



higher education  
& training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides

Study guide 7:

# Teaching Writing

Primary Teacher Education project  
Department of Higher Education and Training

## Study guide 7: Teaching Writing

© 2020 Department of Higher Education and Training

### Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

You are free to share (that is, copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material) as long as you follow these licence terms:



**Attribution (by)**

You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.



**Non Commercial (nc)**

You can copy, distribute, display, perform, adapt and use this material for any purpose other than commercially (unless you get permission first). Non Commercial means not primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation.



**Share Alike (sa)**

You may remix, transform, or build upon the material, but you must distribute your contributions under the same licence as the original.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the licence permits.

#### Notices

You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation.

For the full text of this Creative Commons licence go to:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/legalcode>

Department of Higher Education and Training

Private Bag X174, Pretoria, 0001

123 Francis Baard Street, Pretoria, 0001

Tel.: 012 312 5911 / 0800 87 2222 / 086 999 0123

Fax.: 012 323 5618

Web: [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

# Contents

---

<b>Introduction to teaching writing</b>	<b>1</b>
How do children learn to write?	1
What this study guide contains	1
What literacy teacher standards does this study guide cover?	1
<b>1. Writing in society and school</b>	<b>3</b>
Functions of writing in society	3
The purposes of writing for learners	3
Unit 1: Self test questions	4
<b>2. The process of teaching writing</b>	<b>5</b>
The writing process	5
Foundational writing skills	6
The components of the writing process	7
Strategies for the various components of writing	7
Planning	8
Drafting	9
Sharing	9
Revising	10
Editing	10
Evaluation	10
Publishing	11
The necessity of practice	11
Levels of text writing	12
The necessity of practice	11
Writing difficulties with girls and boys	12
Assessing writing	12
Unit 2: Self test questions	14
<b>3. Handwriting</b>	<b>15</b>
The pre-handwriting skills	15
Teaching handwriting	16
Holding the pencil	16
How to sit and write	17
Forming the letters	18
Choosing and appropriate script	19
Cursive handwriting	22
Practice in handwriting	22
Approaches top teaching handwriting	22
Keyboarding	24
The importance of handwriting fluency	24
Unit 3: Self test questions	24

<b>4. Teaching spelling</b>	<b>25</b>
The importance of spelling	25
Stages in spelling development	26
Things learner spellers have to know	26
Knowledge of letters of the alphabet and what they represent	26
Knowledge of the form of words	26
The need for explicit teaching of spelling	27
English spelling	27
How does an English word's language origin explain its spelling?	28
How does a word's form determine its spelling?	28
Why does English require spelling instruction across several grades?	28
Spelling practice and activities	29
Unit 4: Self test questions	30
<b>5. Sentence, paragraph and text construction</b>	<b>31</b>
Generating ideas and content for writing	31
Word choice	31
Writing fluent sentences	32
Combining sentences	32
Developing paragraphs	33
Building sets of paragraphs into whole texts	33
Obeying writing conventions	33
Unit 5: Self test questions	24
<b>6. Writing genres</b>	<b>35</b>
Writing in a particular genre	36
Unit 5: Self test questions	36
<b>7. Making multimodal texts</b>	<b>37</b>
Types of multimodal texts	37
Planning multimodal texts	38
Resources	38
Unit 5: Self test questions	38
<b>8. The writing friendly classroom</b>	<b>39</b>
Unit 5: Self test questions	41
<b>References</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Self test answers</b>	<b>45</b>

# Introduction to teaching writing

---

## How do children learn to write?

This study guide has material directed to a single goal, teachers enabling learners to use writing flexibly and effectively to help them learn and communicate their ideas.

## What this study guide contains

There are eight units:

1. Writing in society and school
2. The process of teaching writing
3. Handwriting
4. Teaching spelling
5. Sentence, paragraph and text construction
6. Writing genres
7. Making multimodal texts
8. The writing friendly classroom

## What literacy teacher standards are covered?

This study guide covers five of the standards (or portions of them). These knowledge standards relate to the knowledge of language and literacy and that graduate teachers need to have to teach learners to read and write.

7. **Demonstrate knowledge that reading and writing are complementary and recursive processes.**
  - 7.1 Understanding that literacy development is not a simple linear process but a recursive one that involves and integrates all the different components of reading and writing in the use and production of texts of increasing complexity in a variety of genres and text types.
8. **Demonstrate knowledge of theoretical and research-based components of reading and writing teaching through the phases and grades (including its cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural foundations and the processes and concepts involved).**
  - 8.1 What learners need to be able to read and write, and why, within and across the relevant grades and subjects, can be described.
  - 8.2 A broad understanding of the concepts, curriculum, and pedagogy of literacy teaching can be articulated.



- 8.3 A coherent evidence-based understanding of the teaching of reading and writing that guides their approach and practice can be articulated.
- 8.4 The broad continuum of reading and writing development can be described.
- 8.5 A variety of strategies to teach, assess and support learners' development across the continuum can be identified.
- 18. Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical, historical, and research-based components of writing development and the writing process through the grades.**
- 18.1 A basic understanding of a theoretical, historical and research-based approaches to the teaching of writing is articulated.
- 18.2 Knowledge of the functions of writing in society and schooling is demonstrated.
- 18.3 The role of writing in 'writing to learn' and in documenting learning is articulated.
- 18.4 The role of writing in developing learners' imagination and creativity is discussed.
- 19. Demonstrate practical knowledge of the teaching of writing and the creation of a writing-rich environment**
- 19.1 The distinction between handwriting (a skill) and writing (communication of meaningful written information) is explained.
- 19.2 Evidence-based knowledge of effective instruction in the following is demonstrated: handwriting (print script and cursive script), typing (keyboarding and wordprocessing), handwriting for left-handed learners
- 19.3 The role of spelling, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and writing conventions, etc. in the development of writing for communication is explained.
- 20. Display knowledge about writing genres and text types.**
- 20.1 Knowledge is demonstrated about appropriate literacy education texts in multiple genres, formats and degrees of complexity within various settings and cultural contexts, for various audiences taking into account learners' background knowledge, stage of reading development and any reading difficulties.
- 20.2 The purposes, functions and structure of various kinds and genres of texts (such as messages, stories, poems, and informational texts) are explained.
- 20.3 The ability to talk with learners meaningfully about the different genres is demonstrated.
- 20.4 Means of creating a classroom environment in which learners can communicate in writing using a range of genres, including creative writing, are described.

# 1. Functions of writing in society and school

---

If children are going to be put through all the hard mental and physical work of learning to write, it is important that they understand that writing is important, useful and powerful. The teacher has to help the learners to develop an understanding of the purposes of writing and learn to write well for a variety of real-life purposes and audiences. The way this message is communicated will be different in the various grades.

Learners need to understand the inseparable and **reciprocal** relationship between spoken and written language and that writing is a form of meaningful communication that will be increasingly important in their school careers and in their whole life.

## Functions of writing in society

Historically some of the first human writing was for recording commercial lists. As nations and empires grew, written commands and laws became increasingly important in commerce, government and in religion. It is the permanence of writing that enables it to be a means of communication across time and space.

In modern societies writing is a fundamental part of most professional, social, community, and civic activities. A large majority of salaried employees have to engage in writing in their work. Being able to communicate well in writing to a variety of audiences is an essential skill. People who do not have good writing skills are at a severe disadvantage in accessing education and employment opportunities.

In modern societies that are moving rapidly into the so called **Fourth Industrial Revolution**, many if not most of the jobs will be new and people will have to be constantly learning, unlearning and relearning. Reading and writing skills as tools for lifelong learning will become more and more important.

## The purposes of writing for learners

Being able to write enables one to communicate with friends and relatives. We can use writing to spread our ideas and thoughts other people. We can tell stories, describe our observations and experiences, and share important information. We can share our feelings – and that can be important to us and to the people we write to.

Writing provides a way of influencing others. In writing we can try to persuade other people to do certain things or adopt certain idea. That is why writing is important in the way ideas about the politics and government can be advanced or argued against. This is why many undemocratic governments ban “subversive” documents and even jail the offending authors for fear of their influence.

**reciprocal:** mutual action or relationship between two things

**fourth industrial revolution:** The 4IR is the ongoing automation of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern smart electronic technology. Large-scale machine-to-machine communication and the internet being used to connect a multitude of electronic gadgets (the so-called internet of things) are integrated for increased automation, improved communication and self-monitoring, and production of smart machines whose software programs can be used to analyze and diagnose issues without the need for human intervention.

Writing is also an essential tool for learning. Writing instruction including spelling, sentence construction and paragraph formation, helps improve reading fluency and comprehension (Graham and Herbert, 2010, 2011). Writing is also where the learners' imagination and creativity is shown.

After children learn to read and write in the Foundation Phase they will rapidly move to 'writing to learn'. They will document and demonstrate that learning by writing. Most of their future assessment will be done on the basis of what they write.

Much of what children write will be about what they read. As their writing develops it will start to reflect more what they read than what they hear spoken.

They will learn to write in different ways for different contexts such as formal assessment and examinations, formal documents and reports, informal notes, diaries and journals, poetry and song lyrics, and cellphone texting.

Writing enables us to gather together information – in notes, summaries, and full texts – that we can then use, keep and communicate to others. The very act of writing helps the writer remember and learn the content of what is written. The explicitness of writing enables us to see the connections between the ideas in a text, examine the assumptions behind those ideas, and ask further questions. Because writing is permanent it enables us to reread it, review it, revise it and evaluate its usefulness.

Older children will increasingly engage in electric technology-based forms of writing such as text messages, social networking messages, emails and instant messages.

To conclude, apart from teachers needing the knowledge, skills, and tools to teach writing, they also need to explain to the learners why writing is important and how writing develops. Writing, along with reading fluently, is a necessity. It is a predictor of success in school and a fundamental requirement for full participation in civic life and in the global economy.

## Unit 1: Self test questions

1. Produce definitions giving your understanding of the terms 'reciprocal' and 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'.
2. Briefly describe common purposes of writing.
3. What is 'writing to learn' ?
4. Writing is explicit, that is, it states things clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt. Why is this useful?



## 2. The process of teaching writing

---

Writing is a very complex task. It requires a new way of coordinating fine motor skills and cognitive skills, puts demands on our language knowledge, and has to take account of the language, social and cultural patterns of the writer's time and place.

Writing is also, like reading, an unnatural act. Learning to speak is instinctive, reading and writing is not. It takes learning and practice to reproduce the sounds of language into written code with a pencil or a keyboard. Writing is also very different from speaking in which there is a direct social relationship between people. We usually know those people we speak with and they can ask us questions or ask us to clarify what we have said. With writing we may not know the reader at all. Hence writing involves our imagination as well. We have to imagine that we are having a special kind of conversation (which we write down) with a person who is not actually there. We have to imagine who that person is and why we are writing for that person.

