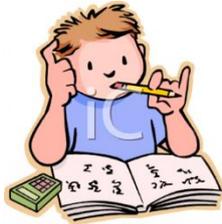


Things to know about Writing.

Writing is more than putting words on paper. Your child needs to think about what to write; **say** what they want to write, write it down and re-read their writing. It is a balancing act between having wonderful ideas (creativity), organising their ideas and the ability to put these exciting ideas onto paper (handwriting and spelling).



One of the first means of communication for your child is through drawing. Do encourage your child to draw and to discuss his/her drawings. Ask questions: What is the boy doing? Does the house look like ours? Can you tell a story about this picture?



As your child becomes a better writer they will need to:

1. Write varied sentences, including complex sentences.
2. Write sentences which are grammatically correct and punctuated.
3. Organise, structure and sequence their writing.
4. Use paragraphs.
5. Produce writing which is imaginative, interesting and thoughtful.
6. Produce writing which suits the task, the purpose and the audience.
7. Use and select exciting and appropriate vocabulary
8. Use correct spelling
9. Develop good handwriting and present their work well.

In school we teach and encourage accurate spelling and correctly formed handwriting. We aim for all children to produce neat, legible and continuous cursive script.

<http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/index.html>

Speak to your teacher to find out exactly which script we use at school.



What does writing need?



- **Reading.** Reading can stimulate your child's imagination, increase their vocabulary and encourage them to write. Good writers are 'magpies'! If your child reads good books, (s)he will be a better writer. Ask children to find a "golden line" in their reading—a sentence that especially attracts them and makes them aware of what clever or colourful writing looks like. Write interesting words on post-its!
- **Clear thinking.** Sometimes your child needs to have his/her memory refreshed about a past event in order to write about it.
- **Sufficient time.** Children may have 'stories in their heads' but need time to think them through and write them down.
- **A Meaningful Task.** A child needs meaningful writing activities. Suggestions for such activities are in the section, "**Things to do.**"
- **Interest.** All the time in the world won't help if there is nothing to write, nothing to say. Some of the reasons for writing include: sending messages, keeping records, expressing feelings, or relaying information.
- **Practice.** And more practice.
- **Revision.** Children need experience in revising their work – for example, seeing what they can do to make it clearer, more descriptive, more concise...

Helpful pointers for writing at home

In helping your child to learn to write well at home, remember that your goal is to make writing easier and more enjoyable.

Provide a place: It is important for a child to have a good place to write - a desk or table with a smooth, flat surface and good lighting.

Have the materials: Provide plenty of paper - lined and unlined - and things to write with, including pencils, pens, and crayons.

Allow time: Help your child spend time thinking about a writing project or exercise. Good writers do a great deal of thinking!

Respond: Do respond to the ideas your child expresses verbally or in writing. Make it clear that you are interested in the true function of writing which is to convey ideas. This means focusing on "what" the child has written (their ideas), not "how" it was written (spelling and handwriting). Ignore minor errors, particularly at the stage when your child is just getting ideas together. In school, we do not correct every spelling error as this is not the main focus of the writing task.

Praise: Take a positive approach and say something good about your child's writing.

Write together: Encourage your child to help you with letters, even routine ones, such as ordering from an advert! It is important that your child sees that writing is important and meaningful to adults.

Fun Things to do at Home with your Children

- Exchange Post-it notes with your children. Put the notes on pillowcases or lunch boxes or any surprise location!
- Help your child assemble photo albums of family events and write captions.
- Ask children to put their wishes into writing such as what they would like to be when they grow up.
- Help your child create a family newsletter or website to share with family members near and far.
- Suggest that your children write postcards to themselves when they are away from home. When they receive their own postcards in the post, they will have a souvenir of their trip.
- Make writing practical and useful by having children write grocery and task lists, reminders and phone messages, instructions for caring for pets, or directions for getting to the park.
- Encourage your child to keep a diary.
- Suggest note-taking on trips or outings.
- Use games to help increase your child's vocabulary. Try crossword puzzles, word games, word searches, Scrabble, Boggle, Hangman, Countdown, anagrams...
- Encourage your child to write to relatives and friends (or maybe a pen pal).
- Draw a cartoon strip/ story board and make into a script for a play or film.
- Make posters/advertisements
- Write invitations to friends and relatives.
- Write to their favourite author, football player etc.
- Research your favourite author and watch them describing how they write online.
<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews>
- Visit the Oxford Story Museum <http://www.storymuseum.org.uk/>
- Visit Roald Dahl museum and Story Centre <http://www.roalddahl.com/museum>
- Go to local bookshop events <http://www.mostly-books.co.uk/>
<http://www.abingdon.gov.uk/business/local-business-directory/bookstore>
- Join in with events at your local library. www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/event-categories/children
- Make books together. (Children particularly love miniature books)
- Type up a story on the computer.

