Talk for Writing: A Guide for Parents

About Talk for Writing

Talk for Writing was developed by the author Pie Corbett.

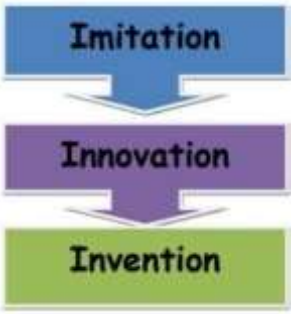
It is a whole school approach to develop our children as readers, writers, speakers and listeners. It enables children to read and write independently for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences.

The approach moves from children being supported by the teacher and teaching assistants using shared writing and guided teaching towards children writing independently and creatively.

Talk for Writing starts with enjoying and sharing stories. There is a strong emphasis on children reading stories and enjoying a range of literature. Through regular reading, we want children to build up an extensive and rich vocabulary for use in their own writing. Reading and sharing stories regularly at home, no matter what age your child is, is the key element in developing their writing.

The Talk for Writing Process:

There are three phases in the Talk for Writing process:



Children will carry out a 'cold task' or 'have a go' task to identify what they can do independently ahead of starting a unit of work. These findings are used to plan a unit of work that is tailored specifically to the children's needs.

Imitation Phase

The unit of work begins with a creative hook to engage the children with a sense of audience and purpose. The children will listen to, learn and re-tell a model text off by heart so that they can memorise and internalise the language and sentence patterns of the text type. Later, the children will be able to apply these in their own writing.

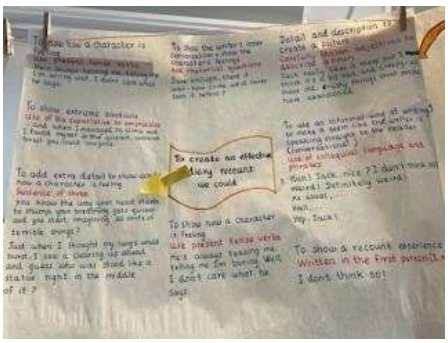
When learning and retelling a model text a multisensory approach is used:

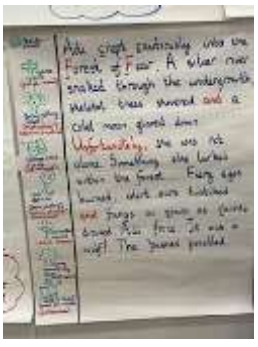
- A Visual story/text map
- Actions
- Lively, animated expression
- Drama

As the children become familiar with the text, they will carry out a wide range of activities. These activities can usually be categorised as 'reading as a reader' and 'reading as a writer'.

Reading as a reader encourages the children to understand the text and the characters at a deeper level. It requires the children to analyse and unpick the model text and its features. It should also include elements of drama and short bursts of writing. This type of writing allows children to warm up and have a go at writing in small sections, with a particular focus, giving them the confidence to create a final piece of writing at a later stage. There are also opportunities to identify and develop SPaG (spelling, punctuation, and grammar) skills.

Reading as a writer gets the children thinking about a writer's toolkit and how they would be able to recreate something just as effectively. They analyse the structure of the text and plot it onto a story curve or boxing up grid. This enables the children to magpie (borrow) what they need from the text when writing their own.





<u>Innovation Phase</u>

Once the children have become familiar with the model text, they are then ready to start using it to support their own writing. During the innovation stage, the children change the model text to create their own versions. Younger writers or less confident writers may need to stay close to the structure and the vocabulary used in the

model text to build confidence and understanding. More confident writers will come away from the model text and want to explore their own ideas or ways of writing.

Different ways of innovating include:

• **Substitution**— change the settings or characters.

• **Addition**— add in something new to the story.

• **Alteration**—changing a part of the story e.g. a different ending.

• **Viewpoint**—writing from a different person or character's point of view.

When planning an innovation, the children will use and adapt the text map, story curve or boxing up grid that they created during the imitation stage. They will continue to rehearse this orally.

During innovation, teachers model writing through shared writing. Shared writing is writing completed by the whole class, but the class teacher will keep questioning and taking ideas until the class get the very best ideas and sentences to be written. This demonstrates that our first ideas are not always the best. Shared writing also models the importance of re-reading your work and editing.

The children will then be given opportunities to write their innovated text, often bit by bit. The teacher will work with the children on their next steps and feed-back about the writing will be given to the child.

Throughout Talk for Writing, but especially during innovation, sheets of paper are added to washing lines or on the working wall to support the children when they come to write. These sheets of paper may include: the shared writing; text maps; story mountains; boxing up grids; vocabulary banks and sentence examples.

Independent Application (Invention)

The final phase of the process provides the children with the opportunity for them to use all the skills they have learnt throughout the unit to create an independent piece of writing. This stage allows the children to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and creativity. The children are guided through the planning of their own story or nonfiction text that is the same genre as the model text.

Non-fiction can be applied across the curriculum.

During this phase, the children are given opportunities to draft and revise their own work. Editing and improving is an essential skill for all year groups. Children are taught how to check their own work independently or with a peer to support.

At the end of the unit, the children's work can be published or displayed. Publishing is a valuable part of the process as it gives their writing meaning and purpose.

Helping at Home

Read, Read, Read - Talk for Writing begins and ends with enjoying stories and reading books. Children who read for pleasure are also more likely to succeed as writers because of the way in which reading develops language development.

- If your child brings home text maps, then allow them to share and practise them with you.
- Play with words and vocabulary – who can find the best word to describe something?
- Consider how often your child sees you write in the modern age.
- Encourage your child to magpie ideas, recycle them and make them their own.

But mostly, find the joy in telling and sharing stories together!

For further information, visit: ***http://www.talk4writing.co.uk/***

Glossary

Magpie: words from other texts or from their peers that the children can borrow to use in their own writing.

Text map: The story/text that is being learnt is turned into pictures to create 'memory triggers' for children to remember the next part of the story/text.

Boxing up: The story broken down into sections or boxes to support children with paragraphs.

Tool kits: Key features that should be included to write that text type correctly.

Washing lines: A way of displaying the story map, tool kit, key vocabulary, model texts so the children can refer to them at all time.