Guidance for teachers

Teaching strategies for writing in Years 3–9

Purpose

The teaching strategies and accompanying resources in this series enhance the classroom practices that support implementation of the Writing element of the Literacy general capability. This series provides teachers with practical teaching strategies and resources that support students to create texts for a range of purposes and audiences across learning areas.

The Writing element consists of five complementary sub-elements:

- Creating texts

- Grammar

- Punctuation

- Spelling

- Handwriting and keyboarding.

The focus of this series is the sub-element Creating texts.

> A student becomes increasingly proficient at creating texts for a range of purposes and audiences across learning areas. Students' writing moves from representing basic concepts and simple ideas to conveying abstract concepts and complex ideas, in line with the demands of the learning areas. Creating texts is a holistic sub-element, which is supported by the other sub-elements in the Writing element. (ACARA, 2010–present).

How to use

The slide presentation and resource templates in this series can be used various ways. For example, curriculum leaders may choose to:

- deliver the Years 3–6: Improving writing proficiency levels presentation to teachers

- deliver the Years 7–9: Improving writing proficiency levels presentation to a particular year level and/or learning area team, editing the activities to reflect the specific information from the learning area

- use the strategy and template resources to create a learning area unit that focuses on teaching writing.

Each strategy in this series consists of a step-by-step guide and additional resources such as ready-to-use templates and models (see Appendix: Strategy factsheet — annotated sample). These strategies can be used in professional development across year levels, departments and/or faculty groups.

Writing and the teaching and learning cycle

'Writing instruction, like reading, is a constellation of approaches, as students move from ideas (surface), to thinking (deep), to constructing knowledge (transfer)' (Fisher, Frey and Hattie, 2016).

There are various ways to approach the teaching of writing, including using a teaching and learning framework such as the example shown in Figure 1. This teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka and Jones, 2022), can be used to teach strategies to support students to create texts, apply appropriate processes, develop and use vocabulary, and comprehend (make meaning).

The cycle can be used to support teachers move in and out of these stages in response to students' needs as they teach writing.

Figure 1: Teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka and Jones, 2022)
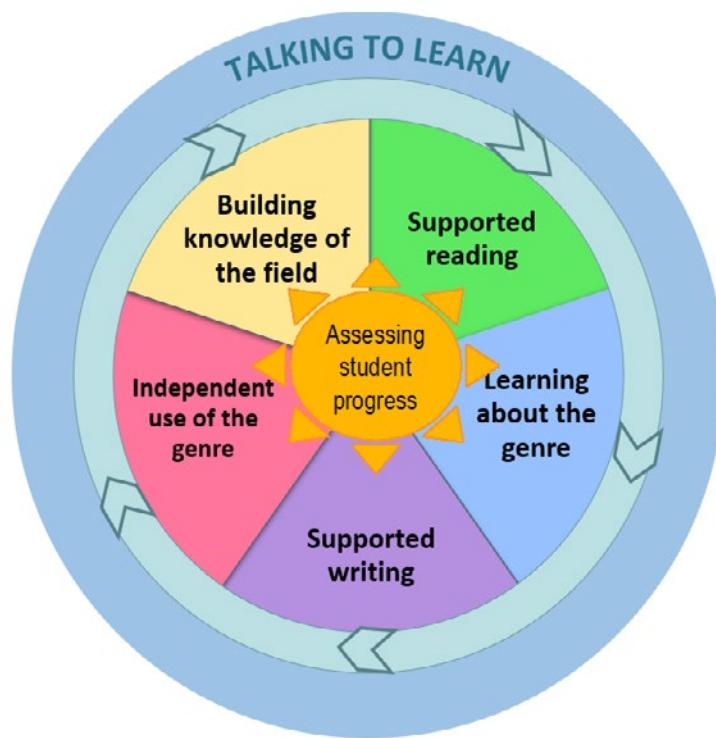
Teaching strategies in the teaching and learning cycle

The stages of the teaching and learning cycle identified by Derewianka and Jones (2022) are:

- **building knowledge of the field** — the initial stage uses a range of texts to build a shared understanding of learning area content and/or a topic which may include the topic-specific, technical vocabulary required and how ideas in the field are expressed through language. This stage leads into supported reading where the teacher introduces texts similar to the type of text students will create

- **supported reading** — this stage focuses on guiding students to comprehend, analyse and interpret selected model texts that contribute to building knowledge of the field and the text they will write. Supported reading acknowledges that students need to be taught how to read and engage with texts purposefully, particularly as the texts increase in complexity across the years

- **learning about the genre** — in this stage the focus shifts from field to genre and is also known as the modelling or deconstruction stage. To familiarise students with the characteristics of the genre, teachers can focus on the purpose for writing a particular text, followed by identifying the typical stages and possible phases of a text to achieve its purpose

- **supported writing** — this stage is also referred to as joint construction and involves collaboration between teachers and students to create a text. Supported writing activities may include modelled, shared, guided and collaborative writing

- **independent use of the genre** — at this stage students take full control of their writing and create their own texts. This stage involves students taking part in the independent writing process in which they draft, edit and publish their text using their learnings and explicit criteria provided.

Each stage builds on the previous stage of the teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka and Jones, 2022). Teachers can move flexibly in and out of the stages in response to student progress. Students may progress to the independent use of the genre stage at different rates, needing further opportunities for building knowledge of the field, learning about the genre, or modelling through independent research tasks. Not every writing task will necessarily need to draw on the whole teaching and learning cycle to be successful.