Sometimes the reasons we write are obvious. A politician writing a pamphlet or a speech wants to influence people in their thoughts and feelings. A preacher writing a sermon does the same. The way in which they do this is also obvious. They provide new information that the readers do not know or information which they already know but which they want explained to them in a new way. With school assignments the work is written as if the reader (the teacher) knows nothing about the subject and has to have it explained, though in reality the reader usually knows much more than the writer does! The real reason is to give the writer practice in communicating information through writing.

There is strong scientific evidence that writing can be taught and should be (What Works Clearinghouse, 2012, 2014, 2017a, 2017b; Graham *et al.*, 2013; Andrews *et al.*, 2009; Santangelo and Olinghouse, 2009).

This requires explicit, interactive teaching, **modelling** of writing and **scaffolded instruction** in writing strategies. Both what is taught and how it is taught are important.

### The writing process

Writing is a complex process that involves self-directed cognitive and physical activity that is driven by the goal of the writer to communicate thoughts and ideas to a particular reader or an audience of readers who live within a culture, society and history.

To meet this goal the writer has to skilfully and flexibly coordinate this complex process, which takes place within a specific writing environment, from the start to finish of writing a text.

**modelling:** instructional modelling is where a teacher “acts out”, demonstrates a skill performance, or does a “think-aloud” to explain what it being done. The learners are then expected to mimic or reproduce what they observed.

**scaffolded instruction:** instructional scaffolding is a process through which a teacher adds various temporary supports for learners in order to enhance learning and aid in the mastery of tasks. The teacher does this by systematically building on students' experiences and knowledge as they are learning new skills. The analogy is with the scaffolding used when erecting a high new building. The scaffolding is taken away once the building is constructed.

Instructional scaffolding supports include resources, carefully prepared tasks, key questions, worked examples, outlines, templates, guides and story boards, teacher modelling, talking through a process, emotional support, giving advice, etc. These supports are gradually removed as students develop autonomous learning strategies.

The teacher's role in developing writing is as follows:

- Teach learners strategies for the various components of the writing process.
- Guide learners to select and use appropriate writing strategies.
- Encourage students to be flexible in their use of the components of the writing process. [This is because writing is not a linear process, like following a recipe to bake a cake. Writers should learn to move easily back and forth between components of the writing process, often altering their plans and revising their text along the way.]
- Gradually move responsibility from the teacher to the learners so that they can become independent writers.

The learners need to be taught the full writing process and the use of the various **strategies** and **techniques** for the various components of the writing process.

In teaching writing the learners must come to understand how a person thinks when planning, composing and revising their writing.

But before the full writing process can be engaged in the learners need certain foundational skills.

## Foundational writing skills

Writing down language, the act of systematically constructing phoneme-grapheme correspondences, has many challenges and difficulties. To start with learners need systematic instruction in the foundational skills for writing:

- handwriting (or keyboarding) – teaching very young learners how to hold a pencil correctly and form letters fluently and efficiently
- word spelling
- sentence construction
- punctuation
- paragraph construction (with no runs on and sentence fragments)

These foundational skills of writing must be taught in the initial grades.

Developing the foundation skills relies on plenty of regular, daily practice. But this practice must always be linked to real writing – the goal is to create texts of various types.

The more fluent the writer is with these foundational skills the more attention can be devoted to the composing of the text as a whole using appropriate text writing strategies and techniques.

The foundation skills need to be developed from Grade 1.

There should not be any stress on grammar in the first two grades – that comes later. Grammatical constructions and terminology should be introduced at points which are relevant to the focus of learning.

**strategy:** a writing strategy provides the general plan, the overall design or blueprint for the writing process. It is the broad starting point for methods, techniques, procedures and processes that the writer will use.

**technique:** a way of carrying out a particular activity that needs skill.

Depending on circumstances learners may need to be taught keyboard use and word processing, though usually this is more useful in the higher grades where extended texts have to be written.

Teaching learners to construct sentences that are fluent, meaningful and with a particular style will be looked at in Units 4 and 5.

## The components of the writing process

The components of a full writing process are:

- planning (conceptualising)
- drafting
- sharing
- revising
- editing
- evaluating
- publishing.

Teaching all the components of the writing process, whilst started in the first grade in a simple way, are best developed from Grade 2 onwards, becoming more and more sophisticated as the learner progresses through the grades.

As the learner writers become more competent they should be encouraged to be flexible when using the different writing components.

## Strategies for the various components of writing

Learners need to acquire appropriate strategies for each component of the writing process (Graham *et al.*, 2012).

The teacher needs to describe each strategy and explain to the learners why they should use a particular strategy and how it will help them.

Then the teacher should model the strategy (for example by saying out aloud what she is doing) and ask the class for ideas. Then in small groups, the learners can practise applying the strategy. The teacher checks to see that the learners are applying the strategy properly.

Then individually the learners use the strategy and the teacher monitors this.

In taking learners through these components “scaffolding” can be used, such as a pre-written text which needs to be altered, an outline text which needs to have details filled in, a model for a poem, etc. However, as with scaffolding in building, which needs to be taken down once the building can stand up on its own, scaffolding is a temporary support. Over dependence on scaffolding can become a problem.

# Planning

This is the initial stage of conceptualising, representing in one's mind, what one is to write about.

It involves:

- developing goals (Why am I writing this, for what purpose, for what readers?)
- generating ideas (What am I going to write about? What kind of text will it be?)
- gathering information from reading, use of prior knowledge, and discussions with others
- organizing (e.g. in numbered notes) these ideas for writing based on the purpose of the text.

The goals can be created by the teacher or the learners themselves (and reviewed by the teacher) and can include adding more ideas or including specific features of a writing **genre**. In the later grades learners should write down these goals and ideas so that they can refer to and modify them throughout the writing process.

Planning requires learners to recognize that a person can write for a variety of purposes.

Encourage self-motivation e.g. by personal target-setting.

Engage learners in pre-writing activities where they can assess what they already know, research an unfamiliar topic, or arrange their ideas visually.

The prior knowledge involves what the writer knows about the writing topic and linguistic, vocabulary and genre knowledge including the typical format or template for the particular type of writing product.

Give pupils a writing task which involves the use of inquiry skills e.g. establish a clear goal for writing or researching/exploring concrete data on a topic.

## Writing for a particular purpose

Every writer has a purpose in writing. The writer needs to think carefully about this when planning what to write about, how to say it, and to think about what the reader needs to be told.

Over time the learners need to have their understanding of writing purpose and audience expanded. Writing is used for a variety of purposes and for many different kinds of audience. Sometimes a text is designed for not just one but several audiences.

The teacher must help learners understand the different purposes of writing, such as describing, communicating news or information, enhancing understanding of a reading, making an argument, sharing an experience, emotion or idea, criticising something, persuading or entertaining somebody.

Learners should also be taught the connection between writing purposes and the different writing **genres** or **text types**.

Each writing genre has specific features. If the writers know this they can structure and adjust their writing accordingly. To gain understanding of genres the learners need to read good examples of writing in the different genres.

## Drafting

This is the writing down of a first version of the text.

With long texts the first stage may be an outline that shows the order of the main ideas and the supporting details for each main idea.

To make a draft the learners must:

- Select the words and construct the sentences that most accurately convey their ideas, and then transcribe those words and sentences into written language.
- Combine sentences into longer ones using suitable **conjunctions**.
- Place the sentences into coherent paragraphs. This means deciding which are main ideas and which are supporting ideas.

In drafting, all the foundational skills are used – handwriting, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. However, these should not be the focus of the effort at this stage.

A learner can try out sentences orally before writing them on paper or, after writing it, read the sentence aloud to see if it sounds right.

Or several sentences can be written about the same thing and the best one chosen.

It often helps for a learner to select a sentence or paragraph from another writer and imitate it.

Explicit teaching of drafting skills can include the use of photocopied scripts for editing exercises, reading transcripts, hearing the drafts of other learners and drafting targeted sections of the planned text.

## Sharing

Starting in Grade 2, once a text is drafted it is a good idea for the learner to share it with the teacher, other adults or the other children. Reading it aloud is most useful. This enables them to get feedback on their work and suggestions on how to improve what they are writing.

Note that teacher feedback should concentrate on meaning and communication, not just grammatical correctness.

Though correct grammar is important for clear communication, the task of writing is to communicate, not just demonstrate correct grammar usage.

**genres:** a category of literature, music or art. The main genres in literature are Poetry, Drama, Fiction, Non-fiction and Media, all with many possible subdivisions (See Wikipedia entry for List of writing genres).

**text types:** are the different types of writing, broadly divided into factual and literary. Factual text types include factual description, accounts, or persuasive. Literary text types include poetry, narrative or personal response.

**conjunctions:** these are words that link other words, phrases, or clauses together. This means that longer sentences can be formed so that one does not only have very short sentences.

## Revising

Revision can take place at many stages of writing. It usually takes place after the learner has read through a first draft or shared it with others.

Revision includes:

- making content changes (adding or deleting)
- making the text clearer and more understandable including refining the words used and the structure of sentences and paragraphs
- reorganizing the sequence of the text
- removing or adding sections of the text.

## Editing

Editing, though it is a kind of revision, involves making sure that the final written text conforms to the conventions of the written language.

Learners have to review their spelling, grammar and punctuation and make any necessary corrections. Following basic language conventions is important if the reader is to be able to interpret the text's meaning.

Editing changes make a text readable for external audiences and can make the writer's intended meaning clearer.

The simplest questions for editing are:

- Did I capitalize the first word in sentences and proper names?
- Did I use commas and end-of-sentence punctuation?
- Did I spell each word correctly?

## Evaluation

This is the judging of the overall value of the text that has been written,. Evaluation can be done by the writer or others. The evaluator must read all or part of the text and carefully consider whether it meets the original writing goals.

Good questions to ask include:

- Are the ideas clear?
- Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Does the writing connect with the reader?
- Are sentence types varied?

Evaluation may lead to further revision and editing.

From grade 3 onwards learners should be encouraged to self-evaluate their productions and to ask themselves whether they met their goals in writing the text and used the best strategies to do so.



## Publishing

This is work that has to be done to deliver the finalised text to the intended readers or audience of readers in a carefully handwritten or printed form, in oral form, or both.

The overall appearance of the text should be appropriate and of acceptable quality. When a learner text is handed in to a teacher to be marked – this is the “publishing” stage.

Not all writing is published but it is good if learners are able to “publish” their writing and have it available for others in the class or elsewhere to read.

### Using wordprocessors in the writing process

Handwriting can be replaced by typing on a keyboard linked to a wordprocessor program in a computer, or in a simpler form on a cellphone or tablet.

Once a learner has mastered the basic of wordprocessing, it can be used to make it easier and quicker to draft, revise and edit a text. This is because it is so easy to add, insert, move and delete text. The learner can also more easily jump from one part of the writing process to another and back again. Rewriting is easier. When the text is completed it can be easily formatted for printing or display on a screen.

