

Using guided practice to support writing

In their guidance report, the EEF (2019) emphasise the importance of teaching literacy skills such as reading, writing and oracy, in all subjects through an approach called disciplinary literacy.

What is disciplinary literacy?

Disciplinary literacy recognises that literacy skills are general and subject-specific. For example, the ability to write legibly is a general skill required in all subjects, whereas the ability to write a science report is subject-specific. Therefore, as pupils progress through their school journey, there is a growing need to ensure that they are trained to access different subjects' academic language and conventions.

Specific writing skills and requirements can vary across subjects; for example, pupils may be required to write in full sentences in English, but not in science. Therefore, it is essential that you make these nuances explicit to pupils so they can write successfully in the subject you are teaching.

It is a common misconception that pupils should develop writing skills in English lessons alone. However, this is certainly not the case. There are many subject-specific writing requirements that should be explicitly taught in the context of each subject, and pupils should be given opportunities to practice implementing these.

When pupils are being asked to compose a written response, it is important you clearly model how this can be effectively done in the subject you are teaching. For example, if you want pupils to clearly articulate their reasoning as a written response in maths, you will need to provide them with sentence structures to do so and support them to use the correct terminology. Or, if you want pupils to write an evaluation about a piece of artwork, you will need to explicitly teach them the writing components and structure that would be used. One way to do this is by guiding pupils during the writing process, sometimes known as shared writing.

Shared writing

Shared writing is a form of guided practice where a piece of writing is co-constructed by the teacher and their pupils. In shared writing, the teacher models the writing process and asks for contributions from pupils linked to the learning objectives. Teachers will use 'Think Aloud' when modelling to make the implicit thought process of an expert writer explicit to novice learners.

Principles of shared writing

Some general principles of shared writing are:

1. Generate writing based on pupils' ideas.
2. Remind, prompt and challenge pupils so the writing remains focused on the general and subject-specific skills and vocabulary being developed.
3. Model good general writing skills such as rereading the text and listening to the flow of composition so the next sentence can be composed.
4. Keep the pace brisk to ensure pupils don't lose focus but include pauses for thinking time.

Shared writing is the guided phase used to develop pupil independence in writing. It engages the whole class

during teaching instruction but can also be used as a support to groups of pupils during writing tasks.

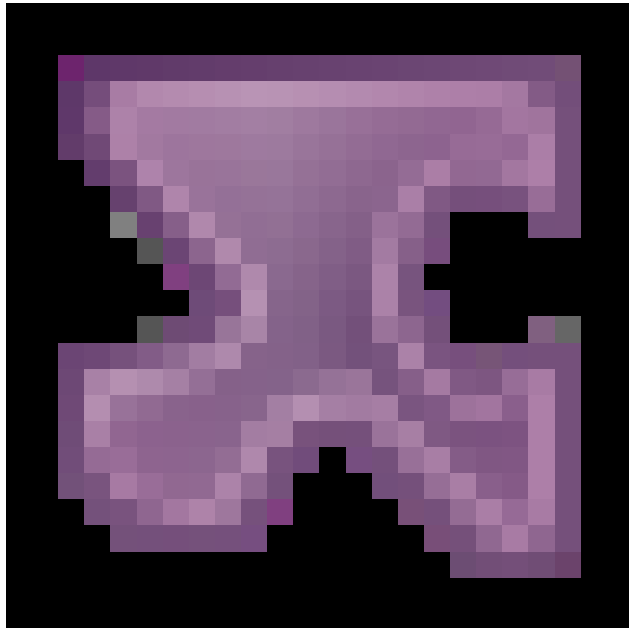
In a sequence, it would come after teacher input, where a teacher models writing without pupil input using 'Think Aloud', but before independent practice, where pupils are asked to work without adult support.

Shared writing in action

Watch the video below to see a teacher using shared writing and answer the following questions in the notes tab (or your own notebook):

- What prior knowledge would pupils need in order to contribute during shared writing?
- What was the impact of shared writing on pupils' engagement and learning?
- How did the teacher maintain high expectations or address misconceptions?

Early years

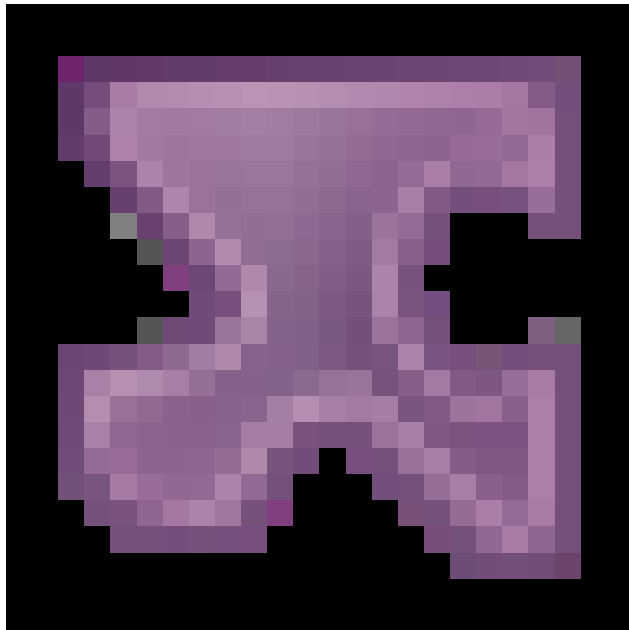


Direct Link: [Shared Writing - Early Years](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Shared Writing - Early Years](#)

[\(this link opens in a new window/tab\)](#)

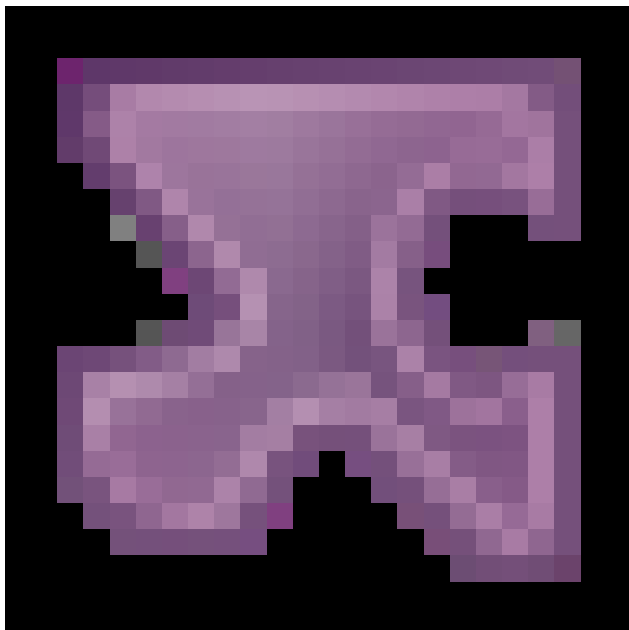
Primary



Direct Link: [Shared writing - Primary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Shared writing - Primary](#)
([this link opens in a new window/tab](#))

Secondary



Direct Link: [Shared writing - Secondary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Shared writing - Secondary](#)
([this link opens in a new window/tab](#))