Non-Fiction Progression for Writing

Guidance to support the planning and teaching of non-fiction writing in Year 1 to Year 6



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South Gloucestershire Council

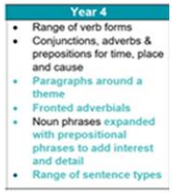
Foreword

The ability to read and comprehend non-fiction is a life skill. News articles, adverts, brochures, leaflets, letters, manuals, guides and recipes, to name a few, are all examples of texts that we engage with on a day-today basis to answer questions; to keep ourselves informed about the world and to find the information we need.

Understanding non-fiction is also an essential feature of the broader curriculum. Pupils who become confident readers of non-fiction are able to access subject-specific content far more easily, allowing them to develop their knowledge and make links with previous learning, ultimately often leading to academic success.

'The vocabulary and style of fiction is typically very different to many of the non-fiction informational texts so commonly read in the school curriculum.' (Alex Quigley, 2018) With this in mind, recognising and being able to use the features of writing to inform, argue and explain is therefore a key skill, one that will continue to support progress through secondary school, where the demands of writing become more challenging and varied.

This document has been written to support schools in planning progression in their non-fiction teaching. It aims to provide guidance about the skills and features that may be taught in each year group to ensure that children's writing in each text type becomes more sophisticated as they progress through primary school. Each area is divided into two sections:



the top row identifies key skills for each year group from the National Curriculum. New objectives for that year group are indicated in blue; objectives from previous years are indicated in black. Both should be built into teaching to allow the reinforcement of previous learning;



the second row identifies the language and organisational features that could be taught in each year to support progression across the school.

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At the end of each section, there are some 'things to think about when you're writing…' prompts. These can be used by teachers to help inform their teaching and modelling. They can also be used (with adaptation where necessary) to provide success criteria for pupils; to create checklists that can be referred to when writing and/or to help support self-assessment and revising.

The progression for **discussion** and **explanation** both focus purely on upper Key Stage 2. The rationale for this is that there are a number of key skills children need to secure in order to write these text types successfully. For example, to effectively balance opposing viewpoints in a discussion, children firstly need to be able to effectively portray one side of an argument; use a range of persuasive devices; support their views with appropriate evidence and maintain an appropriate level of formality for the audience and purpose. Similarly, writing an explanation text is challenging. Pupils need to be clear about the difference between instructions (which tell the reader how to do something) and explanation (which tell the reader how something works). Explanations centre around a process or cycle so require a good understanding of causal connectives and relationships, as well as an impersonal tone and grammatical features such as passive voice, which appear in upper Key Stage 2. For this reason, we suggest that schools focus on really embedding reports, recounts, persuasion and instructions in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 so that children are best placed to handle the increased complexity and cognitive demand of discussion and explanation texts in years five and six. The National Curriculum does not prescribe which text types should be taught so the above is obviously only guidance. Schools who wish to introduce discussion and explanation earlier are absolutely able to do so.

Although presented as individual text types in this document, it's important to remember that many non-fiction texts don't fit neatly into a single category. For example, a report about mountains may include an explanation about how they are formed; a newspaper report will revolve around a recount of an event; a tourist leaflet may include instructions about how to get there.

As with all writing, thinking carefully about the context, audience and purpose for writing, taking into consideration the cognitive demand of the task and sharing examples are key factors in supporting success.

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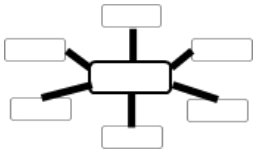
Possible Non-Fiction Writing Opportunities

The table below provides a list of possible writing opportunities linked to the various non-fiction text types. At Key Stage 1, writing opportunities will be simpler and more related to direct experiences (either real-life ones or those created through sharing texts). At Key Stage 2, children should have opportunities to explore the text types, broadening their understanding through doing so. Whilst the direct teaching of skills is likely to happen in English lessons, it's vital that children have the chance to regularly apply their learning across the curriculum to help embed understanding.