## The necessity of practice

Practice makes fluent. People learn by doing. To become effective writers, students need daily opportunities in class to learn and practice writing skills, strategies, and techniques, and to write different forms of texts to meet different communication purposes. Home writing activities should also be encouraged. As teachers observe the way students write, they can identify writing difficulties and assist students overcome them. As teachers observe the way students practice writing, they can identify writing difficulties and assist students overcome them.

Learners must write frequently and across all the subjects in the curriculum. Writing practice time can be included in instruction in other content areas to give learners more time to write. This becomes particularly important in the higher grades. Teachers can make links with other subjects e.g. ask learners to write a paragraph explaining some subject content. When teachers integrate writing tasks with other content-area lessons, students may think more critically about the content-area material. Some writing tasks should be for the learners to respond in writing to reading, to set out what they already knew before they read, what they know after they read, and what they still want to know.

Even in Reception year learners should be spending at least 30 minutes a day in writing. From Grade 1 there should be at least an hour a day in writing. Part of the time can be on fundamental writing skills, components and techniques, the other half on actual practical writing when they apply these skills.

## Levels of text writing

As the learners advance through the grades the writing goes through three levels:

**Basic text creation:** This means encoding what one wants to say into text through choosing words, putting them together in intelligible well punctuated sentences, and with practice, elaborating on the detail and expressing one's thoughts more clearly and clarity of expression.

**Intermediate writing skills:** Here learners have to develop more complex, structured texts with good paragraphing, introduction and conclusion (in accordance with the various types, formats and genres of writing, and various writing conventions). Writing now involves planning, revising, editing their own work, and producing a finished text. These processes become more important as learners advance through the grades.

**Advanced writing knowledge and skills:** Writing knowledge includes an understanding of discourse and genre and how writing has to convey its meaning clearly and appropriately for different recipients. They also have to pay attention to the layout, colour and image choice of print and digital texts.

## Writing difficulties with boys and girls

There is considerable, but contested, evidence of differences in how boys and girls respond to reading and writing tasks. Generally boys perform less well than girls in reading and writing (Reilly, 2020).

Girls and boys may well develop different reading preferences and writing topic preferences and there are claims that girls are interested in stories and poetry, boys less so, as they are more interested in informational texts and non-fiction.

There are suggestions that it is helpful to give learners of both sexes greater choice in what they read and write. Boys dislike drafting and need explicit teaching on how to do it, including tightly structured and well-organised scaffolded instruction lessons and tasks with clear learning goals. There should be explicit teaching of drafting skills.

## Assessing writing

Assessing writing is a fundamentally subjective judgment and depends at least in part on the framework the reader brings to the task.

Despite the subjective nature of writing assessment, there are some features that many can agree contribute to effective writing (e.g., developing a clear focus for the reader).

There are a number of checklists and rubrics to assist teachers (and learners) to assess success in writing at various grade levels. Many of these are available on the internet.

For the lower grades such checklists typically look at the following:



### **Formation of letters**

- Letters formed correctly
- Legible
- Good spacing between words
- Sufficient words written in given time

### **Punctuation**

- Sentences are punctuated effectively by capital letters, full stops, exclamation and question marks.
- Commas are used to separate short phrases, clauses, items in a list.
- Quotation marks (inverted commas) show where speech starts and ends.
- Capital letters used to start people's names or places.

### **Spelling**

- Accurate spelling

### **Sentence structure**

- Correct sequence of words in sentences
- Full sentences and no sentence fragments
- Use of simple sentences, complex sentences, compound sentences, and complex-compound sentences
- Conjunctions used correctly
- Articles used correctly
- Pronouns and tenses used appropriately

### **Paragraphing**

- Paragraphs have main idea or topic sentences and supporting ideas.
- Paragraphs are in a good sequential order.

### **Comprehension**

- Sentences make sense.
- Order of paragraphs/events make sense.
- No big gaps or things left out
- Good transition between paragraphs

### **Text structure**

- Text has a clear start, build-up, events or descriptions, conclusion/ending.
- Suitably balanced, clearly distinguished and logically related
- Suitable pace through the text

### **Content**

- Content relevant to the topic
- Content of the written text reflects writers purpose
- Writer's own thoughts and interests presented

## Unit 2: Self test questions

1. Explain what is meant by 'scaffolding' writing instruction.
2. List five foundational skills for writing.
3. List seven steps in the text writing process.
4. Three very basic early grade editing questions deal with:
5. Give examples of how you would model the cognitive and physical activities of writing to learners.

### 3. Handwriting

---

As children are being taught to recognize letters they should also be being taught to write those letters.

Handwriting is a skills that everybody needs to master for use in everyday life.

#### The pre-handwriting skills

Before learning to write young children need to develop certain physical skills and have practised using drawing implements such as crayons and pencils.

They need to have developed sufficient hand and finger strength, **fine-motor control**, and eye-hand co-ordination.

These are achieved through hand strengthening exercises such as playing with plasticine or play dough, screwing nuts onto bolts, rolling paper balls between the fingers, etc., fine motor control exercises such as cutting patterns with scissors, and hand-eye coordination by catching balls, bean bags and drawing.

The learners need to have a sense of direction, of what is up, middle and down, and left and right.

Using a range of writing tools such as paint brushes, wax crayons, etc., they must have practice in tracing simple outlines of pictures and patterns and begin to form letters using finger painting, paint brushes, and crayons.

Then they can begin drawing straight lines, curved lines, and letters where a starting point and direction are given. They can also 'write' letters in sand trays.

They can practice sitting in the correct sitting position for handwriting.

There are a number of activities that can develop an understanding of writing as distinct from drawing pictures.

The child can draw pictures about personal experiences. The child can draw squiggles, "pretend writing", and "read" what the squiggles say.

It is important that the child recognizes that writing and drawing are different.

Other useful pre-writing activities include:

- Role-playing such situations as taking a telephone message, writing a shopping list, etc.
- Copying well known letters in own name to represent writing.
- Copying common print from the environment such as labels on common household products.
- 'Writing' from left to right and top to bottom.
- Contribute ideas for a class news book by means of drawings.

**fine-motor control:** the coordination of muscles, bones, and nerves to produce small, exact movements. An example of fine motor control is picking up a small item with the index finger (pointer finger or forefinger) and thumb. The opposite of fine-motor control is gross (large, general) motor control.

# Teaching handwriting

Handwriting has to be taught and it is important to get it right at the beginning by teaching such things as:

- how to hold the pencil or pen efficiently (including for children who are left handed)
- how to sit in the best writing position
- how to use handwriting movements to form the letters (and link them together)

and to provide plenty of guided practice in handwriting.

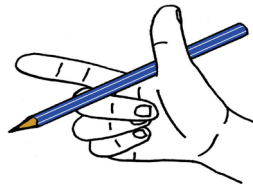
## Holding the pencil

There is a preferred way to hold the pencil but it may take time for the child to master it. Some children may not yet have enough strength in hand and fingers to do this easily. It will need practice over time.

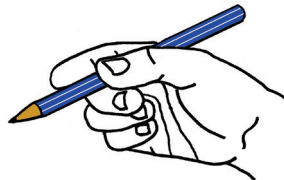
Many children may be able to manage initially even though they write holding the pencil in a less than optimum way. However, they will find it more and more difficult to write quickly and neatly in later years when they have to write extended length texts.

Here is an example of a good way to teach a child to hold a pencil:

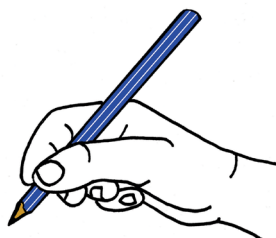
1. Help the child to hold the hand with the thumb upright and the **forefinger** pointing out and the other fingers bent inwards. Place the pencil against the top of the bent middle finger and resting against the thumb joint.



2. The child must now squeeze the pencil between thumb and forefinger. The pencil now also rests on the middle finger.



3. The pencil is now pointed down at a 45 degree angle onto the paper to write. The tip of the pencil should be about 3 cm from the fingers.



**forefinger:** the finger next to the thumb, also called the index finger, pointing finger or trigger finger

**middle finger:** the middle finger of the hand, next to the forefinger.

**Little finger:** the last and smallest finger of the hand. Also called the pinky finger.

## Holding the pencil for left handed children

The pencil is held slightly higher up the shaft, at least 3 centimetres. The teacher can tie an elastic band around the pencil to indicate this.

Softer leaded pencils and pens with non-smudging ink are best for left-handed writers.

## How to sit and write

The child should sit slightly bent forward, with the bottom well back in the chair.

The head should be the correct distance from the paper and be straight, not tilted.

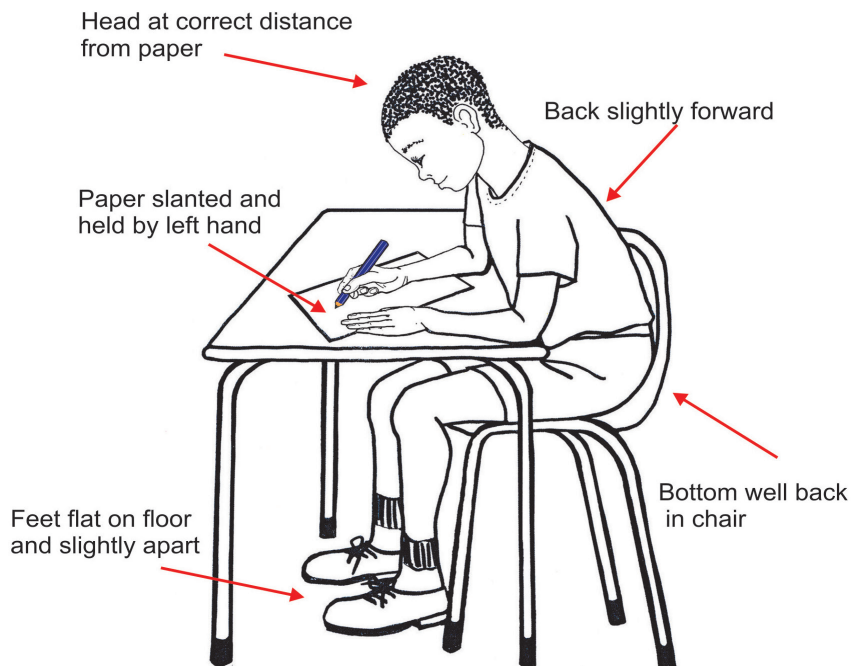
The feet should be flat on the floor.

The paper should be slanted to the left and the left hand touching it to keep it in place. (They will need to learn to move the paper up the desk rather than move their hand down the paper.)

The right arm should be supported by the forearm and the bottom (little) finger.

Writing is a movement of the fingers, hand and arm. The finger will move slightly in forming the letter shapes. The hand moves smoothly ahead of the point where the pencil meets the paper.

As handwriting tasks lengthen the child should learn to take brief pauses to relax the hold on the pencil and rotate the wrist.



## How to sit for left-handed children

The paper should be slanted to the right with the right hand on it to keep it in place. Paper position is important to ensure that the writing hand stays below the writing line. A sloping desk board helps.

The child should not sit to the right hand of a right handed writer to avoid their arms colliding.

