

DEVELOPING WRITING

through reading, talking
and listening



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

HMIe
improving Scottish education



DEVELOPING WRITING

through reading, talking
and listening



Acknowledgements

The Scottish Executive Education Department provided funding for this initiative to support the continuing professional development of primary and secondary teachers of English language.

Margaret Dobie, Head of pre-5 Services and the North East (Glasgow), and Pat McDaid, Adviser in English, both at Glasgow City Council Education Department, were commissioned to produce these materials.

The authors wish to acknowledge the ongoing support received from HMIE, the contribution made by Mike Kincaid and Learning and Teaching Scotland, and the constructive comments given by a range of teachers from across Scotland.

© Crown copyright 2005

ISBN: 0-7053-1055-8

HM Inspectorate of Education
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA

Produced for HMIE by Astron B3824 5/05

Published by HMIE, May, 2005

This material may be copied without further permission by education authorities and education institutions in Scotland for use in school self-evaluation and planning.

The report may be produced in part, except for commercial purposes, or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date therefore are stated.



CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction and overview	1
Module 1	
Using Models – From Reading to Writing	4
Module 2	
Teaching Genre – Reading as a Focus for Writing	12
Module 3	
Demonstrating the Writing Process	19
Module 4	
Conferencing, Redrafting and Learning from Assessment	23
Appendix	
Further Reading and Resources	29





INTRODUCTION

Rationale

We write because we have something to say, when we have a rich experience to share or when we have ideas to clarify and record. Effective writers learn how to communicate. This applies to adults as well as children.

Teaching writing is about building on the language skills which children bring with them to school. Pupils need a rich stimulus which makes them want to write and draw upon their real experience. They also need to learn the craft of writing.

This package aims to share strategies such as demonstration, writing frames and models which can help pupils and teachers be aware of how to improve writing. Each section within this package can help teachers, as individuals or as members of school teams, reflect on different aspects of their approach to the teaching of writing.

Experienced teachers may use it to explore and renew their own good practice. Teachers newer to the profession may draw upon the package to support their professional development and to help meet the learning needs of their pupils.

Those who are clear about their goals and their pupils' starting points as they use the strategies will be best placed to evaluate and maximise the impact on their teaching and on pupils' writing. As always, we gain most from professional development when we can try out and evaluate what works and then add new approaches, either adapted or as given to our professional skills.

If the most significant influence on pupil attainment is the classroom teacher, then the key to genuine and lasting school improvement must be developing the quality of teaching.

Mike Hughes: *Closing the Gap*

There was evidence that the more teachers were able to make use of higher order questions and statements [those designed to elicit problem-solving reasoning or imaginative responses] the better the progress made.

P. Mortimore: *School Matters*

Learners (including adults) prefer approaches which take account of their needs. Lessons in which pupils mainly listen create difficulties for some learners. Classroom research suggests that pupils spend most of their lesson time listening but we learn more easily when we can:

- listen to someone explaining what to do (auditory learning);
and
- see examples of what has to be learned (visual learning);
and
- talk through what the task means and how it is to be done (metacognitive learning);
and
- practise the skills at each stage of the process (kinaesthetic learning).



AN OVERVIEW OF THIS APPROACH TO TEACHING WRITING

What is in each module

There are four modules. Each starts by suggesting how you might use given strategies, then gives material for reading and discussion, and ends with follow-up teaching resources. There is one appendix which identifies further reading for those who want to find out more. It is likely that around 10 hours will be needed to cover all four modules.

How to use the modules

This package has been designed to be used flexibly with teachers, as individuals or teams, selecting the modules which help them to reflect on their practice and address their priorities for improvement.

The suggested sequence involves:

→ **reading** the module outlines → **selecting** the module(s) to meet your needs → **planning** and **delivering** teaching and learning → **evaluating** the impact.

1. Using models

The strategies outlined involve talking and reading linked to writing, developing skills in textual analysis, identifying how writers achieve their effects and applying these in writing. Instead of using a mainly auditory classroom approach where pupils listen to teachers or to other pupils, teachers are given guidance on leading pupils to practise the skills through working on texts before they apply the skills to other pieces of writing.

2. Teaching genre – reading as a focus for writing

This module suggests ways of teaching different types of writing and meeting the needs of different kinds of learners.

3. Demonstrating the writing process

This module offers a practical approach to supporting pupils, for example to develop their ideas or to write an appropriate introduction or conclusion. Teacher demonstration can show pupils how to bring together the writing skills required for a particular purpose or genre.

4. Conferencing and redrafting: learning from assessment

This module deals with the important part played by talking and listening in creating writing. Constructive, precise feedback can be a tool for further learning. Pair or group talk helps pupils go from the initial stimulus to discussing on one another's writing and using constructive feedback in their own redrafting. Examples of peer assessment sheets are provided.

What do we need to succeed?

We need confidence, knowledge, skill and strategy. That applies as much to writing as to any other new experience. When we adults write, we know how to access a wide range of support. We know the kind of help which suits our learning style. We know enough about the characteristics of different genres to be able to apply them to our writing. We also know that writing is a craft and we need to work at acquiring craft skills. This section identifies strategies which can help pupils learn how to be successful and confident writers.

- **The purpose and audience and success criteria are clear.** Successful writing has something to say. Before writing, we want to know why and for whom we are writing. This helps us make decisions about what to include, exclude and emphasise. It helps us to shape our writing confidently, for example using the kind of words and structure suited to the appropriate genre. This approach enables us to meet the requirements of the writing task.
- **Using models.** Seeing others' attempts at similar tasks helps us understand what kind of information has to be selected and how it is to be set out. Adapting and analysing such models can help us to clarify key features of the writing task. Access to several different models helps encourage confident writers to choose the words and form best suited to their own style and what they want to say.
- **Advice for writing tasks is given.** We expect clear task instructions, for example pro forma or templates specifying required contents and style of presentation. Pupils, particularly visual learners, want to see how best to break down the task and present their work. As well as having clear information on what is expected, we need to be clear about what we have to do and we want constructive advice.
- **Access to demonstration and support.** We find it invaluable to us when an experienced colleague walks us through the whole process of preparing for and producing a piece of writing. This process helps to highlight decisions that need to be made and offers advice on what to include. Pupils need similar support during the process of writing especially at the early stages when they will be tentatively trying out their ideas.
- **Support is available before the final draft.** We use feedback from colleagues on our writing drafts to help us polish our writing before publication. Pupils need access to similar opportunities to help them maximise their potential as writers.
- **Supportive feedback is timely and focused.** We make most constructive use of feedback when it focuses on what we need to do to improve and when it is given at redrafting stage. While they are writing, pupils need to know what to focus on to improve.

1



MODULE 1 Using Models: From Reading to Writing

Module 1: Using Models

By the end of this module you will have had opportunities to:

- reflect on the benefits of using models in your classroom;
- consider some completed examples annotated to show the required criteria;
- try using some strategies involving talking and reading linked to writing;
- follow up your work on genre by referring to the Genre Grids in Module 2; and
- evaluate their impact on the quality of pupils' writing and attitudes.

Using Models

The concept of using models – short texts or excerpts from the work of other writers, including teachers and pupils – to illustrate aspects of writing style is not new. However, research into *how* such texts are used prompts us to re-consider teaching approaches.

