The no hands up approach means it is more inclusive and it is used routinely, not as a one-off strategy.</p>

Differentiation

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ADAPTIVE - Differentiation of teaching that is adaptive to pupil needs.	Creemers et al, 2013; Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021	“Use high quality information about pupils’ current capabilities to select the best next steps for teaching.” Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation	The Write Stuff is based on whole class direct instruction teaching, however consideration does need to happen for those pupils who need extra support to complete the writing required. The Write Stuff works on the principal of all pupils involved in the learning exchange are tasked to do the same writing but it is the teachers responsibility to provide extra language sentence scaffolds, frames or additional adult interaction to support those pupils to ‘get there’.
CHALLENGE HIGHER ATTAINERS - Engage pupils deep thinking and stretch it encourage them to personally elaborate their writing.	Dunlosky et al, 2013; Praetorius et al, 2018; John Biggs and Kevin Collins, 1982; Hattie, 2012	Expert teachers are more likely to extend pupil thinking to new domains such as, “extended abstract level: knowledge generalised to new domains.” - Biggs and Collins He defines this deeper understanding as “more integrated, more coherent and at a higher level of abstraction.” - Hattie	Deepen the Moment’ has been designed to deepen pupils thinking and encourage them to showcase what they know and apply ‘without a model’ into the current writing. ‘Deepen the Moment’ requires pupils to choose any lens off The Writing Rainbow and be aware of the positive or negative writing intent of the piece and insert sentences that do not plot push (narrative) or shape shift (non-fiction).

Independent Writing

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SPELLING - Teach pupils to become fluent with spelling.	What Works Clearinghouse, 2012; Gillespie and Graham, 2010; Andrews et al, 2009; Graham et al, 2011; Santangelo and Olinghouse, 2009; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021	“Spelling should be explicitly taught. Teaching could focus on spellings that are relevant to the topic or genre being studied.” - Education Endowment Foundation	The Write Stuff encourages pupils to be ‘brave spellers’ in context during the Early Years and early part of Key Stage 1. The Write Stuff encourages plausible phonic strategies for their own writing. As they move to Key Stage 2 there is a two pronged approach which consists of not avoiding a word because you can’t spell it alongside taking responsibility to check on their own spelling.
PLANNING - Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and monitoring their writing.	Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021	“Pupils writing can be improved by teaching them to plan and monitor their writing.” - Education Endowment Foundation	Pupils are actively encouraged to plan their zoomed out view of their writing on narrative and non-fiction maps. They are also taught, through modelling of a process, to map success criteria onto their zoomed out plan and zoom in and prepare for writing by investing in constructing sentences that will feature strongly in their final piece of writing.
SUCCESS CRITERIA - Set specific success criteria goals for their own independent writing.	What Works Clearinghouse, 2012; Gillespie and Graham, 2010; Andrews et al, 2009; Graham et al, 2011; Santangelo and Olinghouse, 2009	“Make the success criteria visible in the learning process and name them.” - John Hattie and Klaus Zierer	Success criteria is a critical part of The Write Stuff and every single Write Stuff lesson has steps to success, as the teachers and pupils guide. Success criteria also forms the backdrop of pupil thinking when they plan, build and write their own independent work.

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DISTRIBUTED PRACTICE - Distributed practice Support pupils to process information, keep revisiting it and store it in their long term memory. We retrieve information back into our working memory when we need it.	Dunlosky et al, 2013; sumeracki, M. And Weinstein, Y. With Caviglioli, O, 2018	“Deliberate practice both produces and relies on mental models and mental representations to guide decisions. These models allow practitioners to self-monitor performance to improve their performance.” - Deans for Impact	The Write Stuff relies on never leaving an aspect of writing for too long so children will keep returning to passive voice time and time again through a range of different story genres and non-fiction text types.
COMMUNITY - Create an engaged community of writers.	What Works Clearinghouse, 2012; Gillespie and Graham, 2010; Andrews et al, 2009; Graham et al, 2011; Santangelo and Olinghouse, 2009; Wenger, 2000	Learning is essentially, “an interplay between social competence and personal experience.” Experience members eventually become ‘old timers’ supporting ‘newbies’. - Wenger	Lively and engaging editing sessions are built into The Write Stuff approach so that pupils read each others work, provide feedback and advice and ‘Editing Ambassadors’ act as ‘old timers’ replicating teacher behaviours to support their peers.
OWNERSHIP - Give ownership to pupils to make choices about their independent writing. Help learners plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Model how to plan and encourage students to explain their thinking.	Daly, 2003; Estyn, 2008; DfES, 2007; Ko et al, 2013; Praetorius et al, 2018; Van de Grift et al, 2017; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021	“Pupils articulating their ideas verbally before they start writing.” - Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 Education Endowment Foundation	‘Chotting’ the act of chatting and jotting vocabulary ideas means pupils are able to prepare well before they start writing. Final pieces of writing are celebrated and pupils talk through their process from starting with planning so that more pupils understand the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the process.
HIGH EXPECTATIONS - High expectations.	Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE	“Setting tasks that stretch pupils, but which are achievable, within a challenging curriculum.” - Early Career Framework	The Write Stuff goes beyond the National Curriculum particularly with the ideas of writing (the FANTASTICs) and the techniques of writing (the BOOMTASTICs) to model a broad repertoire of competencies for pupils to showcase in their own work.

Independent Writing

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<p>FEEDBACK - Provide high quality feedback Provide pupils with actionable feedback to guide their learning. Feedback can enhance learning powerfully Judge expertly the kind of actionable steps that are most likely to deliver learning.</p>	<p>Early Career Framework, 2019 DfE; Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Hogarth, 2001; Winnie and Butler, 1994; Dylan William, 2011</p>	<p>“Feedback should be more work for the recipient than the donor.” - Dylan William</p>	<p>Teachers train their pupils on the three ways of editing. Edit type 1 is spelling, punctuation and grammar aspects; Edit Type 2 is a rewrite of a sentence due to ineffectiveness; Edit Type 3 is a request to add more to the writing. The teacher tasks the pupils with quantity e.g. Edit Type 1 = 6 then Edit Type 2 = 3 and then Edit Type 3 = 4.</p>
<p>APPLICATION - Apply ideas/skills learnt to different writing situations. Embed practise until learning is fluent and secure revisit key concepts to prevent forgetting. Encourage overlearning as an important part of making pupil performance more durable and flexible Increase long term retrieval strength by recalling information and procedures after a delay.</p>	<p>Sweller, 1990; Soderstrom and Bjork, 2015; Adescope et al, 2017; Bjark, 2011; Dunloskay et al, 2013; Weinstein et al, 2018; Improving Literacy Key Stage 1 and 2 Education Endowment Foundation, 2021</p>	<p>Strategies for planning should be “described and modelled before pupils practise them with feedback. Support should then be gradually reduced as pupils take increasing responsibility.” - Education Endowment Foundation KS2</p>	<p>Pupils quickly learn through The Write Stuff approach that smaller chunked teaching that during the teaching sequence and daily taught success criteria might return as a challenge for their own independent writing. This encourages an emphasis on retrieval strength from taught material into pupil application.</p>

Further reading:

How Learning Happens - Seminal Works in Educational Psychology and What They Mean in Practice by Paul A. Kirschner and Carl Hendrick

10 Mindframes for Visible Learning - Teaching for Success by John Hattie and Klaus Zierer

Rosenshines Principles in Action by Tom Sherrington

Great Teaching Toolkit - Evidence Review by Rob Coe, C.J. Rauch, Stuart Time, Dan Singleton (In Partnership with Cambridge Assessment International Education)