# Forming the letters

Before introducing children to the letter forms for handwriting the teacher has to deal with the names of the letters.

## The matter of letter names

Before looking at teaching handwriting one has to consider the matter of letter names.

The learning of letter sounds is quite different from learning the letter shapes and their names.

In English writing instruction the 26 alphabet letters have to represent 44 sounds.

In English only some of the spoken letter names contain the letter sound.

For example, the name for the letter **b** is “bee” and the sound /b/ (/’bi:/ in the IPA) begins that name. The name for the letter **w** is “double-u” and the sound is not represented in that name.

It must be noted that letter names in English may not cue to the sounds of the letters in the African languages. It is best not to use the English letter names but rather the sounds in these languages, that is, the letter name should be the sound. Afrikaans has its own set of letter names.

When teaching the letter names it is best to initially teach the letters that are not visually similar to avoid confusion. Then when teaching letters that are similar in shape you teach one of those letters well first. Also take special care with letters that have similar names and shapes, such as **b** and **d**.

There is no prescribed order for teaching letter names.

There is a debate about whether it is best to teach the upper case letters first as they are more easily distinguishable from each other. Against that is that in first grade the texts children read are mainly in lower case letters.

When introducing lower case letters after the upper case ones, first introduce the lower case ones that are identical to the upper case ones in form.

Lower case letters **a d g** and **p r n m h b** all have the same handwriting starting stroke.

The goal is that the learner can recognise all the letters of the alphabet in lower and upper case in whatever sequence they are ordered and automatically.

Alphabet books are a useful way to introduce the letters and the alphabetical order.

Learning the sequence of the alphabet is another matter that should also be mastered in time because of the importance of alphabetical order in information retrieval. There are also alphabet sequence songs for this. The learner must be able to pick up a sequence from any point in the full alphabet sequence.

### How does one represent a sound in letters?

A letter between slash marks, /b/, shows the phoneme, or sound, that the letter represents, and not the name of the letter. For example, the letter **b** represents the sound /b/.

These sounds are usually represented by the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) which uses letters and adapted letters to represent all of the sounds in all languages, each symbol only representing one sound.

Here is the IPA rendering of the words “English”: /’ɪŋɡlɪʃ/ and “teacher”: /’ti:tʃə/.

## Choosing an appropriate script

The teacher has to choose and teach an appropriate early handwriting print script that can later be easily transformed into a **cursive script** (Goves, 2006). It is best to have one that uses a continuous stroke for most letters.

A number of suitable scripts are available that also have computer fonts for producing your own readings and exercises in that script. Some of these are the excellent scripts used in schools in the various states of Australia and fonts for these can be purchased from: <https://www.australianschoolfonts.com.au/>

There is a free font set from Victoria: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/Pages/handwriting.aspx>

### Example of the South Australia foundation script



**script:** the letters or characters used in writing; handwriting as distinct from printing

**cursive:** writing joined together in a flowing manner, generally for the purpose of making writing faster, in contrast to block letters

**font:** a typeface used for printing, e.g. Cambria, Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman. Each font has a set of characters of the same style and size.

**case:** whether letters are in upper (capitals) or lower case

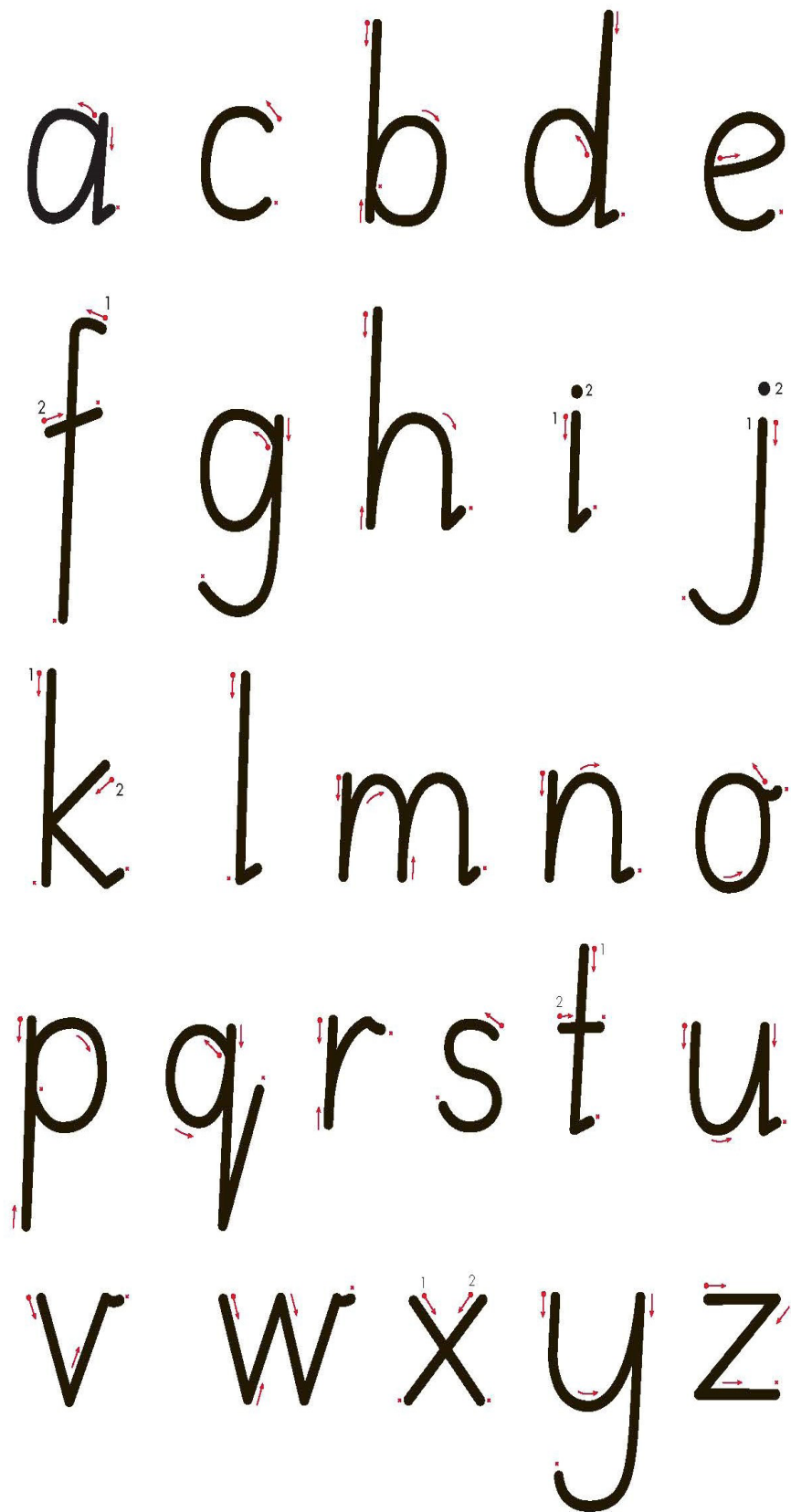
**size:** the size of printed letters, measured by their height (usually in points (pt)). This text is in point size 10 (about 3.5 mm high).



a b c d e f g h i  
j k l m n o p q  
r s t u v w x y z  
0 1 2 3 4  
5 6 7 8 9

Example of the South Australia foundation script font  
(lower case and numbers)





Example of the South Australia foundation script font  
(lower case with links)

## Cursive handwriting

**cursive:** handwriting style in which some characters are written joined together in a flowing manner, generally for the purpose of making writing faster, in contrast to block letters

**Cursive** or 'joined' writing requires learning about common sequences of letters in the written language and the skill of joining the letters together. Once learners have been taught the basic linking techniques they can be encouraged to write words by clustering or chunking learned sequences of letters in a fluent handwriting movement.

Once mastered cursive writing can be done faster.

## Practice in handwriting

Because handwriting is a motor skill, it works best to practice in multiple short sessions. Learners also should apply their handwriting skills at the word, sentence and whole text levels and in authentic writing activities.

At the beginning teach the pattern for forming the letter rather than how to write it perfectly on paper.

Use dot and arrow cues to help learners remember how to form the letters. Give clear directions on how to form each letter.

Group letters together that all have their formation beginning in the same place.

For example uppercase letters F, E, D, P, B, R, N and M all begin in the top left corner with a straight line down.

In assessing handwriting the teacher needs to look at:

- correct seating posture
- pencil hold
- legible letter formation
- correct spacing between words,
- and over time, writing speed.

All this requires a lot of individual attention.

## Approaches to teaching handwriting

How does one approach teaching handwriting? Essentially there are two approaches commonly used:

### The multisensory approach

As the name indicates this approach gets the children to use several of their senses – touch, sight, sense of movement.

The focus is on the feel of the letters and the feel of the body forming their shapes. The children are encouraged to feel what they are doing rather than talking about it.

Here is an example of a multisensory approach lesson:

1. The teacher shows a selected group of letters to the children on the chalkboard. She names the letters.
2. She demonstrates forming these letters on the chalkboard, indicating the way to write them. Then a child copies them on the chalkboard. The child copies each letter three times, one of the letters at a time.
3. Then the teacher writes each letter in the air (“sky-writing”). The children imitate this several times.
4. Then the teacher writes the letters in a sand tray or something similar three times. A child writes the letters in a sand tray or something similar three times.
5. Then the teacher, using her index finger, touches and follows the shape of some prepared cut-out letters made of something that can be easily felt (fine sandpaper, bumpy glitter-glue). The children imitate this three times.
6. With markers the children follows the shapes of the letters printed on a worksheet.
7. The children copy each letter three times with a pencil on regular-lined paper.

### The cognitive approach

This approach uses a more mental strategy that focuses on the child’s awareness of letter formation and with verbal mediation to guide letter formation

It is thought that this approach is the best for second grade students, and in fact more beneficial at this age (Zwicker and Hadwin, 2009).

Session usually start with an alphabet song warm up.

Examples of sessions include an alphabet warm-up and activities such as the following:

1. Alphabet warm-up. The teacher and the children sing the alphabet song. The children then name each letter of the alphabet the teacher points to on an alphabet strip or when the teacher names a target letter, and the children name it and the letters just before and after the target letter.
2. Modelling, in which the teacher demonstrates letter formations using cards with numbered arrows which describe the sequencing stroke order and direction for forming the letters.
3. Imitation, during which children imitate the teacher in forming the letter while describing how to form it.
4. Discussion, during which the teacher and children discuss how letters in the group of letters are similar and different.
5. Practice, which is the naming of a letter and saying out aloud what you

are doing when tracing and copying tasks with a pencil the letters on a prepared worksheets, with numbered stroke direction arrows and without numbered arrows.

6. Writing letters from memory.
7. An evaluation in which the children circle the best-formed letter for each target letter introduced.

## Keyboarding

As children get more and more access to cellphones, tablets and computers with keyboards they need to learn basic keyboarding skills. They have to be taught to recognise all the letters of the alphabet (lower and upper case) In the higher school grades the use of word-processor programs and other text design software may become important in digitally equipped schools.