When models are used as illustrations, often much of the teaching is teacher talk with pupils listening. Research, for example by Robin Alexander, has found that 80% of teachers' questions produces one or two word answers. Yet we know that a combination and variety of approach is more supportive (that is pupils learn by seeing and doing as well as hearing). Strategies like using models can help us to take account of the learning needs of our pupils.

Use models which clearly show the criteria of the genre to be exemplified.

You can help pupils identify key features more clearly if you:

- select accessible and interesting texts with clear examples of the features of the genre;
- identify features of non-fiction genre – e.g. structure, viewpoint, language, etc.; and
- identify features of fiction genre – e.g. storyline, character, setting, language, etc.

How to use models to prepare pupils for writing non-fiction and imaginative writing

What follows illustrates the decisions involved in each task in a step by step way. After reading, you are encouraged to apply the approach in your classroom.

As always, teaching writing is most effective when:

- reading and talking about a range of literature comes before writing;
- the teacher provides an appropriate stimulus, structure, varied support and feedback;
- the pupils have time to discuss, think, analyse text, try out skills before writing; and
- models are used to support learning, not to dictate what pupils write.

Preparing the class for a piece of non-fiction writing.

1. Recognise that the characteristics of functional writing (3rd person, impersonal, organised by ideas, etc.) are different from the natural characteristics of early pupil writing (1st person, narrative, sequential). Help pupils to understand the difference by using stimulating models to exemplify these characteristics before pupils are asked to write. Pupils have to be aware of the formal structures of discursive, argumentative and report writing. They need opportunities to work, interactively, on short models which highlight key aspects.

2. Select a stimulating model that clearly demonstrates the following features:

- How the opening paragraph outlines the subject/theme or structure of the writing.
- How the ideas are organised.
- How the ideas are linked.
- How the writer establishes viewpoint and creates a line of thought.
- How the ending brings together the ideas already discussed.

3. Move to pair work after class discussion. Break tasks down and ask pupils to work in pairs, discussing aspects such as whether, in the opening three paragraphs, there is a clear line of thought. For many pupils, class discussion is insufficient preparation for consolidating and applying what they have been told to the practical business of writing.

4. Let pupils play with the key features of texts. For example, discuss with the pupils an effective model identifying the stylistic features. Issue a new text and ask pupils, working in pairs, to improve it. If needed, provide differentiated support in the form of multiple-choice, true/false questions to enable all pupils to interact with the text, eg Which of the following descriptive words is most effective in suggesting setting? Ensure that there is quick feedback.

5. Create writing posters highlighting the key features of the type of writing demonstrated in the model. These are important, visual reminders during the process. Oral reminders are often forgotten. [Posters can be created from the models or the skills being taught from the Genre Grids.] Ensure that the poster highlights only those language features used in the teaching model. The poster should also contain examples of the techniques to support the pupils. Display these on a chart in the classroom or duplicate them for pupils to see as they write.

6. Use the worked examples of writing in the follow-up teaching resources. You have three texts with identified genre features, that is *Linthaugh High School*, *The Bouncy Castle* and *Lost in the Woods*. One text, *Foxhunting*, is there for you and your pupils to annotate in the same way. Working on such texts can help clarify what persuasive writing requires and the difference between the informal language of personal speech and the more formal approach of writing.

Use models from professional writers to support imaginative writing.

Before asking pupils to create an imaginative piece of writing, teachers should illustrate how a professional author creates a character or develops an exciting plot. The focus may be on how a character changes, or how a character is in conflict with others, or how a situation is resolved. Too often, without such a focus, pupils create flat characters in their stories.

- Select appropriate short models which will stimulate imaginative writing.
- Focus on only one or two skill elements – creating character, developing a setting, etc.
- Use short models – perhaps focusing on one or two elements such as what the character does or says.
- Make explicit those strategies which authors use in fiction. As teachers, we are intuitively aware of how professional authors create character and often discuss this with pupils in the study of a text. Yet often the analysis or discussion of such models may not be used to support pupils in their own writing. Provide posters identifying the skills behind these strategies.
- Allow pupils the opportunity to discuss and practise these skill elements on short pieces of writing before they apply them to their extended writing.
- Give pupils a method to analyse character and a structure to create character in their own writing. For example, show how in a fiction text a character is revealed by:
 - what he/she does;
 - what he/she says;
 - what others say about the character; and
 - how the author shows the character's inner thoughts and feelings.
- Before asking pupils to write a story, discuss and analyse how realistic the characters are in the text. Give them an opportunity to suggest how characters could be made more realistic or memorable.
- Allow pupils the opportunity to reinforce the learning and discussion points through interacting with texts playing with the skills features highlighted earlier.
- Ask pupils to change the type of character portrayed in a text, for example, to change a character from likeable to despicable, through what he/she does or says.
- Give pupils opportunities to practise creating and changing characters through the modelling process before they write their own stories.
- Use an annotated text, like *Lost in the Woods* in the follow-up resources, to show how to analyse imaginative writing.

1

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE

Functional Writing: Writing to inform (pupil script)

Linthaugh High School

Linthaugh High School is a comprehensive school, which has a very wide catchment area with pupils attending from all the areas in the East of Glasgow. There are around 800 pupils and 50 staff in the school. The school is open to both boys and girls. The school uniform is based on three colours – black, gold and white. Boys wear black trousers, white shirt and black jumper. Girls wear a black skirt or trousers, white blouse and a black jumper or cardigan. The school tie and badge are gold, black and white.

The school is situated at the top of Woodhall Avenue in the North East of the city. It has three stories. The school itself is over fifty years old but a new wing was added in 1976, which houses the geography, history and music departments. There are two main playgrounds. One at the main entrance of the school for first and second year pupils. The playground at the back of the school, near the football pitch is for older pupils.

The school boasts many facilities. One of the most significant is the school library, which is very popular as it contains many resources. As well as well stocked shelves, the library houses many computers, which are linked to the internet.

There are a number of **rules** that must be followed in the school. **Pupils are expected to** wear school uniform and to remove outdoor garments in the classroom. Bad behaviour is not tolerated at any time. To aid pupils to keep track of the substantial amount of homework that they are given a diary and planner are provided at the beginning of the school year. Pupils are not allowed to remain in the school building at intervals or lunchtime unless the weather is bad. **These are some of the more important school rules, which benefit all pupils.**

The above information is given to address the questions, which pupils ask. Hopefully the information will help young pupils prepare for their secondary school career at Linthaugh High School.

Factual information on topic paragraph

Note: no first person

Relevant information

Ideas clustered round topic-describing the “big picture” of the school

Passive voice structures used. Language formal

Sentences used to round off paragraphs

Conclusion: summary of main body of report

Personal Writing (pupil script)

Bouncy Castle

"There's the bouncy castle!" yelled my friend Brian. We all ran out, still wearing our pyjamas in order to see it being blown up. It had arrived at exactly half past eight on the morning of my tenth birthday.