The National Curriculum does not stipulate when the various text types should be introduced so schools have the flexibility to decide what is most appropriate for their context.

Writing to Inform		Writing to Argue		Writing to Explain	
Reports	**Recounts**	**Persuasion**	**Discussion**	**Instruction** (how to do something)	**Explanation** (how something works)
• Non-chronological reports • Film reviews • Book reviews • Sports reviews • Weather reports • News reports • News broadcasts • Police reports • Information texts	• Postcards • Thank you letters • Recounts based on real experiences *e.g. trips, experience days* • Diaries in role • Letters in role • Blogs • Emails • Eyewitness reports • Biographies • Autobiographies	• Invitations • Letters in role • Wanted posters • Posters to advertise • Letters for real purposes • Radio, television, magazine or hoarding adverts • Leaflets • Travel brochures • Written arguments	• Debates (oral) • Written balanced arguments	• Rules • Recipes • Directions • Experiments • Survival guides • Instruction manuals	• Processes or cycles • Explanations linked to work in other subject areas *e.g. the circulatory system in science, how mountians are formed in geography.*

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Reports

The purpose of a report is to provide information and describe the way things are. They are used to present precise and detailed information. There are many different types of reports, the feature of which vary slightly in relation to their audience and purpose, but they share a range of common language and organisational features. Reports generally aim to objective; however, the selection of information to include or omit and the overall tone of the writing can create bias so acknowledging and discussing this, especially in upper Key Stage 2, is helpful.

Reports are written in the past or present tense, depending on their purpose. Most reports are written in the present tense but historical reports are written in the past. Control of tense is vital for cohesion and reports can be difficult as they often require children to switch tense. For example, a news report may use the past tense to describe events; the present tense for quotes from interviewees and the future tense to explain any next steps. Children often confuse these tenses, especially in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, so it is vital that they are clear about the purpose of the report; they have discussed examples and that they have had relevant opportunities to practise using different tenses in grammar lessons or short burst writing.

By Upper Key Stage 2, children are usually fairly au fait with the key features of report writing and can be introduced to some of the more complex language and organisational features, linked to the grammar curriculum.

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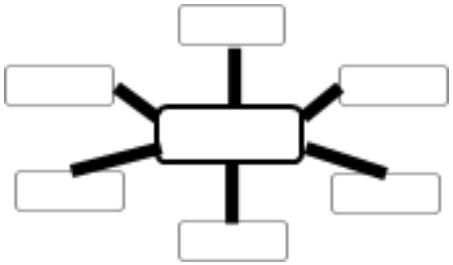
Reports

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Grammar Expectations	• **Simple past and present tense** • ***and* to join clauses**	• **Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions** • **Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail** • **Progressive verb forms**	• Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions • Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail Simple and progressive verb forms • **Simple paragraphs** • **Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause** • **Perfect verb forms**	• Range of verb forms • Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause • Noun phrases • **Paragraphs around a theme** • **Fronted adverbials** • **expanded with prepositional phrases to add interest and detail** • **Range of sentence types**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • **Range of clause** • **structures, including relative clauses** • **Parenthesis** • **Cohesion within and between paragraphs** • **Appropriate level of formality**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • Range of clause structures, including relative clauses • Parenthesis • Cohesion within and between paragraphs • **Passive voice** • **Nominalisation** • **Control of formality**
Report Features	• Simple present tense • Third person • Relevant vocabulary	**Previous features and:** • simple and progressive present/past tense • brief introduction • sub headings • pictures • subject specific vocabulary	**Previous features and:** • present/past perfect • introduction • summary • chronological order if needed • technical vocabulary • glossary	**Previous features and:** • adverbs for quantity *e.g. many, few, some, every* • adverbs for frequency *e.g. often, always, rarely* • logical structure, moving from the generic to the more specific • rhetorical questions to engage the reader	**Previous features and:** • logically sequenced paragraphs *e.g. opening statement; more detailed classification; description of the subject with examples/elaboration of points; summary* • tables, diagrams or images that add or summarise information • appropriate level of formality for the intended audience	**Previous features and:** • passive voice to avoid personalisation and maintain an appropriate level of formality • nominalisation to maintain formality • language of comparison and contrast *e.g. equally, both…and.., similarly, just as…so does, in contrast, alternatively* • description used to add precision • integration of other text types if appropriate