## The importance of handwriting fluency

A fluent writer has automaticity of handwriting and spelling as well as proficiency in sentence construction. The more fluent the child is in writing, including handwriting, the more short-term memory can be devoted to the actual construction of the whole text.

### Unit 3: Self test questions

1. List some pre-handwriting skills.
2. Distinguish between a letter name and a letter sound.
3. Should a learner recognise all the letters of the alphabet in both lower and upper case in whatever sequence they are ordered early in the Foundation Phase?
4. What should the teacher assess in initial handwriting?
5. Briefly distinguish between the multisensory and cognitive approaches to teaching handwriting.

## 4. Teaching spelling

---

To teach spelling the teacher has to understand the language, be able to identify all the speech sounds in the language, know how sounds are used to form words, understand the way that these sounds interact with one another and how words are organised and used in the language.

Explicit teaching of conventional spelling from the earliest grades is very important.

The teaching of spelling is an absolute necessity in a language such as English with many sound/letter irregularities. Without explicit instruction, most children will not simply infer the correct spelling of all the words they need to learn in order to write well.

### The importance of spelling

Spelling is the ability to match the sounds of words to phonetically appropriate letters, a process often called **encoding**.

In a literate society, conventional spelling is expected and anything beyond a few small errors is equated with ignorance and incompetence.

There is a strong relationship between spelling, reading, and writing. Snow *et al.* (2005, p. 86) summarize the real importance of spelling for reading as follows:

“Spelling and reading build and rely on the same mental representation of a word. Knowing the spelling of a word makes the representation of it sturdy and accessible for fluent reading.”

The ability of the fluent reader to read words automatically is based on the ability to link sounds to letters and letter combinations. Because the shapes of words are not very distinctive it is impossible for children to memorise more than few words unless they understand how sounds and letters correspond.

Learning to spell requires the encoding of the sounds of words to the correct phonetically appropriate letters. Gradually, the knowledge about speech sounds, letters and word meaning are integrated and whole words can be memorised.

Thus spelling itself has to become automatic. If the writer has to concentrate too much on spelling not enough cognitive resources are left for the actual composition of the text – its topic, organization into paragraphs, choice of appropriate vocabulary, and thinking about the needs of the potential reader. [The same need for automaticity applies to other basic aspects of writing – hand-writing, grammar and punctuation.]

Poor spellers are also very restricted in what they write if they can only spell a few words and they are very slow when writing because they struggle to spell words.

**encode:** encoding is the process of converting data from one form to another. In writing sounds are encoded as letters of the alphabet.

## Stages in spelling development

Often a child's first experience of spelling is of their own name and they may have been told the letter names for their name.

Knowledge of letter names plays an important role in children's spelling (well, particularly in English it does, where the letter names do not always correspond to the sounds of the letters, unlike in African language where the letter name is usually the same as the sound) (Pollo *et al.*, 2005, p. 19).

In English the learner may attempt to spell by using sounds that have corresponding letter names. This sometimes results in what is called "invented spelling" which may play a useful role in helping some children learn how to write.

Children may 'spell' a letter name with the corresponding letter. For example the letter name "bee" may be spelled with the letter B. So when applied to words one will get examples like this: "car" spelled CR or "tell" as TL. These invented spellings are often found with English speaking children. Substantial research has shown that spelling development is slower for English than most other languages. With the African languages, where there is a much more direct link between sounds and letters, where letters consistently stand for the same sounds in a one-to-one relation, invented spelling does not help and should not be encouraged.

Children have to get beyond this stage and understand that letters stand for sounds smaller than syllables and enter a full alphabetic phonetic stage.

## Things learner spellers have to know

These include the following:

### Knowledge of the letters of the alphabet and what they represent

For children to master spelling they need to know how letters of the alphabet, individually or in combinations, represent vowels and consonants and syllables (English rules for this being particularly complex). They need to know which groups of letters form regular patterns, for example the common syllables in African languages, and in English the CVC (Consonant/Vowel/Consonant) pattern to form short vowels or CVCe/CVVC patterns to form long vowels.

### Knowledge of the form of words

Morphological knowledge (what the meaningful units are within words, how they can be combined, and how they are spelled) is also important in spelling. This includes knowing about roots and bases, affixes (prefixes, infixes (in African languages) and suffixes).

Morphemic spelling rules govern the formation of plurals and joining syllables and vowels. Morphological changes are also important in African languages in that they influence phonological changes in the written form of language, e.g. in the **coalescence** and elision of vowels, e.g. in isiZulu *abantwana*, which comes

**vowel coalescence:** a phonological process in which adjacent vowels cause each other to change. Processes of vowel coalescence are widespread in Bantu languages.

from *aba + ntu + ana*, the /u/ and /a/ undergo a process of vowel coalescence, and it becomes a /w/.

In English spelling, many of the words that seem “irregular” (based on phonemic spelling rules) actually preserve the morphemes as they were in the source language (e.g., ‘ch’ sounds like /ch/ in Anglo-Saxon words like *check*, /sh/ in French words like *niche*, and /k/ in Greek words like *chaos*).

**morpheme:** the smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided

## The need for explicit teaching of spelling

Teachers have to know how to explicitly teach learners to learn and remember the spellings of the words. This can be accomplished through:

- explicit instruction in phoneme-grapheme correspondences, phonemic patterns in letter sequences or syllables, rules for joining syllables or adding morphemes, elements of morpheme preservation in word formation, and strategies for encoding irregular words;
- careful selection of spelling words that capitalize on learners’ developing knowledge of the underlying structures of words (and there are useful word lists available, though not yet in all languages); and
- repeated and cumulative practice in coordinating phonemic, orthographic, and morphemic knowledge with immediate error correction.

Reading and spelling should be linked together because this creates opportunities to practice applying common patterns. Instruction in writing about texts learners have heard read or read themselves is more effective than only receiving instruction in reading alone or reading and discussing the text alone. Spelling has a final verification stage where the speller reads back the written word to make sure it looks and sounds correct.

## English spelling

The African languages use consistent letters and letter combinations to represent sounds. Once the learners know the sound/letter correspondences, they can read and write any word in that language. In English this is not always the case. When a learner comes across a new word, its spelling does not always give a clue to its sound and meaning.

However, the spelling of words in English is more regular and pattern-based than commonly believed. More than half of all English words can be spelled accurately on the basis of sound-letter correspondences alone, as the letters predictably represent the sound patterns (e.g. in the words *back*, *baby*, *clay*). These sound patterns may still be somewhat complex and have to be learned (e.g., when to use “ck” as in *back* and when to use “k” as in *book*).

Another third of English words would only have one irregularity if they were spelled on the basis of sound-letter correspondences alone.

This means that only about a seventh of English words have mostly unpredictable spelling.



To understand and learn the spelling of these English words requires understanding of the word meaning and its origin.

## How does an English word's language origin explain its spelling?

English spelling irregularities occur because there are lots of different spelling for the same sound. For example, the /k/ sound can be spelled with several different letters and letter combinations, such as k (*king*), c (*cat*), ck (*back*), qu (*queen*), and ch (*chorus*).

Why is this? As English developed as a language it was influenced by several languages: Anglo-Saxon, Norman French, Latin, and Greek. Each of these languages had its own conventions for spelling speech sounds, syllables, and meaningful units of speech. So the spelling of a modern English word is often related to and explained by, its language of origin (Moat, 2005).

## How does a word's form determine its spelling?

The form of an English word may determine its spelling. This is because many English words are spelled according to both their sounds (**phonemes**, such as /b/) and their meaningful parts (**morphemes**, such as the word root *med* (from the Latin word “to heal”) in words such as medical, medicine, medicate, remedy, and remedial). This is why linguists describe English spelling as a morpho-phonological alphabetic system.

Here is another example – these ten words all share a Latin morpheme “cred”, a word root meaning “to believe” – *credible, credibility, credit, creditable, creditor, credulity, credulous, incredible, incredulity, incredulous*. The last three words also share the morpheme, in, meaning “not”.

Though the spelling of these morphemes is constant, the pronunciation of them is not, e.g. in *heal* and *health* the morpheme is pronounced differently.

## Why does English require spelling instruction across several grades?

Because English has such a variety of letters and combinations of letters to spell a more limited number of sounds, this does require spelling instruction across several grades.

English speech sounds are spelled with single letters and/or combinations of up to four letters. Learners will need practice in recognizing and writing groups of words that have a similar patterns of letters.

So an English speech sound can be represented by a single letter, or a sequence of letters, such as ai, sh, ow, igh, tch, ough, etc.

English has more than 250 **graphemes** to represent the 44 phonemes, that is, a single sound may be represented by different letters and combinations of letters.

Two main types of guidance can be given for English spelling in relation to the sounds in the words:

**phoneme:** A phoneme is the smallest unit of a speech sound that makes a difference in communication. It is any of the perceptually distinct units of sound in a language that distinguish one word from another, for example the sounds p, b, d, and t in the English words pad, pat, bad, and bat. When phonemes are combined they make up words. A phoneme may be represented by one, two, three or four letters of the alphabet. Languages usually contain between 20 to 60 phonemes. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (the number varies depending on the accent).

**morpheme:** the smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided (e.g. in the word “incoming”, *in, come,* and *ing* are morphemes. In the word “pins”, *pin* and the suffix *s* are morphemes. The word *pin* is a stand-alone morpheme, the *s* cannot stand alone.

**phonological:** having to do with the rules of how a language sounds, and how and when certain sounds can be combined.

**grapheme:** a letter or combination of letters that spells a single phoneme



## 1. The spelling of a given sound can vary according to its position within a word.

In English, deciding on which grapheme to use often relies on the position of the sound in the spelled word.

As an example look at the sound /k/ which is commonly represented by three graphemes:

- c e.g. in *can*. The letter c represents /k/ most of the time, is used in consonant blends such as cl, cr and scr, is usually used before the vowels a, o, and u.
- k e.g. in *kid*. It can be used before any vowel. It is almost always used before vowels e, i, and y distinguish it from that of a c followed by an e, i or y which represents an /s/ sound (as in *cent, city* or *cycle*).
- ck e.g. *rock* and at the end of other one-syllable words such as *back* and *neck*, as well as the /k/ sound after a stressed short vowel.

Another example is how the phoneme /ou/ is spelled. If it is at the beginning of a word it is usually ou (as in the word *out*), in the middle of a word ou is usually correct except when /ou/ is followed by only a single n or l when it is spelled o (as in *brown* or *bowl*), and at the end of a word it is spelled ow (as in *cow* and *now*).

There is also the example of the **split digraph** (sometimes called “the magic e”), for example:

- wrote* – the ‘oe’ here make one sound. The ‘oe’ digraph is split by the ‘t’.
- lake* – the ‘ae’ here make one sound. The ‘ae’ digraph is split by the ‘k’.
- complete* – the ‘ee’ here make one sound. The ‘ee’ digraph is split by the ‘t’. The first ‘e’ becomes a long vowel as opposed to a short one.