Later in the day all of my friends arrived bringing presents, which I opened one by one. Later we decided to have a game of wrestling on the bouncy castle. This was both easy and **great fun** as we could throw each other down without any risk of hurting ourselves or each other. **It was great fun. Nothing could possibly go wrong.**

It was very warm and sweat was dripping from my forehead. My friends Steven and Richard and I began to throw my little brother, Matthew and his friends from one side of the castle to the other. Suddenly Matthew charged at me. I pulled him and slammed him down in a power-bomb which was one of the wrestling moves. Unfortunately his own knee flew back and smacked him right on his nose. He ran away screaming. Five minutes later, he came storming back in an angry rage.

He jumped back on the bouncy castle and charged at me. This time a flying kick hit me on the chest and I fell to the ground. I immediately got to my feet and pulled him down on to the bouncy surface. **I was raging!** I tried to punch at him, but he kept blocking me with his arms. The others just stood there watching, one group shouting their support for Matthew and the other for me.

Suddenly I was aware of two large shapes above us. The shapes were my dad and my uncle who had arrived to break up the fight. I **stomped away** muttering threats that Matthew would not get away with this. At the time we were both very angry but when I look back it all seems too trivial.

Begins by reflecting back on experience

Chronological structure

1st person Engages reader's interest by the use of descriptive detail

Explicit personal reaction

Convincing impression of developing circumstances built on chronological order

Personal involvement

Detailed description of writer's personal reaction

Explicit statement reveals personal reaction

Word choice implicitly reveals personal reaction

Rounded off with brief reflection

1

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE

Imaginative Writing (pupil script)

Lost in the Woods

It was a **dark and cold night**, the rain was pouring down when Joe was walking along the street on his way home.

He knew how late he was and how his parents would be worried so he decided to take a short cut **through the woods** so that he would not be too late.

There was **no moonlight** and you could hear the **wind whistle** and the leaves nestle in the darkness.

Joe heard an owl hoot and felt the rain on his skin. He began to run. Before he knew it he was lost. He stared around and out of the corner of his eye he saw a small **dark cottage**. **In the darkness it looked frightening**. He looked inside through the windows, which were covered in cobwebs, but its place looked deserted.

Joe did not want to go inside but he had no choice, as he wanted to be out of the rain. The door made a screeching sound as he slowly pushed it open. A strange sound greeted him. He could see no one. **Suddenly in front of him** he became aware of liquid lying on the floor – a pool of blood! He wanted to run but instead he moved slowly into the kitchen. A blood stained knife lay on the table. He felt as if someone was watching but he could see no one. Fear overtook him and he ran from the cottage.

Shaking with fear he kept on running until he saw a light in the distance. He was out of the woods and on his way home. At he opened his own front door he felt safe at last. **At the moment he would tell no one what had happened**.

Opening paragraph sets the scene

Main character introduced

Uses weather to set the scene

Setting creates sense of uneasiness

Uses darkness and sound effects to set atmosphere
Hooks the reader
Setting – uses darkness to create atmosphere

Creates a turning point

Sounds intensify atmosphere

Suitable conclusion ...leaves opening for future development

Note

In this pupil's imaginative writing the teaching focus was on how to use setting to create an atmosphere. The pupil had examined models before writing.

Persuasive writing (pupil script) for analysis

Foxhunting

Every year thousands of foxes are **slaughtered** in the ritual of the foxhunt. The **solitary fox lies torn to pieces** by at least a dozen hounds. The argument is that this is necessary and a humane method of killing. The questions we have to ask is, **are foxes not human creatures like ourselves? Do they not feel pain and suffering too? Do they not deserve the right to live?** The human race has now reached such depths that innocent animals may be murdered in cold blood, in the name of sport.

Foxes, contrary to belief, are not ferocious fearsome fiends. On average they weigh only two pounds more than a household cat. Dogs, traffic and sharp objects kill foxes every day. Seemingly that is not enough. No, there has to be an organised hunt with huge horses, packs of well-fed strong hounds. These hounds are used to chase and kill this "villain". Without the help of these **trained "killers"** the fast fleeing fox, running like a gazelle, could escape both men and horse. **Of course** foxes are not angelic, they are wild animals. **Of course**, they can kill but only for food. **Of course** farmers protecting their chickens should take action against the fox if he is guilty of destroying livestock but the fox, unlike humans, does not kill for "kicks". Let us think of the reality of foxhunting.

Vets state that when a fox is hunted down and **savagely** ripped apart by hounds, he or she does not die instantly but he or she dies slowly, painfully, pitifully.

Can we call ourselves civilised if such primitive acts are still carried out and legalised by governments? The pro-foxhunting lobby has no conscience. "Is it not now time that we call a halt to this vicious 'sport'?"

2



MODULE 2

Teaching Genre: Reading as a Focus for Writing

Module 2: Teaching genre

By the end of this module, using the genre grids in the appendix, you will have had the opportunity to:

- consider characteristics and teaching approaches for different genres;
- apply these in your own teaching; and
- evaluate their impact on the quality of pupils' writing.

Knowledge of language, including genre characteristics

Identifying the genre features of a text is a skill that leads to a better understanding of that text, and how its language features and structure fit its purpose. This understanding helps develop the skills needed to write for a variety of purposes.

Some pupils quickly learn how to recognise and use genre features. Others never learn these skills without systematic teaching. Since they are important skills, they require to be deliberately and consciously taught. Teaching should move pupils through the developmental stages of writing. For young writers, the natural form of discourse tends to be 1st person, informal and chronologically structured. Their early writing tends to be personal and narrative. Older students have more experience of other writers to draw upon and are often aware of their readers' requirements. They need to know how to craft their writing using features such as: 3rd person and non-sequential ways of organising ideas structured round issues.

A systematic school programme can give balanced attention to teaching the writing skills needed for different:

- purposes (e.g. inform, persuade, entertain, reflect);
- strands (e.g. functional, personal and imaginative); and
- formats (e.g. diary, story, newspaper article, report, letter).

Whatever the format, teaching has to focus pupils on how to write the content in a language appropriate for its purpose. If pupils are working on a letter, is it a letter of complaint, or a letter designed to persuade or to inform? In each case, the style characteristics are different. Pupils have to focus on learning how to choose language and structures to suit the purpose of their writing. Over emphasis on format is a distraction from key learning about purpose and genre.

HMIE reports such as *Improving Writing 5-14* indicate that pupils' knowledge about language and genre is an important but often under-represented aspect of learning and teaching about English language. Too often, pupils' writing showed:

"limited awareness of the characteristics of different types of writing for different purposes" when the "specific skills required for a type of writing are usually not explicitly taught."

Using genre characteristics to teach writing

What follows illustrates the decisions involved in each task in a step by step way. The genre grids in the appendix offer examples of what is discussed. After reading, you are encouraged to apply the approach in your classroom. You may also want to gather your own collection of fiction and non-fiction models and genre grids. This resource might include anonymous pupil texts from previous years.

1. Decide on the type of writing to be taught (the genre)

The school or the class teacher may have decided to focus on a specific genre like persuasive writing, for example during Term 1. The persuasive writing may emanate from contexts such as novels, plays, or non-fiction topics being studied. These provide the ideas for the writing.

2. Focus on teaching before asking pupils to write in this genre

If the focus is on the language skills of persuasion, then the model may exemplify persuasive language techniques like flattery and rhetorical question. If the focus is on imaginative prose fiction, the teacher may be concentrating on the following.