Talking to learn supports all stages of the teaching and learning cycle, referring to the purposeful use of spoken interaction (e.g. class discussions, small group dialogue) to build shared understanding in preparation for students' independent writing.

Table 1: Resources and templates for strengthening writing

Talking to learn		
Building knowledge of the field and Supported reading	**Learning about the genre**	**Supporting writing and Independent use of the genre**
- Vocabulary cards - Frayer model - QCAA reading and viewing resource templates	*Binna Burra 25* text sample - Re-ordering template - Sentence flip cards	- Planning template - Using a checklist

Selecting the strategies

Teachers select writing strategies to meet the needs of students in their contexts — including phases of learning — with the goal of supporting students to create texts, particularly through the stages of the teaching and learning cycle.

Using the strategies across learning areas

In English, students are expected to 'create texts with clarity, authority and novelty [and] they do this by selecting key aspects of a topic as well as language and multimodal features' (ACARA, 2010–present). The strategies in this series can be adapted for use across several learning areas where there is a focus on students creating texts, e.g. in Science and HASS, students can build knowledge of the field through the use of vocabulary cards to explore technical vocabulary related to a topic or concept.

References

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority**.** (n.d.). *Literacy.* Australian Curriculum. https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy?element=2&sub-element=LWCrT

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2016). Visible learning for literacy: Implementing the practices that work best to accelerate student learning. Corwin Press.

Derewianka, B., & Jones, P. (2022). *Teaching Language in Context.* (3rd ed.) Oxford University Press.

Further reading

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority**.** (2022). *Teaching writing in Prep–Year 10 and across learning areas**.** https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/aciq/general-resources/ac_gc_lit_writing_resource_list.pdf

Derewianka, B. (2020) *Exploring How Texts Work*. (2nd edn). Primary English Teaching Association Australia.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2024) *Literacy Version 9.0: About the general capability.* https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/content/dam/en/curriculum/ac-version-9/downloads/general-capabilities/general-capabilities-literacy-about-the-general-capability-v9.docx

Appendix: Strategy factsheet — annotated sample

Frayer chart/ model
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Teaching strategies for writing across the learning areas

Best for: Building knowledge of the field

Overview

Description	The Frayer chart/ model is a graphic organiser that can be used to strengthen students' understanding of vocabulary or concepts.
	The Frayer chart/ model helps students engage with selected topic-specific vocabulary or ideas in deliberate and purposeful ways. In the first phase (Definition), students define the selected word or concept, to develop a shared understanding. Then they determine and record the characteristics (Characteristics) of the word or concept. In the final phase (Examples and Non-examples), students consider examples and non-examples of the word or concept to deepen their understanding.
Learning focus (based on the Literacy general capability — Writing progression: Creating texts)	**Vocabulary** • selects more specific adjectives (P6) • uses learning area topic vocabulary (P6) • uses a range of learning area topic words (P7) • uses synonyms to replace common and generic words and avoid repetition across a text (P7) • uses a range of learnt topic words and words from other authors (P8)
Teacher preparation	Choose, or negotiate with students, a relevant word or concept to practise the strategy as a class. The word or concept will be related to the current curriculum focus. This strategy is best used after teachers have modelled the strategy.

Suggested implementation

1. Make a Frayer chart/ model (see Table 1) and present the chosen vocabulary list or list of concepts to be defined. Clarify the purpose of the activity to be undertaken, e.g. to activate background knowledge, to acquire subject-specific vocabulary, to understand a concept or idea, to build knowledge of the field.

2. Ask students to work in pairs to examine a word or concept from the teacher-provided list. Write the selected word or concept in the centre circle.

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Annotations:

Name of strategy

Best for: a reference to the stage of the teaching and learning cycle in which the strategy is most likely to be used.

Description of strategy

Learning focus The learning focus is based on the Creating texts element of the Literacy general capability and is written in the form of possible learning goals. In most cases, the strategy can be adapted to suit students at different levels of literacy development.

P6 progression levels from the Literacy general capability for each indicator

Teacher preparation suggested preparation for implementing the strategy

Suggested implementation Step-by-step guidance is provided for implementing the strategy. These are written from the perspective of teacher actions. Where relevant, resources and examples are provided.

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3. Discuss the word or concept in pairs. Write a definition for the word or concept. This may be a dictionary definition or written in students' own words.

4. Write or draw the characteristics of the word or concept.

5. Write examples and non-examples of the word or concept.

6. Evaluate if the information they have learnt is sufficient for their purpose.

7. Consider the next step, e.g. share the completed Frayer model/ chart with the class, build a collaborative word wall, use the word in context.

Table 1: Frayer chart/model

Definition	Characteristics
Examples	Non-examples

Variations

A Ask students to work individually to record their own answers for a shared word or concept from a teacher-provided list. Ask them to swap their Frayer model/ chart with another student and discuss similarities and differences.

B Adapt the Frayer model/ chart as a research template. Add or change headings to suit purpose of activity e.g. evaluating a potential solution to an identified problem (positives and negatives).

C Adapt the Frayer model/ chart as a planning template for writing. Add or change headings to suit purpose of activity e.g. stages of a text.

D Use the Frayer model/ chart to examine characters in a story. Add or change headings to suit purpose of activity e.g. characteristics to facts.

Annotations:

Icons A blue T or M icon indicates that a downloadable template or model (completed sample) is available.

Variations Where relevant, variations (including extension work) will be suggested. However, teachers are encouraged to create further adaptations to suit their own context and purposes.

Frayer chart/ model
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