## 2. The spellings of some sounds are governed by established conventions of letter sequences and patterns.

Some English spelling conventions were developed by dictionary makers to help people pronounce words correctly (for example hopping versus hoping) and to avoid ending words with letters that were visually similar, such as i, u and v. Thus, when a word end in the phoneme /v/ it is always spelled -ve (as in the words *love, have* and *give*). When the phoneme /j/ ends a word it is spelling either -ge or -dge. Why the d in -dge? Because if the word has an accented short vowel (as in *badge*) the letter e could reach back over the single consonant g and make the vowel say its long vowel sound (as in *wage*).

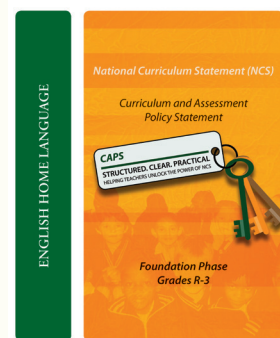
Truly unpredictable spellings such as *of, does* and *aunt* are few in number.

## Spelling practice and activities

Moats (2005, pp. 17-19) provides key content and strategies for spelling instruction and recommends about 15-20 minutes daily or 30 minutes three times per week for spelling instruction. The CAPS suggests daily writing activities including spelling that are closely linked to phonics taught during that week. The teaching of spelling should be informal during the Grades 1 and 2,

digraph: a combination of two letters, representing two consonants or a vowel and consonant, pronounced as a single sound (a phoneme), e.g. in English st, sh, ch, wh, gh, etc.

**split digraph:** when a digraph is split by a consonant it becomes a split digraph. The two letters, which work as a pair, split, to represent one sound.



**inflection:** the change in the form of a word to express a grammatical function or attribute such as tense, mood, person, number, case, and gender.

**schwa:** schwa is the name for the most common sound in English. It is a weak, unstressed sound and it occurs in many words, e.g. in *the* and *can*. It can be represented by any vowel letter. It only occurs in unstressed syllables. It is often the sound in English grammar words such as articles and prepositions.

**affix:** is a morpheme that is added to the base form or stem or root of a word and modifies its meaning. A prefix appears at the front of a word, an infix inside the word and a suffix at the end of a word.

**prefixes:** prefixes are word parts that attach to the beginning of a word or word base (a word stripped down to its simplest form) to produce a related word or an inflectional form of a word, for example the *in-* in *informal*.

**infix:** infixes are inserted into a word or word base. They are rare in English but common in African languages.

**suffixes:** a suffix is a letter or group of letters added to the ending of a word to change its meaning or grammatical function. for example *-ing* in *ending*.

with a more formal spelling programme in Grade 3 implemented with periodic, informal spelling tests and dictations. However, correct spelling needs to be evident in children's written work and not only in spelling tests and dictations.

Moat's (2005, p. 22) recommendation for English home language spelling instruction by grade is as follows:

Grade R	Phoneme awareness, letter names, and letter sounds
Grade 1	Anglo-Saxon regular consonant and vowel phoneme-grapheme correspondences
Grade 2	More complex Anglo-Saxon spelling (according to the position of a sound in a word, letter patterns/conventions, and most common inflectional endings)
Grade 3	Multisyllable words, including Anglo-Saxon syllabication, compounds, schwa, and most common prefixes and suffixes
Grade 4	Latin-based prefixes, suffixes, and roots
Grades 5-6	More complex Latin-based forms
Grades 6-7	Greek combining forms

## Unit 4: Self test questions

1. What is the main reason for spelling irregularities in English?
2. Define:  
encoding:  
letter name:  
invented spelling:  
vowel coalescence:  
morphology:
3. Roughly what percentage of English words have regular (phonetic) spelling? 10%; 25%; 50%; 82%
4. What is the morpheme, derived from the Latin word "same" found in all these English words: homogeneous, homogenous, homograph, homologous, homonym, homophone, homosexual?
5. About how many graphemes does English have? 26, 44, 112, 250
6. What is a split diagraph in English?
7. True or False? In English:
  - the spelling of a given sound never varies whatever its position in a word.
  - the spelling of some sounds obey dictionary conventions
  - when a word ends in the phoneme /v/ it is always spelled -ve.

# 5. Sentence, paragraph and text construction

---

For children to gain competence in writing sentences, developing paragraphs and building full texts they need guidance from the teacher and regular practice in writing. They have to learn how to construct a whole text.

Guidance, and scaffolding where necessary, should be given on:

- generating ideas and content for writing
- word choice
- writing fluent sentences
- combining sentences
- developing paragraphs
- building sets of paragraphs into a whole text
- obeying writing conventions
- giving the whole text a “voice”.

## Generating ideas and content for writing

In the Foundation Phase there are lots of ways for generating ideas on what the children will write on. Sometimes it helps for the teacher to provide a list of suitable words (maybe tied to a theme the class has been learning about). There are lots of resources on the internet for the prompting of writing.

In the higher grades the teacher can set clear goals for what kind of text the learners are to complete. They may include objectives for what students are to include in their writing (e.g., reasons to support an argument, rebuttals of the counter argument, etc.). Learners can be engaged in activities that help them gather and organize ideas for their writing before they write a first draft. Such activities can look at clearly specified goals (e.g., describe the actions of people), at what information there is or is to be collected, and how these ideas or information can be used in the text.

## Word choice

Choosing the right words is an important part of writing. Given the huge number of words in every language, having to choose what words to use is important. They need to be words that will have a clear meaning to the reader, be appropriate to the content of the written text, and, obviously, be known to the writer.

Vocabulary development and spelling practice are important supports for the writer in being able to have access to the best words to use.

## Writing fluent sentences

All the words and the placing of the words in the sentence must work together to make for a fluent sentence that is grammatical correct, properly punctuated and meaningful to the reader. They should be easy to understand. The sentence should “flow” smoothly from word to word, phrase to phrase, and then from sentence to sentence.

One of the best ways for the learners to check on the fluency of the sentences they write is to read them aloud.

The sentence structures can be varied – simple sentences, combined sentences.

Following sentences should not all start with the same word. There should be variety in sentence beginnings.

It may be helpful to explain to learners that sentences are made of parts. There is usually a main part which contains the main action or idea of the sentence. There may be a lead in part that leads to the main part or another part. There may be an in-between or interruption part which adds some additional information and then there are add-on parts that add more detailed information

## Combining sentences

Specifically, such instruction involves how to combine simpler sentences into more sophisticated ones. The teacher needs to model how to combine two or more sentences into a more complex one. Learners then practice combining similar sentences to produce the same type of sentence the teacher did.

The teacher can give them sets of sentences to combine.

The learners should then apply their sentence combining skills in a text they produce.

Support needs to be given in the learners knowing how to use appropriate conjunctions (particularly for second language speakers of English).

English has three kinds of conjunctions:

**Coordinating conjunctions** for joining together words, phrases and clauses:

For - explains the reason or purpose that something happens (like “because”)

And - adds another thing

Nor - adds another negative idea to an already stated negative idea

But - shows something different and contrasting

Or - presents an alternative choice

Yet - introduces a follow up idea that contrasts with the first idea

So - show some result, consequence or effect

**Subordinating conjunctions** always join a dependent clause to the independent (the original stand alone) clause but can also be placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Common ones are:

although	though
as	unless
because	until
before	when
how	whenever
if	where
once	whether
since	wherever
than	while
that	why

**Correlating conjunctions** come in pairs to relate one sentence to another.

Common ones are:

both/and	e.g. I want <i>both</i> the cake <i>and</i> the sweets
whether/or	
either/or	
neither/nor	
not/but	
not only/but also	

## Developing paragraphs

Learners have to develop a strategy for writing a full paragraph that includes an opening sentence, sentences that provide details related to the opening sentence, and a closing sentence that provides a conclusion or naturally links or passes on to the next paragraph.

## Building sets of paragraphs into a whole text

Teachers need to provide good models for the types of writing they are expected the learners to create.

Sometimes learners can work together to put sets of paragraphs into a full text.

## Obeying writing conventions

The finished text should obey all the normal writing conventions related to Capitalisation, Punctuation and Usage.

## Unit 5: Self test questions

1. A fluent well written sentence should be \_\_\_\_\_  
correct, properly \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ to the reader.
2. List some of the things which a teacher needs to give guidance on in writing texts.
3. Explain the distinction in English between coordinating, subordinating and correlating conjunctions and give two examples of each.
4. What does combining sentences involve?

## 6. Writing genres

---

Learner writers have to gradually learn about the different purposes of writing and how the texts they write can best reflect those purposes. This writing development should normally occur in parallel with their growing experience of reading texts in different genres.

Both in reading and writing development the teacher has to introduce the learners to appropriate texts in different genres, formats and degrees of complexity within various settings and cultural contexts, for various audiences taking into account learners' background knowledge, stage of reading development and any reading difficulties.

The learners need to be able to choose the different **genres** and **text types** they want to read and write, and be able to identify the types they may be asked to read in different situations, including examinations. (See Wikipedia entry for List of writing genres: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_writing\\_genres](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_writing_genres)).

It is normally in the Intermediate Phase that the learners have to start writing more complex, structured texts with good paragraphing, introduction and conclusion (in accordance with the various types, formats and genres of writing, and various writing conventions). As they advance into the Senior Phase their writing must demonstrate an understanding of discourse and genre and how writing has to convey its meaning clearly and appropriately for different recipients.

It is important, even in the Foundation Phase that learners are alerted to the different types of texts and have practice in writing in different genres such as messages, stories, poems, lists, etc.

Understanding the type of text it is aids comprehension (and also enables quicker linking to one's background knowledge). The various types of texts (messages, stories, poems, dramas, novels, informational texts, etc.) and the different forms of narrative texts (stories, traditional tales, myths, mystery, science fiction, romance, adventure, etc.) and types of speech in the text (e.g. description, assertions, questions, commands, requests, figurative language) also need to be understood.

Writing genres is the term used to describe these various forms of written text, whether prose, poetry, or drama, that are distinguished by shared literary conventions, formats, styles, etc. Genres and text types are categorised in many different ways from simple sets such as messages, letters, stories, myths, folktales, poems, drama, novels and informational texts both fiction and non-fiction, to more complex ones.

Genres are forms of writing with specific features that provide context and structure for a purpose. For example, a student might want to describe a warm summer day. To achieve this purpose, the student might choose to write a poem or a journal entry. Both genres (poem and journal entry) enable the student to communicate the purpose, but they do so in different ways. Writers use genres to achieve a wide variety of writing purposes.

**genre:** a category of literature, music or art. The main genres in literature are Poetry, Drama, Fiction, Non-fiction and Media, all with many possible subdivisions. Lists of genres usually contain up to 30 or more: Action and adventure, classics, comics, detective and mystery, fantasy, historical fiction, horror, romance, science fiction, etc.