- How does the writer structure the plot? (e.g. Are there “cliff-hangers”? How does the writer start/end the story?)
- How does the author create characters in the story?
- How does the writer create a setting that helps build suspense or atmosphere?
- How does the writer convey the theme/ key messages? (See also advice in Module 1)

3. Find models (or create models) which clearly exhibit the features of genre.

To develop this skill, the pupils could work on an example where the language is neutral without persuasive techniques. Pupils in pairs would change the stance and insert the appropriate language. Enabling pupils to analyse and play with the material can help them come to terms with its language features, for example the impact of dialogue or the atmosphere created by the use of setting. Differentiation could be addressed by providing true/false examples that pupils could use as the basis of discussion. See other teaching ideas in the genre grid sheets in the appendix.

4. Allow pupils to practise the skill before applying it in their own writing.

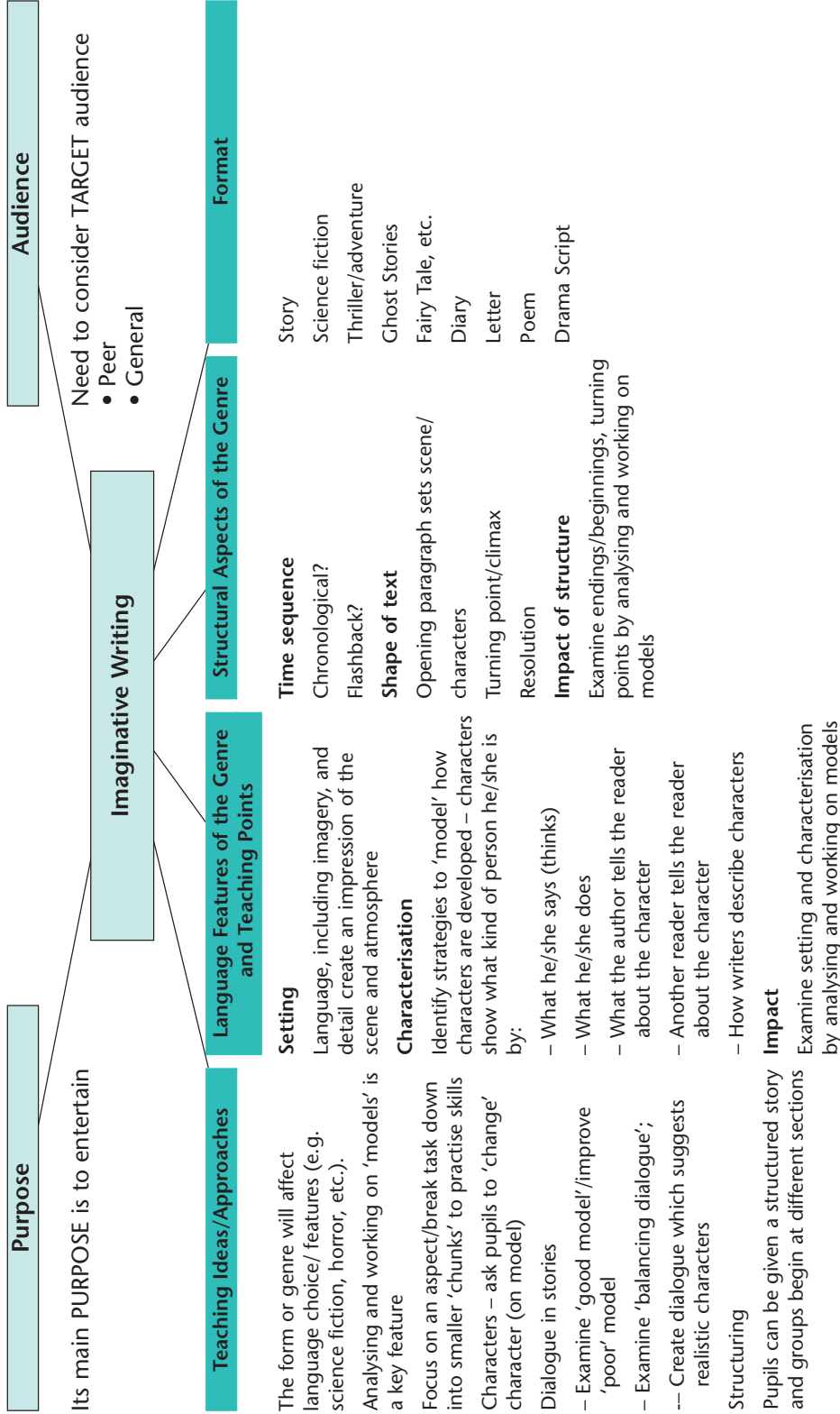
Changing contexts can create increasing demands for pupils. Younger pupils may be using very accessible contexts like fairy tales. Pupils in upper secondary might be writing to respond to complex issues, such as ‘Prisons should be institutions of reform, not punishment’. The key aspect is that the skills being developed can operate at different levels.

2

GENRE GRID FOR IMAGINATIVE WRITING

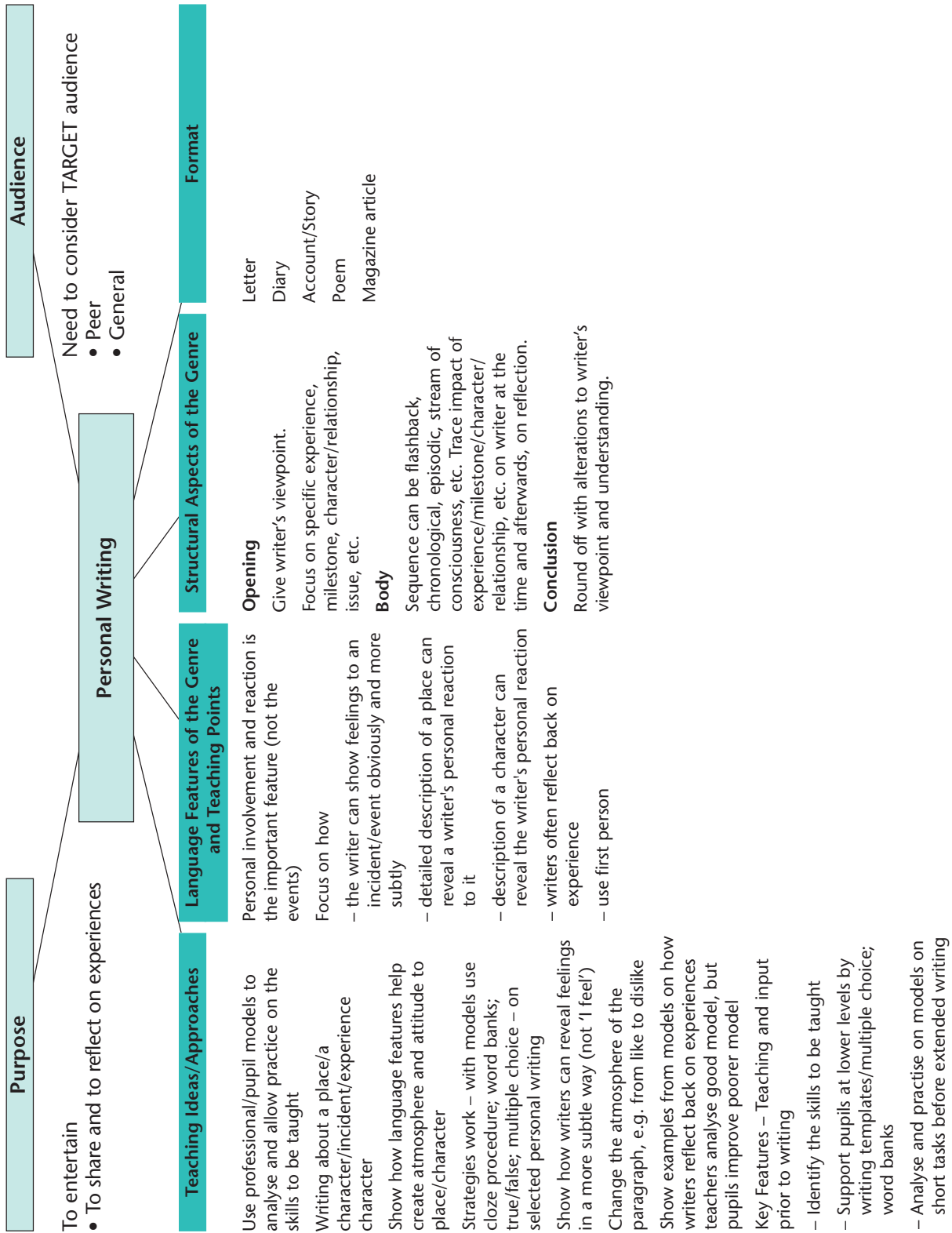
Imaginative writing may take many forms or formats including a story (e.g.) science fiction, thriller, fairy tale, ghost story or a diary, letter, poem or drama script.