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Reports

Planning Frame	Things to think about when you're writing a report

 	• What is the purpose and who is the audience for my writing?
	• Is this a past or present tense report?
	• Is it formal or semi-formal? How will this impact the language I use?
	• Have I selected facts and information from a range of sources?
	• Is my information correct/reliable?
	• What is the focus for each paragraph? Plan under the paragraph headings you've chosen
	• Shall I use a question as the title? (e.g. *Were dinosaurs as fierce as they seem?)*
	• How can I capture the reader's attention in the opening?
	• Should I use any tables, pictures or diagrams to summarise or add more information?
	• How can I relate to the reader? Should I
	  - ask a direct question? (e.g. *Would you be scared if you came face to face with a T-Rex?)*
	  - share my thoughts? (*They really were amazing creatures…)*
	  - add a personal touch? (*So next time you watch Jurassic Park…)*
	• What descriptive/technical language would be appropriate?
	• Is the information clear and organised logically?
	• Will someone who doesn't know anything about the topic be able to understand my report?

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Recounts

Recounts are the most common kind of texts we read and write. Their main purpose is to re-tell an event or experience, either to inform or to entertain. They can be written based on real events, for example an eyewitness report or a biography, or based on a fictional stimulus, such as a diary in role as a character or an eyewitness report based on an incident in a text. Recounts come in a number of different forms but there are three main categories.

Personal Recounts	Factual Recounts	Imaginative Recounts
Recounting something the writer has been personally involved in	*Reporting the details of an incident by recounting factual information*	*Writing in role as a character or applying factual knowledge to an imaginary role*
Diaries, journals, personal letters, visits or experiences, autobiographies, blogs	Letters, diaries, biographies, science experiments, police reports, historical accounts	Letters, diaries, accounts

Recounts are almost always in the past tense. There are occasions when the present tense is appropriate, such as in anecdotal storytelling *e.g. Just imagine, I'm on the crossing and suddenly I see a car zooming right towards me…* but children often find this difficult to maintain so sticking to the past tense is generally advisable.

When writing, it's important to remember that while the purpose is to re-tell, the writing still needs to interest to the reader. If every minor detail is recounted, the reader is likely to lose interest. This means that children need to select the most important events and expand on these in an interesting manner.

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Recounts

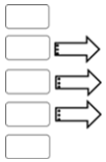
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Grammar Expectations	• **Simple past and present tense** • ***and* to join clauses**	• **Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions** • **Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail** • **Progressive verb forms**	• Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions • Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail Simple and progressive verb forms • **Simple paragraphs** • **Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause** • **Perfect verb forms**	• Range of verb forms • Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause • Noun phrases • **Paragraphs around a theme** • **Fronted adverbials** • **expanded with prepositional phrases to add interest and detail** • **Range of sentence types**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • **Range of clause** • **structures, including relative clauses** • **Parenthesis** • **Cohesion within and between paragraphs** • **Appropriate level of formality**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • Range of clause structures, including relative clauses • Parenthesis • Cohesion within and between paragraphs • **Passive voice** • **Nominalisation** • **Control of formality**
Recount Features	• simple past tense • chronological order • first person	**Previous features and:** • opening that sets the scene • adverbs for time • 5Ws: Who? What? Why? When? Where? • expanded noun phrases to add interest • simple closing statement	**Previous features and:** • first or third person (as required) • adverbs and conjunctions for time • topic sentences and signposts to guide the reader	**Previous features and:** • inclusion of additional information to amuse, interest or inform the reader • inclusion of quotes	**Previous features and:** • appropriate style and formality for the genre and intended audience	**Previous features and:** • use of passive voice and nominalisation to create a formal tone in impersonal recounts • possible adapting of chronology in fictional recounts through using flashbacks