**text type:** are the different types of writing, broadly divided into factual and literary. Factual text types include factual description, account, or persuasive. Literary text types include poetry, narrative or personal response. Each text type shares literary conventions, similarities in topic, theme, style, tropes, or common settings, character types, or formulaic patterns of character interactions and events, and an overall predictable form.

**Trope:** the use of figurative language, whether a word, phrase or an image, for artistic effect. It also means commonly recurring literary and rhetorical devices, motifs or clichés in literature.



The common non-fiction genres include narrative account, reports, explanations, biography, essay, instructional manual, prospectuses, newspaper or magazine, memoir,, textbook, reference book, speech transcript, academic essay, etc. Some non-fiction tries to inform, explain and describe (such as, manuals, prospectuses, reportage, travel guides and brochures); other tries to persuade, argue and advise (essays, reviews, opinion pieces, advertisements); and some to analyse, review and comment (commentaries, articles etc). The last two categories can be described as 'argumentational' writing (Andrews *et al.*, 2009).

## Writing in a particular genre

Even from the earliest grades the learners need to understand the different purposes of writing e.g. 'describe'; 'narrate'; 'inform'; 'persuade', 'analyse' and to develop their concept of the 'audience' and their expectations of the text.

The teacher can read short passages and ask the learners what kind of genre or text it is from. It is important that reading instruction makes learners familiar with all the different genres and text types.

Teach techniques for writing effectively for different purposes, purposes that certian genres and text types are better fitted for. For example if they have to describe something factual they need to ask themselves questions such as "What did I see? How did it look like? What sounds did I hear? What did I touch? How did it feel? What could I smell? What did I taste?"

### Unit 6: Self test questions

1. Define:

Genres:

Text types:

2. Why is taking genres and text types into consideration useful for writers?



## 7. Making multimodal texts

---

Though the dawn of the paperless society is constantly delayed, even young learners have to be introduced to the realities of the digital communication environment in which information is communicated through web pages and computer programmes (such as Microsoft PowerPoint and equivalent presentation software) and mobile phone applications (such as Facebook, Twitter, Signal, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.), all of which have their own conventions.

Being able to use digital technology is increasingly important for success in school and the modern workplace. Learners have to learn how to type on various keyboards, use a word processor and presentation software, use the Internet to collect information, sit computer- and web-based tests, and so on. They have to understand how different writing conventions apply to the different media.

Training in the use of this technology in writing instruction becomes more and more important.

International evidence suggests that even though teenagers and younger children often engage in technology-based writing such as text messages, emails, instant messages or posting comments on social networking sites, they may not think of it as 'writing' and do not think it has a negative influence on their school writing. They are far more likely to use text messages than write letters or keep a diary.

One of the difficulties of developing multi-modal writing competencies is the **digital divide** between children from richer homes and school and the poorer ones. This requires teaching activities to ensure as much as possible that all learners, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of **Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)**.

### Types of multimodal texts

The modes of human communication are spoken language, visuals, audio (sounds and music), gestures (movement, dance, etc.), and spatial (the way things are placed in space).

What are examples of what are multimodal texts that learners can create?

- an illustrated wordprocessed text created on a computer and printed
- a picture book, in which the text and pictures are arranged on the pages
- a comic
- an illustrated advertisement
- digital presentation (e.g. using Microsoft Powerpoint or Google Slides)
- a webpage, in which elements such as text, still pictures, moving pictures, speech or music are combined.

**digital divide:** the gap between those who have ready access to computers, the internet, and smartphones, and those who do not, usually caused by social class, bandwidth differences and skills in using the technology

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs):** technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. It includes the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums.

- posters and signage
- captioned picture on a cellphone message or social media page (such as Facebook or WhatsApp)
- posters and visuals accompanying a dance or musical item

Many of these multimodal texts can be used very helpfully where learners are studying a second language, e.g. adding speech bubbles or labels in the home language to explain new or difficult words in the second language.

## Planning multimodal texts

Multimodal texts usually require more planning than ordinary plain texts.

Teacher supported planning might involve such things writing a story outline which provides brief information about who, what, where, and when; a script which includes information about the text participants (characters or subjects), dialogue, action, sound effects, and music; and preparing a storyboard to outline the whole textual, visual and audio design of the text – what is to be shown and how it will be seen.

Note that the normal process for planning and making videos includes – plan/storyboard/title/sequences of shots/editing/adding music/credits.

## Resources

There are numerous internet resources on multimodal text creation.

Two useful ones are O'Brien (2020) [<https://creatingmultimodalttexts.com/>] and State of Victoria (2019) [<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/multimodal/Pages/createmultimodal.aspx>]

### Unit 7: Self test questions

1. What is the “digital divide”?
2. List some common information communication programs and applications for mobile phones and computers.
3. Give some examples of multimodal texts that could be created in a Foundation Phase classroom.

## 8. The writing friendly classroom

---

The effective teacher of writing is one that tries to create a positive classroom environment that encourages and supports both reading and writing and in which the children can communicate successfully in writing using a range of writing genres, including creative writing.

This means that the teacher herself must show enthusiasm for writing and encourage the learners to believe that the writing skills and strategies they are learning will enable them to write well. The teacher needs to set high expectations for the learners. The children must be willing to work hard at writing, advance on their previous efforts, and their efforts should be acknowledged by the teacher.

The teacher can provide the supportive environment in which the learners can make maximum progress on their own, adapting writing tasks and assignments as much as possible to individual learner abilities. The learners should be involved in thoughtful activities, such as planning the writing of their texts, rather than only rote activities that can be finished quickly.

The teacher has to recognize that not all children will enjoy writing. Generally girls enjoy writing more than boys and are more confident of their writing abilities. Some children may be overconfident of their writing skills.

Practices that can help create an engaged community of young writers in the classroom include:

### Interests

If children are interested in what they are writing about they are likely to be well motivated. This puts pressure on the teacher to carefully select the writing tasks and topics. The more knowledgeable about and interested the child is in a particular topic, the more likely he or she will want to write about it. A child may be more interested in some genres than others.

### Modelling

As a teacher you should be able to model authentic writing that affects one life and communication with others. This modelling should also demonstrate that meaningful writing does take time and effort. Some of this demonstration can be done by saying out loud what one is doing as the text is being planned, written and edited. The teacher can share real examples of her writing such as letters, emails, reports and creative writing such as poems. It is also important that teachers make explicit to learners the purpose and functions of what is being taught, i.e. why they are working hard at becoming skilled writers.

### Writing support

Research evidence (Clark and Dugdale, 2009, Clark and Douglas, 2011) suggests that learners think that to be a good writer means you have to enjoy writing, be able to use one's imagination, know how to spell, use correct punctuation and write neatly.

What this means is that the classroom environment should be designed to make writing as enjoyable and interesting as possible and provides resources for spelling (word lists on the walls, dictionaries, etc.), punctuation guides, etc.

Because many learners have trouble deciding what to write about, activities and resources should be available to assist in this.

### **Choice**

Children need to be given choices in the topics they write about and encouraged to “publish” it in the classroom (and receive responses to it). They are more likely to get really involved in writing if they have choice and sense of control over what they are doing.

Children who believe that they can do things are going to be better motivated than those who doubt their own abilities. It is important for teachers to help young children gain a sense of accomplishment in writing. This is particularly important in encouraging reading in children from poor literacy environments. The teacher has the task of building the learner’s belief in his or her ability to write and that it is worth their effort and perseverance to do practice writing.

### **Group activities**

Encourage collaborative writing. Learners can be asked to collaborate in planning, writing and editing each others’ work and in developing longer or more complex texts.

### **Constructive feedback**

Ensure that learners give and receive constructive feedback throughout the writing process. The learners need to be confident that their writing activities are being taken seriously and are taken as real communications.

### **Publish learner work**

Publish the learners’ writing through readings of their texts and by pinning them up on the walls of the classroom and through illustrating them. Learner writing should also be made available to the wider community, through Parent’s Days, etc.

Where classroom facilities are limited the teacher may have to be able to wordprocess and print some learner work.

### **Resources**

There are a range of useful resources on writing and on writing for pleasure on the internet such as:

<https://writing4pleasure.com/>

## Unit 8: Self test questions

1. Summarise what the good teacher of writing needs to do.
2. What does some research suggest learners think it is to be a good writer?

# References

---

Andrews, R. and Torgerson, C. and Low, G. and McGuinn, N. 2009. *Teaching argument writing to 7-14-year-olds: an international review of the evidence of successful practice*. **Cambridge Journal of Education**, Vol. 39, Issue 3, pp. 291-310.  
Retrieved from:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057640903103751>

<http://dro.dur.ac.uk/9445/1/9445.pdf>

Australian School Fonts. 2020. *Australian School Fonts*.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.australianschoolfonts.com.au/>

Clark, C., and Douglas, J. 2011. *Young people's reading and writing an in depth study focusing on enjoyment, behaviour, attitudes and attainment*. London: National Literacy Trust

Retrieved from:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521656.pdf>

Clark, C. and Dugdale, G. 2009. *Young people's writing: attitudes, behaviour and the role of technology*. London: National Literacy Trust

Retrieved from:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED510271.pdf>

Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia. 2007. *ABC Handwriting in the South Australian Curriculum*. 2nd edition. Adelaide: Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia

Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia. 2007b. *A handwriting program*. Adelaide: Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia

Retrieved:

[http://www.education.sa.gov.](http://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/handwritingprogram.pdf)

[au%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fhandwritingprogram.pdf](http://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/handwritingprogram.pdf)

Ferguson, P. 2017. *What the research says: the 13 most effective ways to improve children's writing*.