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE



GENRE GRID FOR PERSONAL WRITING

Personal writing may take various forms or formats such as a letter, or diary, an account/story or poem or a magazine article. Its main PURPOSE is to provide a personal account about incidents/events/people and to reflect on these experiences.

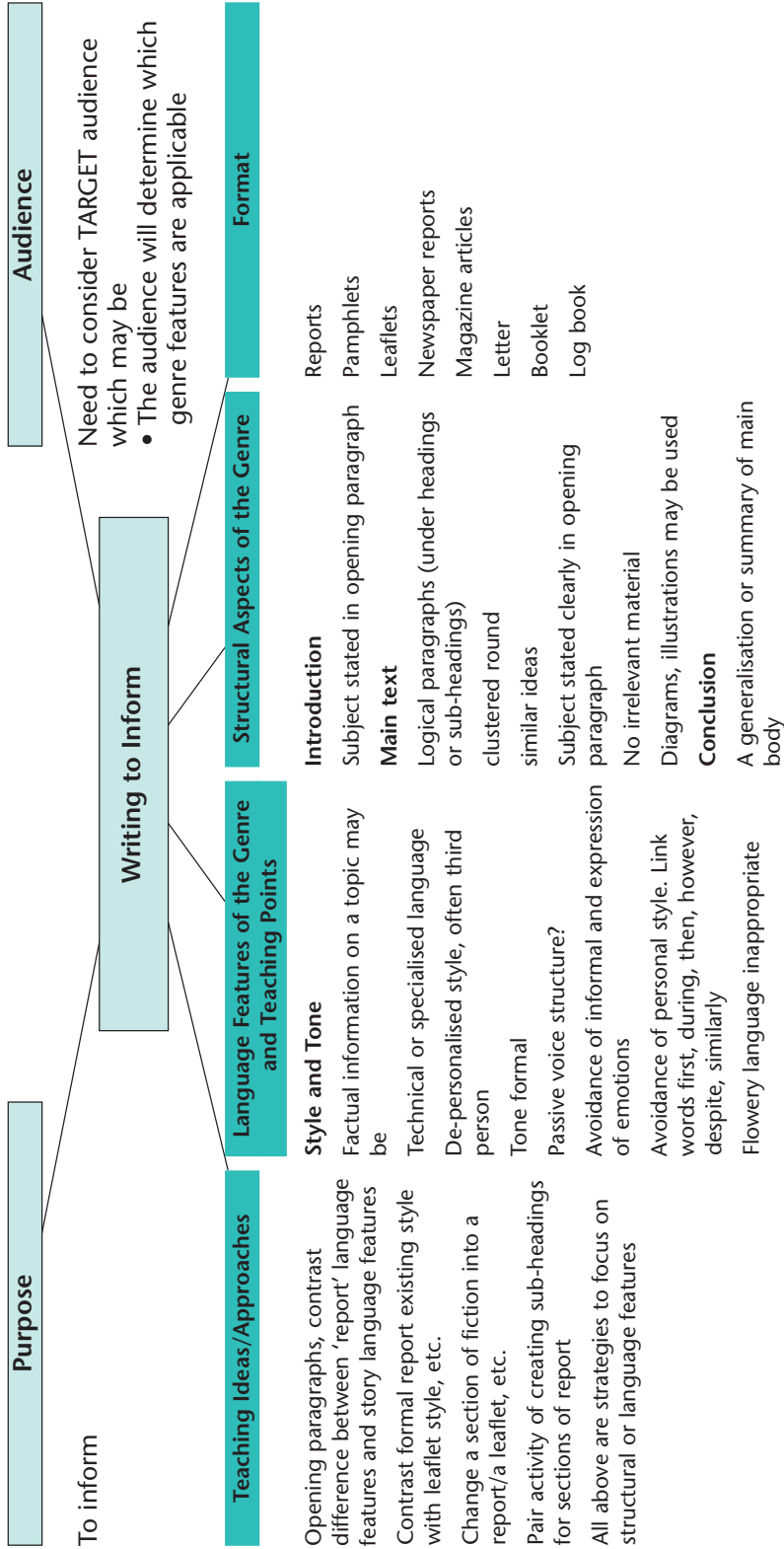


2

GENRE GRID FOR WRITING TO INFORM

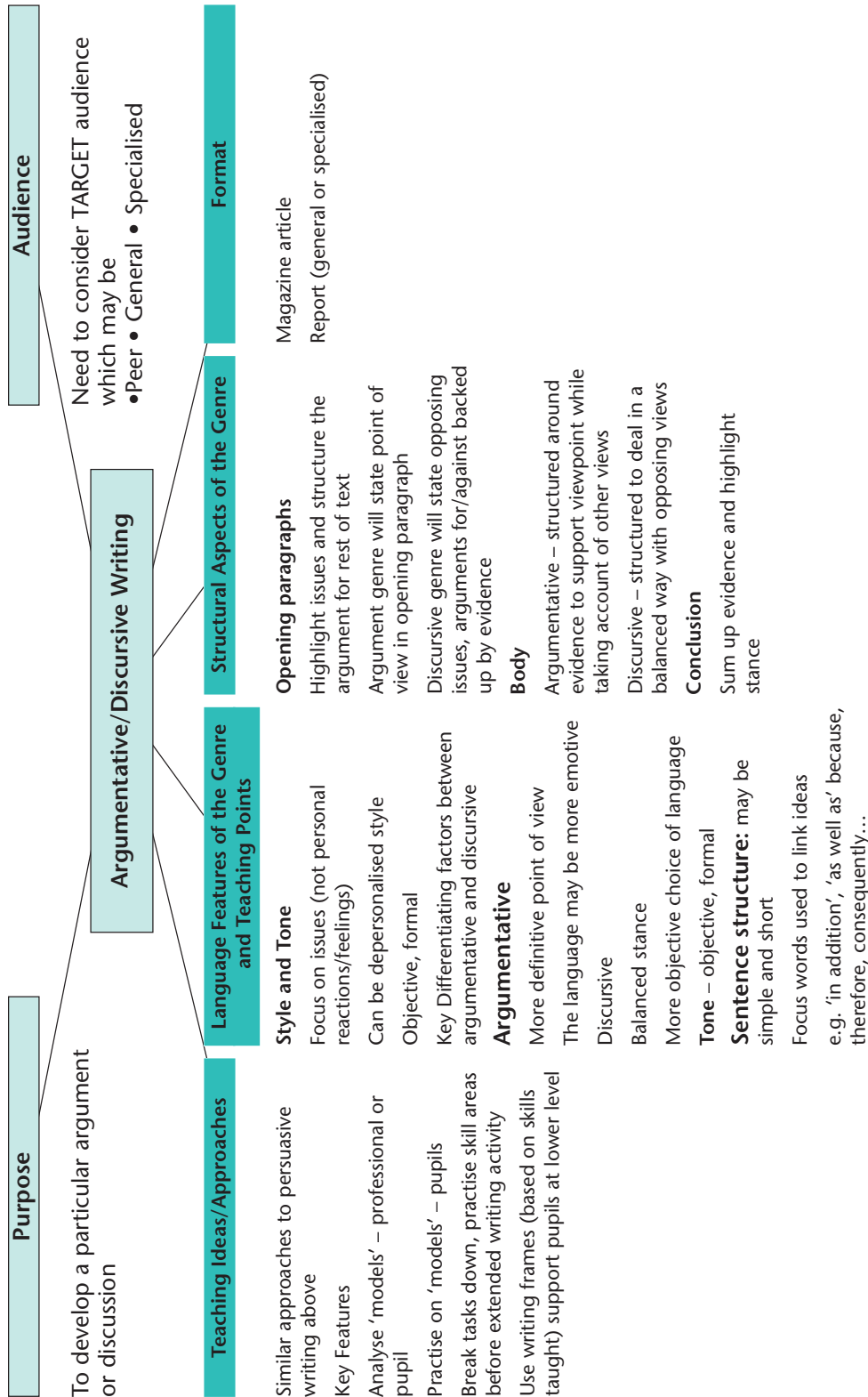
Writing to inform may take various forms or formats, which include leaflets, reports, pamphlets, newspaper reports or magazine articles. Its main PURPOSE is to inform.

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE



GENRE GRID FOR ARGUMENTATIVE/DISCURSIVE WRITING