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Recounts

Planning Frame	Things to think about when you're writing a recount
 	• What is the purpose and who is the audience for my writing? • Is the recount formal (*e.g. Mary Anning's journal recounting her latest find*); semi-formal (*e.g. a biography of Mary Anning for a child's science magazine*) or informal (*a recount about a trip to Jurassic Park*)? • What language do I need to use? • What order do the events need to be in to make sense? • What are the important details that I have to include? • What details can I include to add interest or amuse the reader? • Have I included the 5 Ws? (when, who, where, what, and why?) • How will I finish my recount? - Can I add a summary (*e.g. Mary Anning faced many challenges in her 47 years but her research helped lead the way in our understanding of dinosaurs*). - Can I add a personal reflection? (*e.g. Mary Anning was a remarkable woman, who often didn't receive the recognition she deserved for her research).*

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Persuasive Texts

The purpose of a persuasive text is to argue a particular viewpoint and encourage the reader to agree: the writer sets out to state their view in a way that will influence others. They can be written or oral and vary considerably depending on their purpose and audience. Elements of persuasive writing are found in many different texts, including multimedia texts, meaning that persuasion provides a plethora of opportunities, both formal and informal, so having a very clear sense of purpose and audience is vital in order to take the right approach and achieve the correct tone.

It can be helpful to think of persuasion as having two key strands:

Argument	Advertising
An attempt to persuade someone to agree with or do something	***An attempt to sell something***
Invitations, letters (real and imaginative), posters, leaflets, written arguments, speeches	Posters, fliers, radio adverts, magazine adverts, television and online adverts, travel brochures, leaflets, job adverts

Some persuasive texts present a very overt message and are blatant in their approach, whereas others may be more covert and use subtle coercion instead; however, both may include evidence of bias and opinion presented as fact. In Key Stage 2 particularly, teaching a range of words and phrases for argument is key *e.g. some people claim; it is thought that; they believe; they will argue that.* Understanding the nuance of language is key in writing effective persuasive texts. Writers need to choose language carefully, considering their use of both emotive language to appeal directly to the way the reader whilst also maintaining precision to add weight to the argument.

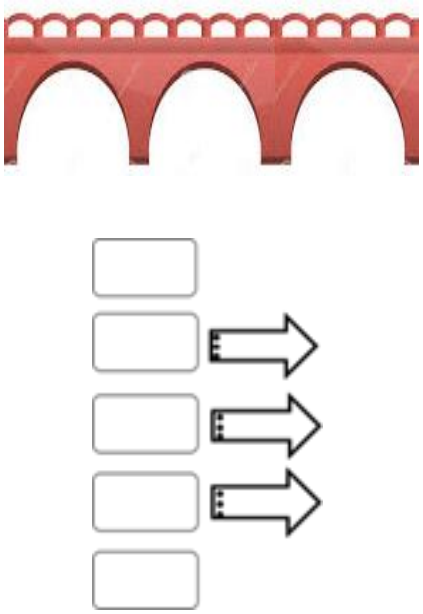
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Persuasive Texts

