Year 6 literacy revision Unit 1 – Reading and writing narrative

Reading and writing narrative (and plays) (3 weeks)

This unit is specifically designed to revisit and revise the reading and writing of fiction and play texts, and is probably best placed in the late spring or early summer of Year 6, prior to the National Curriculum tests.

Phase 1

Children practise reading and answering questions about fiction and play texts.

Phase 2

Children revisit and revise the features of a good short story and playscript. They practise writing a short story or play, drawing on language and organisational features relevant to the genre and audience.

Phase 3

Children revise, explore and extend their previous knowledge of various sentence structures (including complex sentences). They practise writing a different story or play, adding a focus on varied sentences to that of using appropriate genre features.

Phase 4

Children revise, explore and extend their ability to construct and use paragraphs appropriately in narrative. They again practise writing a different story, now adding a focus on paragraph use to those on varying sentences and employing appropriate text features.

Note: In order to ensure children’s enthusiasm and engagement throughout this revision unit, it is essential to ensure that the content of the reading material and subject matter for the writing activities is lively and engaging (it can be drawn from any other curriculum area or areas or integrated into any theme of your choosing) and that the activities themselves are presented as games and explorations, rather than tedious exercises.

Objectives

To ensure effective planning of literacy teachers need to ensure they plan for all elements of literacy effectively across the year ensuring that assessment for learning is used to plan and amend teaching. It is essential that core skills such as phonic strategies, spelling, and handwriting are incorporated into these exemplar units to ensure effective learning.
Most children learn to:

(The following list comprises only the strands, numbered 1 through 12, that are relevant to this particular unit. Where there are relevant Steps in Learning for an objective, a link has been included.)

1. Speaking
   • Use the techniques of dialogic talk to explore ideas, topics or issues

3. Group discussion and interaction
   • Understand and use a variety of ways to criticise constructively and respond to criticism

6. Word structure and spelling
   • Use a range of appropriate strategies to edit, proofread and correct spelling in their own work, on paper and on screen

7. Understanding and interpreting texts
   • Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view
   • Understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact

8. Engaging with and responding to texts
   • Compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language

9. Creating and shaping texts
   • Use different narrative techniques to engage and entertain the reader
   • Select words and language drawing on their knowledge of literary features and formal and informal writing

10. Text structure and organisation
    • Use varied structures to shape and organise texts coherently
    • Use paragraphs to achieve pace and emphasis

11. Sentence structure and punctuation
    • Express subtle distinctions of meaning, including hypothesis, speculation and supposition, by constructing sentences in varied ways
    • Use punctuation to clarify meaning in complex sentences

12. Presentation
    • Use different styles of handwriting for different purposes with a range of media, developing a consistent and personal legible style
Prior learning

Check that children can already:

- Recall the language and organisational features of the main non-fiction text-types (recount, report, instructions, explanation, persuasion, discussion) and employ these in their writing, when appropriate.
- Recall and employ the main features of other significant writing forms such as letters, dialogue, journalistic writing, biography and autobiography.
- Write a variety of sentences (including compound sentences), punctuate them correctly and use them appropriately in their writing.
- Where appropriate, organise their writing into meaningful and cohesive paragraphs.

Note: While this unit will revisit and revise all these points, it does not and cannot provide the opportunity to teach any of them from scratch. It is therefore absolutely essential that the unit builds on learning that has been well paced and cumulative throughout the primary phase.

Teaching sequence phase 1

Note: Children working significantly above or below age-related expectations will need differentiated support, which may include tracking forward or back in terms of learning objectives. EAL learners should be expected to work within the overall expectations for their year group. For further advice see the progression strands and hyperlinks to useful sources of practical support.