Retrieved from:

<https://literacyforpleasure.wordpress.com/2017/04/09/what-the-research-says-the-13-most-effective-ways-for-improving-childrens-writing/>

Goves, G. (Ed.). 2006. *Handwriting in the South Australian curriculum*. Second edition. Adelaide, South Australia: Department of Education and Children's Services

Graham, S., Gillespie, A. and McKeown, D. 2013. *Writing: importance, development, and instruction*. **Reading and Writing**, Volume 26, pp. 1-15

Retrieved from:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-012-9395-2>

[http://www.researchgate.net/publication/257643279\\_Writing\\_Importance\\_development\\_and\\_instruction](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/257643279_Writing_Importance_development_and_instruction)

- Graham, S. and Hebert, M. 2010. *Writing to reading: evidence for how writing can improve reading*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellence in Education
- Graham, S. and Hebert, M. 2011. *Writing-to-read: A meta-analysis of the impact of writing and writing instruction on reading*. *Harvard Educational Review*, Volume 81, pp. 710–744
- Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D’Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., and Olinghouse, N. 2012. *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide (NCEE 2012- 4058)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, United States Department of Education.  
Retrieved from:  
[http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications\\_reviews.aspx#pubsearch](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx#pubsearch)
- Honig, B., Diamond, L., and Gutlohn, L. 2018. *Teaching Reading Sourcebook*. Third Edition. Novato, California: Arena Press
- Moat, L.C. 2005. *How Spelling Supports Reading*, *American Educator*, Winter 2005/06  
Retrieved from:  
<https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter-2005-2006/how-spelling-supports-reading>
- O’Brien, A. 2020. *Creating multimodal texts*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne. Melbourne Graduate School of Education  
Retrieved from:  
<https://creatingmultimodaltxts.com/>
- Pinker, Steven. 2014. *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person’s Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*. Penguin Books Ltd. Kindle Edition.
- Pollo, T.C., Treiman, R., and Kessler, B.T. 2005. *Three Perspectives on Spelling Development*. Washington University in St. Louis
- Reilly, D. 2020. *Gender Differences in Reading, Writing and Language Development*. In: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press  
Retrieved from:  
[DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.928](https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.928)
- Santangelo, T. and Olinghouse, N. 2009. *Effective writing instruction for students who have writing difficulties*, *Focus on Exceptional Children*, Volume 42, Issue 4, pp. 1-20  
Retrieved:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288727453\\_Effective\\_Writing\\_Instruction\\_for\\_Students\\_Who\\_Have\\_Writing\\_Difficulties/fulltext/5ac8c58faca272abdc5f3742/Effective-Writing-Instruction-for-Students-Who-Have-Writing-Difficulties.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288727453_Effective_Writing_Instruction_for_Students_Who_Have_Writing_Difficulties/fulltext/5ac8c58faca272abdc5f3742/Effective-Writing-Instruction-for-Students-Who-Have-Writing-Difficulties.pdf)
- Snow, C. E., Griffin, P., and Burns, M. S. (Eds.) 2005. *Knowledge to support the teaching of reading: preparing teachers for a changing world*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training). 2019. *Creating multimodal texts*. Melbourne: Department of Education and Training.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/multimodal/Pages/createmultimodal.aspx>

What Works Clearinghouse, 2012. *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. NCEE 2012-4058. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance

Retrieved from:

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/WWC\\_Elem\\_Writing\\_PG\\_Dec182018.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/WWC_Elem_Writing_PG_Dec182018.pdf)

What Works Clearinghouse, 2014. *Practice Guide Summary*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance

Retrieved from:

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/wwc\\_writingpg\\_summary\\_092314.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/wwc_writingpg_summary_092314.pdf)

What Works Clearinghouse, 2017a. *Instructional tips based on the Educator's Practice Guide*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance

Retrieved from:

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/wwc\\_ew\\_tips\\_120517.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/wwc_ew_tips_120517.pdf)

What Works Clearinghouse, 2017b. *Summary of evidence for instructional tips based on the Educator's Practice Guide*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance

Retrieved from:

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/wwc\\_ew\\_tips\\_summary\\_120517.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/wwc_ew_tips_summary_120517.pdf)

Young, R. and Ferguson, F. 2020. *Real-World Writers: A Handbook for Teaching Writing with 7-11 Year Olds*. London: Routledge

Zwicker, J., and Hadwin, A. 2009. *Cognitive versus multisensory approaches to handwriting intervention: A randomized controlled trial*. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research: Occupation, Participation and Health*, Volume 29, Issue 1, pp. 40–48.

Retrieved from:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3928/15394492-20090101-06>

# Self test answers

---

## Unit 1: Functions of writing in society and school

1. **Produce definitions giving your understanding of the terms 'reciprocal' and 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'.**

**reciprocal:** the action or relationship between two things. Change in the one thing influences the other.

**fourth industrial revolution:** this is the ongoing automation in manufacturing, industry and world communication using modern electronic technology that will end some jobs and create new ones and therefore require people to engage in lifelong learning.

2. **Briefly describe common purposes of writing.**

Writing enables us to communicate information, express feelings, make persuasive arguments, and also helps in learning and remembering.

3. **What is 'writing to learn'?**

Writing to learn is engaging in writing tasks that helps the learner think through key information, concepts or ideas and constructing them into a text which is the learner's own understanding and which helps the learner remember more easily.

4. **Writing is explicit, that is, it states things clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt. Why is this useful?**

Because writing is explicit it enables the writer to set down, and the reader to see, the connection of ideas (or lack of connection of ideas) in the text and what assumptions the text is based upon. It creates texts which can be reread and reviewed.

## Unit 2: The process of teaching writing

### 1. Explain what is meant by 'scaffolding' writing instruction.

Providing temporary support to the learner in learning and mastering writing tasks through such things as carefully prepared tasks, outlines, templates, teacher modelling, etc.

### 2. List five foundational skills for writing.

- handwriting
- spelling
- sentence construction
- punctuation
- paragraph construction

### 3. List seven steps in the text writing process.

- planning
- drafting
- sharing
- revising
- editing
- evaluating
- publishing

### 4. Three very basic early grade editing questions deal with:

- capitals
- punctuation
- spelling

### 5. Give examples of how you would model the cognitive and physical activities of writing to learners.

I would act out the writing of a text, saying out aloud what I was thinking about as I wrote and showing what I was doing physically in handwriting (or keyboarding) and then reading out the text as a communication.

## Unit 3: Handwriting

### 1. List some pre-handwriting skills.

Typical pre-handwriting skills are:

- hand and finger strength, eye-hand-coordination and fine-motor control (of fingers)
- sense of direction (up, down, middle, left, right)
- can use writing implements and tools - pencil, brushes, etc.
- can draw straight and curved lines and letters
- can do drawings
- understands that pictures are not the same as writing

### 2. Distinguish between a letter name and a letter sound.

A letter name is the name given to a letter of the alphabet which may not be the same as the sound associated with that letter, for example in English the name of the letter “w” is “double-u” which is not like its sound.

### 3. Should a learner recognise all the letters of the alphabet in both lower and upper case in whatever sequence they are ordered early in the Foundation Phase?

Yes. This is a necessity.

### 4. What should the teacher assess in initial handwriting?

- correct seating posture
- correct pencil hold
- legible letter formation
- correct spacing between words
- appropriate writing speed

### 5. Briefly distinguish between the multisensory and cognitive approaches to teaching handwriting.

**multisensory approach** – gets the children to use several of their senses in writing so that they get the feel of the letters and a feel of their body writing the letters

**cognitive approach** – makes the child consciously aware of letter formation and the teacher and child speak about what they are doing and modelling

## Unit 4: Teaching spelling

### 1. What is the main reason for spelling irregularities in English?

In English spelling, many words preserve the morphemes as they were in the source language and thus seem to have “irregular” spelling that does not conform to phonemic spelling rules).

### 2. Define:

**encoding:** the process of converting data from one form to another. In writing sounds are encoded as letters of the alphabet.

**letter name:** a name given to a particular letter of the alphabet. It may or may not correspond to the sound (phoneme) linked to that letter.

**invented spelling:** an attempt to spell by using sounds that have corresponding letter names – the letter corresponding to the letter name is used.

**vowel coalescence:** a phonological process in which adjacent vowels cause each other to change. Processes of vowel coalescence are widespread in Bantu languages.

**morpheme:** the smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided

### 3. Roughly what percentage of English words have regular (phonetic) spelling?

~~10%; 25%; 50%; 82%~~

### 4. What is the morpheme, derived from the Greek word “same”, found in all these English words: homogeneous, homogenous, homograph, homologous, homonym, homophone, homosexual?

homo

### 5. About how many graphemes does English have?

~~26, 44, 112, 250~~

### 6. What is a split digraph in English?

When a digraph is split by a consonant it becomes a split digraph. The two letters, which work as a pair, split, to represent one sound.

### 7. True or False? In English:

- the spelling of a given sound never varies whatever its position in a word.

False

- the spelling of some sounds obey dictionary conventions.

True

- when a word ends in the phoneme /v/ it is always spelled -ve.

True

## Unit 5: Sentence, paragraph and text construction

1. A fluent well written sentence should be grammatically correct, properly punctuated and meaningful to the reader.
2. List some of the things which a teacher needs to give guidance on in writing texts.
  - generating ideas and content for writing
  - word choice
  - writing fluent sentences
  - combining sentences
  - developing paragraphs
  - building sets of paragraphs into a whole text
  - obeying writing conventions
  - giving the whole text a “voice”.

3. Explain the distinction in English between coordinating, subordinating and correlating conjunctions and give two examples of each.

**Coordinating** conjunctions such as *and* and *but* for join together words, phrases and clauses.

**Subordinating** conjunctions such as *although* and *because* join a dependent clause to an independent clause (and can be placed at the beginning of the sentence).

**Correlating** conjunctions come in pairs such as *both/and* and *neither/nor that relate one* sentence to another.

4. What does combining sentences involve?

Two or more sentences are combined into one using appropriate conjunctions and punctuation.

## Unit 6: Genres

### 1. Define:

**Genres:** a category of literature, music or art. The main genres in literature are Poetry, Drama, Fiction, Nonfiction and Media, all with many possible subdivisions. Text types:

**Text types:** different types of writing, broadly divided into factual and literary. Factual text types include factual description, account, or persuasive. Literary text types include poetry, narrative or personal response.

### 2. Why is taking genres and text types into consideration useful for writers?

Readers who are familiar with various genres and text types have expectations of what the various genres and types will deliver to them. The readers' comprehension is improved as they understand the context and purpose of the particular kind of writing they are reading. The readers' background knowledge can be more quickly linked to what is being read.

## Unit 7: Making multimodal texts

### 1. What is the "digital divide"?

The gap between those who have ready access to computers, the internet, and smartphones, and those who do not, usually caused by social class, bandwidth differences and skills in using the technology.

### 2. List some common information communication programs and applications for mobile phones and computers.

Presentation programmes, e.g. PowerPoint, Email programs, applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

### 3. Give some examples of multimodal texts that could be created in a Foundation Phase classroom.

A text illustrated with drawings or with photographs cut out from a magazine. A comic made by the children. A poster advertising some school event. A caption for some photograph sent on a smartphone. A poem or lyrics of a song to accompany some oral presentation or dance. Etc.



## Unit 8: The writing friendly classroom

### 1. Summarise what the good teacher of writing needs to do.

- Teacher needs to herself show enthusiasm for writing and model writing practices.
- Encourage the children to work hard on writing and have high expectations of their writing.
- Provide a supportive environment for writing.
- Provide thoughtful writing activities that mesh with children's interests.
- Recognise varying degrees of confidence in and enjoyment of writing among children, girls and boys.
- The teacher makes explicit the purpose and functions of writing.
- Provides help and support on the choice of topics to write about.
- Provides constructive feedback and affirmation on what the learners write.
- Helps the learners share and 'publish' their writing.

### 2. What does some research suggest learners think it is to be a good writer?

That you enjoy writing, are able to use your imagination, know how to spell. Use correct punctuation and write neatly

## Study guide 7: Teaching Writing

© 2020 Department of Higher Education and Training



Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This is an short introduction to the development of writing in initial literacy teaching.

It describes the components of teaching writing, including handwriting, spelling, genres and the making of multimodal texts.

The study guide includes short self-tests for each unit in the Guide.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Primary Teacher Education Project of the Department of Higher Education and Training and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



higher education  
& training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