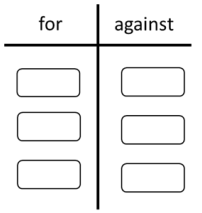
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Grammar Expectations	• **Simple past and present tense** • ***and* to join clauses**	• **Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions** • **Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail** • **Progressive verb forms**	• Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions • Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail Simple and progressive verb forms • **Simple paragraphs** • **Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause** • **Perfect verb forms**	• Range of verb forms • Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause • Noun phrases **Paragraphs around a theme** • **Fronted adverbials** • **expanded with prepositional phrases to add interest and detail** • **Range of sentence types**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • **Range of clause** • **structures, including relative clauses** • **Parenthesis** • **Cohesion within and between paragraphs** • **Appropriate level of formality**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • Range of clause structures, including relative clauses • Parenthesis • Cohesion within and between paragraphs • **Passive voice** • **Nominalisation** • **Control of formality**
Persuasive Features	• simple present tense • second person (*you*) • simple descriptive language • captions or pictures where appropriate	**Previous features and:** • clear viewpoint • opening that sums up the main point • strong, positive words and phrases	**Previous features and:** • effective layout *e.g. title/heading, captions, illustrations, photos* • direct address to the reader • closing statement that reinforces the argument • use of devises such as alliteration, slogans and power of three • adverbs and conjunctions for cause *e.g. because, so, which, otherwise, so that*	**Previous features and:** • effective ordering of main points • elaboration/evidence/ examples for each key point • repetition for effect • rhetorical questions • emotive or boastful language • adverbs for quantity e.g. *many, few, some, every* and frequency *e.g. often, always, rarely*	**Previous features and:** • structure that moves from the generic to the more specific for each point • simple psychology to appeal to the reader • use of statistics and quotes to support points • modal *verbs e.g. will, can, may, must, should* • adverbs for possibility *e.g. certainly, surely, undoubtedly, possibly* • adverbs for viewpoint *e.g. obviously, clearly, evidently, naturally*	**Previous features and:** • logical connectives *e.g. therefore, as a result, in conclusion* • words and phrases to indicate concession e.g. *while it is true that, in spite of, despite this, however, still, nevertheless* • evidence to discredit possible counter arguments

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Persuasive Texts

Planning Frame	Things to think about when you're writing a persusasive text
	• What is the purpose and who is the audience for my writing? • Is it formal or semi-formal? How will this impact the language I use? (*e.g. alliteration in a leaflet advertising a Jurassic Park theme park;* technical language is a persuasive letter from Mary Anning to the Geological Society) • What is my point of view? What will I include in my opening statement? • What is the best order to present my points? • What evidence and explanation supports each one? • What reasons and evidence will convince the reader? - can I address them directly? (*e.g. This is the experience you've bene waiting for…)* - can I make them think other people agree? (*e.g. 9/10 people agreed that…)* - can I make them believe there are benefits for them? (*e.g. Life will certainly be better if…)* - can I use simple psychology? (e.g. *Only a fool would believe that…)* • What facts or statistics support my argument? • What counter arguments may someone have? How can I answer these? • Do I sound knowledgeable and reasonable? • Is the language I have used strong and positive? Do I have too many negative comments? • Could I include any short sentences for emphasis? • Should I include any pictures, diagrams or fact boxes? • Would I be persuaded by my writing?

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Discussion Texts

The purpose of a discussion text is to provide a reasoned overview of an issue or topic through presenting the various points of view. Discussion texts share many features in common with persuasive writing; however, whereas a persuasive text is one-sided and often reflects the writer's beliefs, discussion texts generally take a neutral stance, exploring and balancing opposing points of view.

For a discussion to be balanced, it is important that equal weighting is given to both sides of the argument. If one viewpoint is presented in more depth with more supporting evidence, it is unlikely that the discussion will be a fair representation of the argument as a whole. This often results in a loss of purpose and can mean the argument appears to be more persuasive than discursive.

The National Curriculum does not dictate the text types to be taught in each year group so discussions can be introduced at any time, although as persuasion offers many and varied opportunities for writing, it may be advisable to leave the introduction of discussion until upper KS2, by which time children's skills and maturity should help them to tackle the challenges of this type of writing more successfully.