Argumentative/Discursive Writing may take the form or format of a magazine article or a report, which may be general or specialised. The main PURPOSE is to develop a particular argument or discussion.

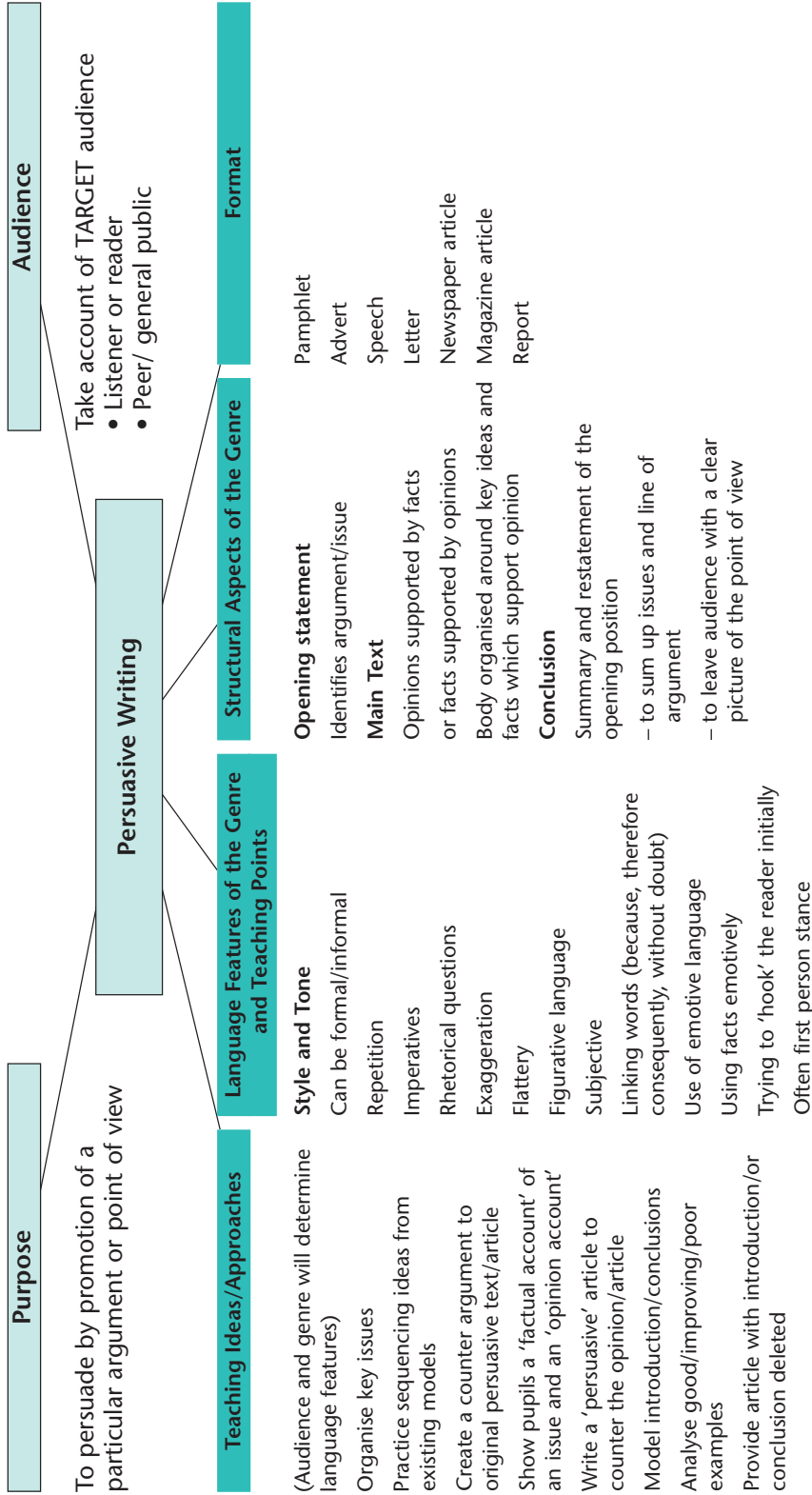


2

GENRE GRID FOR PERSUASIVE WRITING

Persuasive writing may take many forms, from advertising to producing political speeches. Its main PURPOSE is to attempt to promote a particular argument or point of view.

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE



3



MODULE 3 Demonstrating the Writing Process

By the end of this module, you will have had the opportunity to:

- consider different ways of demonstrating the writing process and using writing frames;
- apply these strategies to your own teaching; and
- evaluate the impact on the quality of pupils' writing and their attitudes to it.