Reading narrative and playscript texts (6 days)

Teaching content:

- Model reading and analysis of a narrative text extract with highlighting, note-making, etc. Follow this up with appropriate individual or group reading activity.
- Repeat with a suitable playscript example as the reading text.
- Use the same or different but similar texts to demonstrate, and then explore in group work, different types and levels of questions found in the National Curriculum tests and how best to answer them. Materials and approaches for this and the next activities could be drawn from Year 6 planning exemplification: Revision unit.
- Children make up their own different levels of question, answer each other's questions, discuss, evaluate, analyse and improve the answers, etc.
- Children evaluate and mark various real (anonymous) or simulated answers to previous text questions and discuss how they could be improved.
- At this point it may be appropriate for children to attempt, under test conditions, an example drawn from previous QCA test materials, subsequently sharing, analysing and discussing children's answers with a view to self-improvement.

Learning outcome:

- Children recall and understand how to go about reading a narrative or playscript text, are aware of a range of questions and how to answer them and can improve their own answers.

Teaching sequence phase 2
Playing with genres (4 days)

Teaching content:

- Assemble a collection of several good examples of short narratives (some possibly written by children) covering a range of genres.
- Working first as a class and then in groups, children read, discuss and analyse them to identify common key elements and features of an effective story. List and note these, possibly creating a wall display for reference. Bear in mind carefully the QCA assessment focuses in doing this.
- Select the audience and stimulus for a narrative text in a particular genre and demonstrate the planning and writing process, drawing on the work in phase 1 and showing how to employ features of effective story writing to fulfil the writing task.
- For a different stimulus and audience, children plan and write a narrative text in a different genre (possibly under test conditions or drawing on a task from previous QCA tests) with a focus on including the elements of an effective story.
- Repeat this full sequence of activity in terms of writing a playscript text.
- Share, analyse and discuss some of the outcomes. Evaluate them, particularly against the features of effective stories and plays discussed and identified earlier. Consider how to improve.

Learning outcomes:

- Children understand what are the key elements and features of an effective short narrative.
- Children understand what are the key elements and features of an effective short playscript.
- Children can write a narrative and playscript effectively for a particular audience, drawing on and combining different language and organisational features as appropriate.

Teaching sequence phase 3

Playing with sentences (3 days)

Teaching content:

- In a fiction context (possibly drawing on material and subject matter from other curriculum areas, or books read at another time), play a number of sentence games designed to both revise and extend children's ability to construct and punctuate a wide variety of different types of sentence (including complex ones). Grammar for Writing (Key Stage 2) (Ref: 0107/2000) contains numerous examples of these. Games could include:
  - sentence combining activities
  - making 'silly sentences' with particular given features, for example using conditionals, including a prepositional phrase
  - playing with active and passive verbs
  - experimenting by writing a given passage with only long sentences; rewriting with only very short sentences; rewriting again with alternate long and short sentences then comparing and discussing the relative effect or impact of each.
- At all stages discuss what appropriate use of these sentences might be. Ensure that children can use punctuation to clarify the sentence structure and meaning.
- Select one or more examples of effective narrative writing. In shared reading discuss and analyse the writer's range and choice of sentences and the effect this creates on the reader. Extend this into group activity.
- Carefully establishing genre and audience, model the writing of a section of narrative (possibly drawing on earlier examples), demonstrating particularly how to choose and vary sentence structure for maximum interest and impact.
- As at the end of the previous phase, but for another different genre and audience, children plan and write a short narrative (possibly under test conditions or drawing on a task from previous QCA tests). This time the focus should be on using interesting, appropriate and varied sentence structures.
• Share, analyse and discuss some of the outcomes. Evaluate them, particularly against agreed criteria for using varied sentences, but then add the previous consideration of how well key elements and features of an effective story have been used and combined to fulfil the writing task. Consider how to improve.

Learning outcome:

Children can construct a wide variety of sentences, punctuate them correctly and use them effectively in writing narrative for a particular audience.