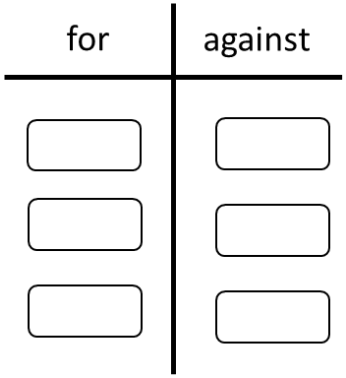
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Discussion Texts

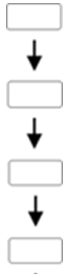
	Year 5	Year 6
Grammar Expectations	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • **Range of clause** • **structures, including relative clauses** • **Parenthesis** • **Cohesion within and between paragraphs** • **Appropriate level of formality**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • Range of clause structures, including relative clauses • Parenthesis • Cohesion within and between paragraphs • **Passive voice** • **Nominalisation** • **Control of formality**
Discussion Features	**Previous related learning from <u>persuasive</u> texts and:** • title in the form of a question • present tense, third person • adverbs for quantity e.g. *several, few, much* and frequency e.g. *seldom, frequently, rarely, consistently* • modal verbs and adverbs for possibility • formal, impersonal style • appropriate, subject-related vocabulary • reasons with evidence to support each point • generic *e.g. politicians, protesters, pollution* and abstract nouns *e.g. greed* • structural signposts *e.g. There are several reasons…, turning to…* • simple structure *e.g.* - *opening statement of the issues and preview of the main arguments* - *arguments for with supporting evidence* - *arguments against or alternative views, with supporting evidence* - *final summary and recommendation/conclusion*	**Previous features and:** • effective balance of both sides of the argument • appropriate level of formality maintained across the whole text • use of statistics and quotes to support points • causal connectives *e.g. consequently, due to this, as a result* • passive voice *e.g. It can be argued that… it is thought that…* • nominalisation *e.g. the **growth** of pollution, the **bravery** of campaigners* • sentences building from the generic *e.g. most campaigners believe…* to the specific *e.g. Greta Thunberg, a 15-year-old climate change activist, argues…* • more sophisticated structure e.g. - *opening statement of the issues and preview of the main arguments* - *first point, arguments for and against, both with supporting evidence* - *second point, arguments for and against, both with supporting evidence* - *next point etc.* - *final summary and recommendation/conclusion*

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Discussion Texts

Planning Frame	Things to think about when you're writing a discussion text
 	• What is the purpose and who is the audience for my writing? • What level of formality is this discussion and how will this impact the language I use? Do I need to make sure my language is impersonal and objective? • What question would make a good title? • What will I include in my opening statement? Why am I debating this issue? • How will I structure my arguments? (e.g. for and against in separate paragraphs; one point per paragraph with the argument for and against) • What is the best order to present my points? • What evidence and explanation supports each one? • What summary will I include in the conclusion? Will I include a statement of recommendation or conclusion? If so, what reasoned judgements will I include based on the evidence provided? • Do I need to use any diagrams or pictures? • Have I presented a balanced argument with both points of view equally represented? • Do I sound knowledgeable and reasonable? Have I used modal verbs and adverbs to help achieve this? *(e.g. may, could, maybe, possibly, often, usually, occasionally)*

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Instructional Texts

Instructional texts explain how to do something effectively and correctly. Following the instructions accurately should mean that the task has a successful outcome. Instructions can take various forms: they may be purely visual; a combination of words and images or just words, meaning that children can be introduced to instructions very early on through simple picture sequencing activities.

As with all non-fiction text types, the way that instructions are written vary considerably according to the purpose and audience. An interesting way of looking at this is to look at recipes for the same dish by different chefs and analyse their similarities and differences for example, how does the language, structure and tone alter? Why is this?

Instructions should provide detailed information about time, manner and place and use clear, factual descriptions. They often make direct address to the reader. This can be through the use of rhetorical questions, warnings, additional advice, suggestions, persuasion or encouragement.

Some writing opportunities, such as survival guides and instruction manuals, can provide greater scope and challenge for more able pupils.