Why demonstrate the process?

The best way to encourage pupils to think about thinking is to [demonstrate] the process yourself – show pupils that you are thinking about your own thinking and learning and you are also interested in their thinking.

M. Rocket: *Thinking about Learning*

Pupils benefit from observing the teacher as he/she tackles writing tasks which they, as less experienced writers, will be asked to complete. The teacher also benefits, as during the interaction it becomes clear where pupils are having difficulty.

Demonstration of the writing process allows the learner to observe and participate in the decision-making process, in relation to ideas, structural organisation and language features, which will lead to the completion of a piece of writing.

This approach can be used across the curriculum for writing science reports and history essays as well as poetry or drama scripts or imaginative fiction.

Demonstration should involve all of the pupils in choosing the most appropriate words, e.g. choosing words to convey the correct tone for a letter of complaint. Access to a thesaurus and word banks should be provided. Pupils will gain in confidence as they recognise that they have a contribution to make and that their contribution is valued.

Demonstration can involve:

- showing a writing task, like a piece of discursive writing, through to completion, from initial stimulus to final draft;
- building skills needed in a specific area, e.g. sentence construction or the use of appropriate vocabulary;
- help with features of writing which may be causing pupils difficulty, e.g. writing an effective conclusion; and
- showing pupils how to create and use a writing frame to structure the content, or write using the appropriate stylistic features, e.g. using thematic sentences and sentence links.

Writing frames can support extended writing after teaching and learning the necessary skills. A useful writing frame has a skeleton outline which gives pupils a visual reminder of the characteristics of a particular genre and offers prompts in the form of different key words and link phrases, which support the generic form.

Using demonstration

What follows illustrates the practical steps to be taken when using this approach.

Organise pupils into pairs

Participation, through interacting with a writing partner and contributing to the whole class during the demonstration and follow-up, can make developing writing skills a more positive and motivating experience for pupils.

3

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE

Creating pairs with different strengths

Working with a partner can encourage young writers to discuss and practise the skills they need for using models, and contributing confidently in class.

Research has made us more aware of pupils' different learning needs and the way these can change according to the context. Some pupils will tend to think before responding, but may be hesitant in responding and making an oral presentation. Others are more confident and often respond without thinking – enjoying the competition or risk-taking elements. Pairs can create a useful combination of reflection and speculation. The teacher can ensure that each pupil in the pair is given an opportunity to contribute and encourage the pupils to identify in what ways each has learned from the other.

Focus the demonstration

Before demonstrating, the teacher should introduce the writing task by:

- stating the: genre → purpose → audience; and
- reminding the pupils of the genre characteristics of the chosen genre, e.g. discursive.

Take a step-by-step approach to demonstrating the writing process

1. Teacher shows how to begin.
2. Teacher verbalises thoughts, makes deliberate mistakes; makes changes and insertions working on the advice of pupils.
3. Teacher with pupils adds genre features like linking words or imagery.
4. Teacher demonstrates specific skills like use of tone or cohesion.
5. Teacher, with pupils, rearranges text to improve structure/argument/cohesion.
6. Teacher considers several endings, selects one and shows how to round off the writing.

Even after being involved in demonstrations of how to write, some pupils may still be at the stage of needing the structural or stylistic support of a writing frame for their extended writing. The final result may be clearer and better structured when a writing frame is used. The follow-up resource provides you with an example of a writing frame on discursive writing as well two pupil scripts on school uniform which illustrate the impact of using writing frames.

**Pupil script 1 written without a writing frame
SCHOOL UNIFORM**

Should school uniform be made compulsory?
Everyone in the school is wearing one form of dress and this can make everyone feel that they belong. Uniforms are a lot cheaper than designer labels such as Nike, Adidas or Reebok. Those in favour of school uniform say that uniforms are not only smart, but also hardwearing.

Uniforms can be uncomfortable especially in the summer months when ties or thick skirts and trousers make everyone very hot and unable to concentrate for long periods of time.

Pupils are individuals, each with their own personality, beliefs and opinions, and in school uniform their individuality is lost.

Uniforms should not be compulsory and each pupil should be allowed to make their own decision about what to wear to school. If pupils are taught to come to school in clothes of their own choosing, they are more likely to grow into independent, thinking, adults who will be better able to take up a responsible position in society.

**Pupil script 2 written with a writing frame
SCHOOL UNIFORM**

There is a lot of discussion about whether school uniform should, or should not, be made compulsory.

The people who agree with this idea claim that because everyone in the school is wearing one form of dress code that it makes everyone feel that they belong. **Furthermore,** uniforms are a lot cheaper than the designer labels such as Nike, Adidas or Reebok, the purchase of which could **result in** parents getting into debt.

A further point that those in favour of school uniform claim is that uniforms are not only smart but they are very hard wearing.

However, there are strong arguments against the point of view expressed by both pupils and parents. One point of view is that pupils are individuals, each with their own personality, beliefs and opinions. **Therefore,** in wearing a school uniform, all individuality is lost.

They also say that uniforms are very uncomfortable especially during the summer months, when ties and thick skirts and trousers make everyone very hot and **as a consequence** unable to concentrate for long periods of time.

After looking at the different points of view and the evidence for them, I think that uniforms should not be compulsory and that pupils should be allowed to make own choices as far as the clothes they wear to school are concerned.

Finally, it would seem that if pupils are taught to come to school in clothes of their own choosing, they are more likely to grow into independent, thinking adults, who will be better able to take up a responsible position in society.

3

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE

Exemplar Writing Frame on discursive writing: examining both sides

Structure

Discursive writing usually consists of:

- A statement of the issue
- Arguments **for** plus supporting evidence
- Arguments **against** plus supporting evidence
- A summary and conclusion

Link phrases

There is a lot of discussion about whether ...

The people who agree with this idea, claim that ...

They also argue that ...

A further point they make is ...

However there are strong arguments against the point of view ...

They also say that ...

After looking at the different points of view and the evidence for them I think ...

Key word bank

Firstly

because

One reason is ...

Secondly

therefore

Another reason is ...

Finally

as a result

One point of view is ...

As a consequence

An alternative point of view is ...

in addition

furthermore

4



MODULE 4 Conferencing, Redrafting and Learning from Assessment

By the end of this module, you will have had the opportunity to:

- consider how conferencing, precise feedback and redrafting can help pupils use learning from assessment;
- apply strategies to your own practice; and
- evaluate to what extent pupils' extended writing has improved.

Talking to support writing: conferencing during the writing process

Conferencing is a time when a pupil discusses his or her writing with the teacher or a writing partner or a group of others. Any conference should focus on content, structure and vocabulary. This helps pupils take account of important features which go beyond secretarial aspects of presentation.

Feedback has to be sensitive to the needs of the writer

In the initial stages of attempting a new type of writing or skill most pupils will need support and feedback during the process as well as at the end of it. They will want answers to questions like: "Is this how I should do it?" At the formative teaching and learning stages, it is useful to start with a collaborative approach rather than individual activities. At later stages during the writing process, the teacher wants to focus more on pupils' different needs for support and challenge during writing and at the point of re-drafting. This means continuing to create opportunities to support those pupils who need help to get started and organise what they have to say while respecting other pupils' needs for uninterrupted time and space to think independently and let their ideas flow as they create their writing.