Teaching sequence phase 4

Playing with paragraphs (3 days)

Teaching content:

• Again in an appropriate fiction context (possibly drawing material and subject matter from other curriculum areas, or from books read on other occasions) play a number of paragraphing games designed to both revise and extend children’s ability to organise writing into meaningful and cohesive paragraphs. These could include:
  - cutting a narrative text into paragraphs and then jumbling them and asking children to rearrange them in the right or best order, explaining why
  - grouping cards with different information sentences from a story into paragraphs, and adding connectives to achieve cohesion both within and between paragraphs, (perhaps using ‘silly sentences’ to add fun)
  - presenting the paragraphs of a text in random order and asking children to add connectives to try to connect them to make sense (orally or in writing).
• Where necessary, model the above activities first.
• At all stages, discuss what appropriate and effective paragraphs should look like. Ensure that children can use connectives to clarify the internal and external cohesion of paragraphs.
• Select one or more examples of effective narrative writing. In shared reading discuss and analyse the writer’s use of paragraphing and the effect this creates on the reader. Extend this into group activity.
• Carefully establishing an appropriate genre and audience, model the planning and writing of a narrative text (possibly drawing on earlier examples), demonstrating particularly how to construct and link paragraphs for maximum interest and impact.
• As at the end of the previous phase, but for another different genre and audience, children plan and write a short narrative (possibly under test conditions or drawing on a task from previous QCA tests). This time the focus should be on organising the writing into meaningful and cohesive paragraphs, and adding headings if appropriate.
• Share, analyse and discuss some of the outcomes. Evaluate them, particularly against agreed criteria for using paragraphs in narrative, but then add the previous consideration of using effective story elements and features and varying sentences so that the unit is cumulative. Consider how to improve.

Learning outcome:

• Children can construct meaningful and cohesive paragraphs, and use them effectively in writing narrative and playscripts for a particular audience.

Note: Materials and approaches for this unit could possibly be drawn from Year 6 planning exemplification: Revision unit
Note: Children working significantly above or below age-related expectations will need differentiated support, which may include tracking forward or back in terms of learning objectives. EAL learners should be expected to work within the overall expectations for their year group. For further advice see the progression strands and hyperlinks to useful sources of practical support.

Phase 1: Reading narrative and playscript texts (6 days)

Teaching content:

- Model reading and analysis of a narrative text extract with highlighting, note-making, etc. Follow this up with appropriate individual or group reading activity.
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- Use the same or different but similar texts to demonstrate, and then explore in group work, different types and levels of questions found in the National Curriculum tests and how best to answer them. Materials and approaches for this and the next activities could be drawn from Year 6 planning exemplification: Revision unit.
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- At this point it may be appropriate for children to attempt, under test conditions, an example drawn from previous QCA test materials, subsequently sharing, analysing and discussing children’s answers with a view to self-improvement.

Learning outcome:

- Children recall and understand how to go about reading a narrative or playscript text, are aware of a range of questions and how to answer them and can improve their own answers.

Phase 2: Playing with genres (4 days)

Teaching content:

- Assemble a collection of several good examples of short narratives (some possibly written by children) covering a range of genres.
- Working first as a class and then in groups, children read, discuss and analyse them to identify common key elements and features of an effective story. List and note these, possibly creating a wall display for reference. Bear in mind carefully the QCA assessment focuses in doing this.
- Select the audience and stimulus for a narrative text in a particular genre and demonstrate the planning and writing process, drawing on the work in phase 1 and showing how to employ features of effective story writing to fulfil the writing task.
- For a different stimulus and audience, children plan and write a narrative text in a different genre (possibly under test conditions or drawing on a task from previous QCA tests) with a focus on including the elements of an effective story.
- Repeat this full sequence of activity in terms of writing a playscript text.
- Share, analyse and discuss some of the outcomes. Evaluate them, particularly against the features of effective stories and plays discussed and identified earlier. Consider how to improve.