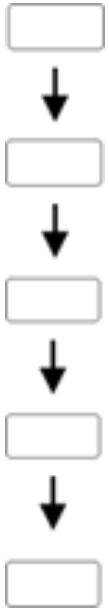
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Instructional Texts

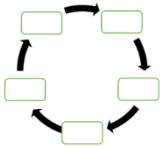
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Grammar	• **Simple past and present tense** • ***and* to join clauses**	• **Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions** • **Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail** • **Progressive verb forms**	• Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions • Expanded noun phrases to add interest and detail Simple and progressive verb forms • **Simple paragraphs** • **Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause** • **Perfect verb forms**	• Range of verb forms • Conjunctions, adverbs & prepositions for time, place and cause • Noun phrases • **Paragraphs around a theme** • **Fronted adverbials** • **expanded with prepositional phrases to add interest and detail** • **Range of sentence types**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • **Range of clause** • **structures, including relative clauses** • **Parenthesis** • **Cohesion within and between paragraphs** • **Appropriate level of formality**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • Range of clause structures, including relative clauses • Parenthesis • Cohesion within and between paragraphs • **Passive voice** • **Nominalisation** • **Control of formality**
Persuasive Features	• follow and give oral instructions • create picture instructions • appropriate title (e.g. How to…) • simple present tense • second person (you)	**Previous features and:** • chronological order • equipment or material list (if appropriate) • organisation using bullet points/ numbers • imperative verbs • final evaluative statement	**Previous features and:** • conjunctions and adverbs for time *e.g. firstly, next, then, after* • adverbs for manner *e.g. carefully, quickly* • diagrams or illustrations • subject-specific vocabulary • clear and concise	**Previous features and:** • direct appeal to the reader for example through **warnings**, *Don't add more glue…;* **additional advice**, *If it doesn't stick…;* **suggestions**, *You could improve it by*…; **persuasion**, *You're bound to love the result…;* **encouragement,** *Only one step left…* • rhetorical questions	**Previous features and:** • maintain the chosen level of formality throughout the text • write instructions at different levels of formality, using appropriate language and style	**Previous features and:** • include instructions within other text types

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Instructional Texts

Planning Frame	Things to think about when you're writing instructions
 	• What is the purpose and who is the audience for my writing? • What are the instructions for? • How will this impact the language I use? (*e.g. Cook for approximately 30 minutes. Pop it in the oven for half an hour or so.*) • Should I address the reader directly (*e.g. once you have gathered the materials…)* or not *(e.g. once the materials have been gathered…)* • If the instructions are not formal, how can I address the reader to gain their interest (*e.g. have you ever wished you could avoid the washing up?)* or keep them motivated? (*e.g. Now, you're nearly there…)* • Do I need to include a materials or equipment list? • What steps need to be taken and what order do these need to be done in? • Will I use numbers or bullet points? • Do I need to use any diagrams or pictures? • What do I need to say in my final statement? • Have I included adverbs to give direction to the reader? (*e.g. measure accurately, pour slowly*) • Are my steps in the right order? • Have I left any steps out? • Are the instructions clear and easy to follow? Could someone with no experience use these instructions successfully?

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Explanatory Texts

Explanatory texts explain **how something works** or **why something happens** as it does. They describe the **cause and effect** of processes and cycles. This is different to instructional texts, which describe how to do something. Subjects for explanatory texts often relate to:

- natural phenomena *e.g. How are mountains formed? Why does it get dark at night?*
- social phenomena *e.g. What impact is pollution having on ocean life?*
- physical phenomena *e.g. How is blood transported around the body? How does an engine work?*

Children often find explanations difficult to grasp. It's common for them to write a report (focusing on **what**) rather than an explanation (focusing on **why**/**how**), resulting in a loss of purpose. The language and structure of explanatory texts is complex, meaning it may be advisable to introduce this text type in upper Key Stage 2, by which time children's skills and maturity should help them to tackle the challenges of this type of writing more successfully and where there a possibly more opportunities across the curriculum to find purposeful reasons for writing.