Using pupil conferencing

- Give pupils responsibility for being the first marker and editor of their writing.
- Focus feedback in the initial stages on content – achieving clarity and organising ideas.
- Use subsequent brief conferences to concentrate on only one or two issues at a time – that is, on the writing skills being developed based on agreed criteria or problems identified in earlier writing.
- Use posters highlighting the key skills being taught to help visual learners to discuss key points effectively in conferencing.
- Demonstrate the process of evaluating writing, using real examples of anonymous writing which exemplify the skill areas being taught.
- Show pupils how to base their assessment on objective criteria. For example, prompt them to explore aspects with questions such as these.
 - Have you a good opening?
 - Have you chosen effective words?
 - Have you drawn together your ideas to make an effective conclusion?
- Plan the sequence of activities so that pupils have opportunities to see how writing skills can be applied and can practise skills before moving to conferencing and redrafting. This is likely to be after the first attempt at bringing together the skills in an extended piece of writing.
- Use conferencing as their piece is building up, as they try out their skills on short pieces that they have created (a few paragraphs). Encourage pupils to ask one another for clarification and discuss how they could improve on the skill area being practised. For example, use questions like those which follow.

4

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE

- Is the setting menacing in this paragraph?
- Which explicit statements show the character's feelings towards a place in the writing so far?
- Which implicit statements show the character's feelings about the place?
- Consider devising and providing further support like assessment pro forma. These are best if they are specific about the key skills taught in the programme rather than generic pro forma.
- Ensure that conferencing is done prior to any redrafting and before work is submitted to the teacher.

Redrafting and thinking time

Given more thinking time, students seemed able to realise that a more thoughtful answer was required.

P. Black and D. William: *Inside the black box*

Redrafting is most effective when precise feedback is used to help pupils learn how to refine their writing for their final readership. Assessment which provides information on how the pupil can improve will be more effective than general comments or grades (see *Inside the black box*, Paul Black & Dylan William). When redrafting is a passive, secretarial copying activity, it is often based on comments, made in the pupils' absence, which have not been understood. When pupils understand why changes are needed they are motivated to try again.

Where there is a clear focus on how to improve, and where the process is interactive (with the teacher or with another pupil, as in conferencing or self/peer assessment) redrafting benefits the writer. It is this pupil involvement at each stage of the process that makes redrafting effective. This approach makes effective use of learning and teaching time and enables the teacher to concentrate on the quality of pupils' writing.

Feedback should guide toward the next steps in improvement and require action

Feedback will encourage improvement only if the comment helps the pupil to identify the issue and how to improve. General comments are not particularly helpful to pupils whose writing is weak because the pupils do not understand the concept or the process.

For example, many pupils writing at 5-14 level C would not find feedback comment in the form of "paragraphing must be improved" to be helpful. At level C they are only "beginning to paragraph" and have not yet mastered the concept. They need more than an oral explanation of a weakness and a reminder what to do. They may need more precise achievable targets, greater interaction and visual prompts for example in the form of a "spidergram".

The "spidergram" approach (see Follow-up resource) can help the pupil to redraft more independently. At the bottom of a piece of writing the teacher would create a spidergram illustration of one or two paragraphs. The pupil would be expected to continue to identify the other paragraphs from his/her writing and place them on the spidergram.

Show pupils how to provide and use constructive advice on next steps

When the teacher is providing feedback to pupils on how to improve their use of a particular aspect of skill, like reflection in personal writing or paragraphing in argumentative writing, a demonstration or example from a text should be used to illustrate what is required. The teacher should identify where this aspect is in the writing and indicate how this could be further explored in other sections or texts. After modelling the giving of constructive advice, the teacher could ask pupils in their writing pair to apply this approach to giving such feedback about one another's writing.

- Ensure that in feedback, pupils are not passive listeners who are given advice. Involve them in their own learning. Give them specific advice on how to address the issues in a short identified section of work.
- Ensure that feedback on the writing activity is constructive, not negative. The emphasis should be on providing a positive impact to help motivate the learner. Try to include two positive comments about the work and one suggestion on how to improve.

4

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE

Exemplar pro-forma for peer assessment – persuasive writing

This sheet can be used before or after your final draft as a checklist of the skills you have been practising.

Essay Title:

--

1. Did the opening paragraph highlight the issues?

Did you include emotive facts?

Did you express opinions on the facts?

Yes	No

2. Structuring your essay

Did the opening paragraph structure the argument for the rest of the piece of writing?

Yes	No

3. Were the issues dealt with in a systematic way with the most important first and last?

Yes	No

4. Did you state your point of view or opinion?

Followed by supporting evidence?

Yes	No

5. Did you come to a conclusion, which shows your feelings on the issue?

Have you tried to persuade?

Yes	No

Exemplar pro-forma: peer assessment – persuasive writing

This sheet can be used before or after your final draft as a checklist of the skills you have been practising.

Essay Title:

If your writing contains none, or very few examples of particular features of the genre, discuss with your partner how to introduce them into your essay.

Does your piece of writing contain persuasive language such as these?

Persuasive Language	Tick if Used	Example from Writing
Repetition Figurative Language – Simile – Metaphor – Alliteration Rhetorical Questions Flattery Exaggeration		

4

FOLLOW-UP RESOURCE

Pupil Spidergram on Lions to support redrafting

The pupil has written about what he/she has learned about lions from a text read in class. The pupil's work, however, betrays a lack of understanding of the concept of the paragraph.

From the pupil's work the teacher has indicated paragraphs 1 and 2 for the pupil and explained why these exist. The pupil decides on the titles of the other paragraphs from the essay content.

Teacher input

1. What they look like

4. Who their enemies are

Lions

Teacher input

2. Where they live

3. What they eat



APPENDIX

Further Reading and Resources

Alexander, Robin: "Towards Dialogic Teaching. Rethinking Classroom Talk"

Avon Education Department: "The Avon Collaborative Reading Project"

Black, Paul and Dylan, William: "Inside the black box"

Glasgow City Council: "Gender Issues in Raising Attainment in Literacy"

Glasgow City Council: "New Horizons in Writing"

Glasgow City Council: "Developing Literacy in the Early Stages"

SEED: "Curriculum Framework 3-5"

HMIE "Improving Writing 5-14"

SCRE "Taking a Closer Look at Writing"

Hannan Geoff: "Improving Boys' Performance"

Hughes, Mike: "Closing the Learning Gap"

Learning Teaching Scotland and the Ides Network: "Learning, Thinking and Creativity. A Staff Development Handbook"

Lewis, M and Wray, D: "Writing Frames" Reading Language Information Centre, University of Reading

Millard, Elaine: "Differently Literate"

Mortimore, P: "School Matters"

Smith, Alistair: "Accelerated Learning in The Classroom"

www.hmie.gov.uk

£10.00

© Crown copyright 2005
Astron B38241 05/05

Further copies are available from
Blackwell's Bookshop
53 South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1YS

Telephone orders and inquiries
0131 622 8283 or
0131 622 8258

Fax orders
0131 557 8149

Email orders
business.edinburgh@blackwells.co.uk

ISBN 0-7053-1055-8



9 780705 310550



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

