

Year 5 & Year 6

Plan their writing by: "in writing narratives, considering how authors have developed characters and settings in what pupils have read, listened to or seen performed."

You don't necessarily need to plan some writing off the back of this activity. Analysing other people's work is an incredibly useful skill to develop! Ask your child to think of their favourite character, this could be something from a book, tv show, film, comic etc. Then make a character profile for them. You can do this in lots of ways: I like to get/draw a picture of the character and write words that describe them all around the picture – not concentrating so much on the physical, but more on their personality. Then, think more closely about one of the words and ask, "why do I think that about this character?" or "how do I know that about them?" and use examples you know from your reading as evidence to support your answers.

Example: Harry Potter is a very *impulsive* character! I know this because he often does things without thinking them through, like when he goes back to his old house even though he knows it might be dangerous.

Evaluate and edit by: "ensuring the consistent and correct use of tense throughout a piece of writing."

Using the correct tense is really one of those practised skills. And it's all in the ear! This highlights the importance of reading work aloud because the wrong tense is easier to hear than it is to see.

I like to practise tenses by using nonsense sentences:

"I will go to the shop yesterday."

"I ran 5 miles next week."

"Tomorrow, I went to see a film."

None of these sentences are correct, but all have multiple ways of fixing them. The first one can either be "I will go to the shop tomorrow." Or "I went to the shop yesterday." And this depends on what the writer actually means. But they are both in *different tenses*. The first is future and the second is past.

Nonsense sentences are a funny way into a difficult concept. Remember to read aloud! And get children to come up with their own nonsense after you have done some examples!

Draft and write by: "in narratives, describing settings, characters and atmosphere and integrating dialogue to convey character and advance the action."

Your child will probably already be familiar with describing settings and characters. *Atmosphere* is a trickier one. I usually start with asking them what they think 'atmosphere' means. This always prompts an interesting discussion. Where does the atmosphere of a piece of writing come from? How do you develop it?

In short, *atmosphere* is the emotion, the feeling of a piece of writing. And where does it come from? Everywhere. The character and their actions. The dialogue. The setting. The weather. The describing words the author chooses.

The best way to start thinking about atmosphere is to read something: this can be anything because everything technically has an atmosphere, but I would go with something tense or a bit scary. This is the genre we most associate with being "atmospheric". Now try and find all the things that make it "scary" or "tense". Could it be a well-placed short sentence? Or a noise made by something unseen? Or is it set during a storm? Or in somewhere haunted?

Once these things have been identified, they can start having a go themselves, taking the general idea and coming up with their own examples.

This week's activities are all about 'Writing - composition'. These activities link directly with the curriculum statements.

Remember, you don't need to be a teacher; learn along with your children or let them teach you! They really like that.

Plan their writing by: "identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own."

This can be done with a simple discussion on audiences. What do we mean by the *audience*? Talk about this with your child: we might immediately think about people who *watch* a show/play/film, but books can have a *reading* audience. Who reads recipe books? Who reads comic books? Who reads books about ancient history? And then, *why*? Why read recipe books?

The answer to these questions is sometimes really obvious! But identifying an audience is very important when writing. The next time your child writes something, ask them who they think would most enjoy reading this and why.

Evaluate and edit by: "assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing."

Being reflective is one of the main ways to grow as a writer.

I'd encourage doing this with everything your child creates, not just writing. This is not just about deciding how to make something better. It is about celebrating what they have done well.

I'd suggest only ever concentrating on one improvement at a time. Any more than that and it can be daunting and become disheartening. There should be no limit for the things to praise though!

Once identified, it's important to try it again. Finding it is only half the journey.