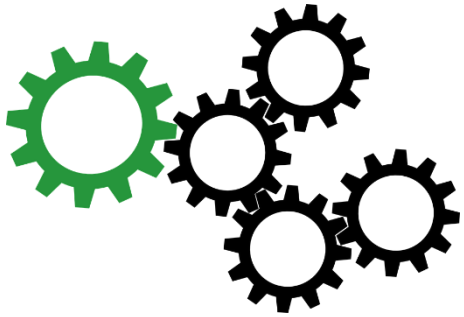
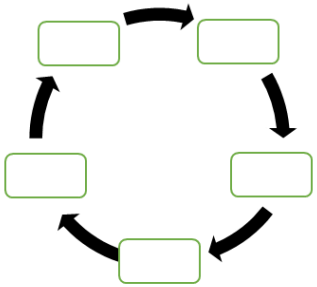
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Explanatory Texts

	Year 5	Year 6
Grammar	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • **Range of clause** • **structures, including relative clauses** • **Parenthesis** • **Cohesion within and between paragraphs** • **Appropriate level of formality**	• Range of verb forms • Fronted adverbials • Expanded noun phrases • Range of sentence types • Range of clause structures, including relative clauses • Parenthesis • Cohesion within and between paragraphs • **Passive voice** • **Nominalisation** • **Control of formality**
Discussion Features	**Previous related learning from other non-fiction writing and:** • title (using why or how) • generic opening statement to introduce the topic • series of logical steps/phases, in chronological order • conclusion • present tense, third person • adverbs and conjunctions for time • technical language • diagrams/images/flow charts (if appropriate)	**Previous features and:** • causal connectives *e.g. consequently, due to this, as a result, therefore* • passive voice to create a formal tone *e.g. Once the blood has been oxygenated…* • glossary for technical vocabulary (if needed) • direct appeal to the reader *e.g. through rhetorical questions, interesting detail, relating to their experiences*

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Explanatory Texts

Planning Frame	Things to think about when you're writing an explanation
 	• What is the purpose and who is the audience for my writing? • What is the explanation about? Am I clear about the steps in the process? • What will my title be? Can I use a ***why*** or ***how***? (*Why does condensation form on windows? How does the water cycle work?*) • How formal is this piece of writing? How will this impact the language I use? • Should I address the reader directly or not? (*e.g. Have you ever wondered…So next time it rains…)* • What do I need to say in my opening statement? • What is the order of the steps in the process or cycle? • Can I add any extra information or detail where appropriate? • Have I linked sentences using connectives for cause (*e.g. so, consequently, therefore, due to, as a result*) and time *(e.g. firstly, after, once, next*) where needed? • Do I need to include any features to support the reader (*e.g. images, diagrams, flow charts, text boxes, captions)* • Do I need to explain any technical information by adding a glossary? • What do I need to say in my final statement? Can I end by relating the subject to the reader? • Are my steps in the right order? • Have I left any steps out? • Is the process or cycle clear and easy to understand?

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The table below contains lists of useful words (conjunctions and adverbs) and phrases that can support non-fiction writing.

Time	Later, soon, next, then, before, when, as, now, just, since, until, once, during, whenever meanwhile, immediately, eventually, firstly, secondly, penultimately, finally, after that, at the same time, every time, in the meantime, as soon as possible, at last
Addition	And, also, in addition, as well as, more importantly, a further point is, not only… but also…
Summary	To conclude, to sum up, in conclusion, in summary, on the whole, in brief, overall, all in all, in short
Examples	For example, for instance, such as, as shown by, as proven by, as indicated by, look at, take, as can be seen, in fact
Comparing and contrasting	But, yet, similarly, equally, however, like, unlike, instead, compared with, whereas, while, in comparison, in contrast, as with, much the same as, in the same way, on the other hand, on the contrary, neither…nor…
Cause and effect	So, for, consequently, thus, accordingly, hence, therefore, as a result, thanks to, due to this, because of this, as a result, for this reason, this leads to
Viewpoint	Obviously, clearly, surely, evidently, naturally, undoubtedly, certainly, undeniably, of course, without doubt
New topic	Concerning, in regard to, in relation to, turning to, as for, moving on, as for
Concession	Although, despite, however, yet, nevertheless, still, while it is true that, in spite of, despite the fact that
Emphasis	Especially, notably, particularly, indeed, moreover, in fact, in particular, above all, more/most importantly

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