Learning outcomes:

- Children understand what are the key elements and features of an effective short narrative.
- Children understand what are the key elements and features of an effective short playscript.
- Children can write a narrative and playscript effectively for a particular audience, drawing on and combining different language and organisational features as appropriate.
Phase 3: Playing with sentences (3 days)

Teaching content:

- In a fiction context (possibly drawing on material and subject matter from other curriculum areas, or books read at another time), play a number of sentence games designed to both revise and extend children's ability to construct and punctuate a wide variety of different types of sentence (including complex ones). Grammar for Writing (Key Stage 2) (Ref: 0107/2000), contains numerous examples of these. Games could include:
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- At all stages discuss what appropriate use of these sentences might be. Ensure that children can use punctuation to clarify the sentence structure and meaning.
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Learning outcome:

Children can construct a wide variety of sentences, punctuate them correctly and use them effectively in writing narrative for a particular audience.

Phase 4: Playing with paragraphs (3 days)

Teaching content:

- Again in an appropriate fiction context (possibly drawing material and subject matter from other curriculum areas, or from books read on other occasions) play a number of paragraphing games designed to both revise and extend children's ability to organise writing into meaningful and cohesive paragraphs. These could include:
  - cutting a narrative text into paragraphs and then jumbling them and asking children to rearrange them in the right or best order, explaining why
  - grouping cards with different information sentences from a story into paragraphs, and adding connectives to achieve cohesion both within and between paragraphs, (perhaps using ‘silly sentences’ to add fun)
  - presenting the paragraphs of a text in random order and asking children to add connectives to try to connect them to make sense (orally or in writing).
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As at the end of the previous phase, but for another different genre and audience, children plan and write a short narrative (possibly under test conditions or drawing on a task from previous QCA tests). This time the focus should be on organising the writing into meaningful and cohesive paragraphs, and adding headings if appropriate.

Share, analyse and discuss some of the outcomes. Evaluate them, particularly against agreed criteria for using paragraphs in narrative, but then add the previous consideration of using effective story elements and features and varying sentences so that the unit is cumulative. Consider how to improve.

**Learning outcome:**

- Children can construct meaningful and cohesive paragraphs, and use them effectively in writing narrative and playscripts for a particular audience.

**Assessment**

For further information, see the booklet Assessment for learning (Ref: 0521-2004) from Learning and teaching in the primary years: Professional development resources (Ref: 0518-2004G).

**Phase 1**

In respect of a fiction or playscript text, explain what different types of question might be asked and what sort of answer is required for each (teacher observation, self-assessment).

**Phase 3**

Write and punctuate correctly several differently structured sentences, including some complex ones (teacher observation, self-assessment).

**Phase 4**

Organise an appropriate fiction text into several meaningful and cohesive paragraphs (teacher observation, self-assessment).

**Phases 2, 3 and 4**

Write an effective fiction or playscript text, making appropriate language, style and structural choices for a particular audience (marking and feedback against agreed success criteria).

**Key aspects of learning**

For further information, see the booklet Progression in key aspects of learning (Ref: 0524-2004) from Learning and teaching in the primary years: Professional development resources (Ref: 0518-2004G).

**Enquiry**

Children will seek out the answers to their own and others' questions in their reading.
Information processing

Children will explore and tease out information communicated through fiction and playscript texts. They will identify relevant information and use this to answer questions at literal, deductive and inferential levels.

Evaluation

Children will share their own answers and writing outcomes, as well as those of others. They will discuss success criteria, give feedback to others and judge the effectiveness of their own work.

Reasoning

To fill the requirements of some questions, children will construct reasoned arguments based on available information and evidence.

Self-awareness

Children will discuss and reflect on their personal responses to the texts.

Empathy

In discussing and writing about the books or stories, children will need to imagine themselves in another person’s position. They will explore techniques that facilitate this process.

Communication

Children will develop their ability to discuss effective communication in respect of both the form and the content of the fiction and playscript texts they are reading and writing. They will sometimes work collaboratively in pairs and groups. They will communicate outcomes orally and in writing.