

# *Non-fiction writing*

## SCAFFOLDS

### CONTENTS

<b>UNIT 1</b>	Autobiographies	<b>6</b>
<b>UNIT 2</b>	Biographies	<b>20</b>
<b>UNIT 3</b>	Informal letters	<b>35</b>
<b>UNIT 4</b>	Formal letters	<b>48</b>
<b>UNIT 5</b>	Instructions	<b>62</b>
<b>UNIT 6</b>	Leaflets and advertisements	<b>76</b>
<b>UNIT 7</b>	Recounts and chronological reports	<b>90</b>
<b>UNIT 8</b>	Non-chronological texts – reports and explanations	<b>104</b>
<b>UNIT 9</b>	Journalistic writing	<b>118</b>
<b>UNIT 10</b>	Discursive texts	<b>130</b>

# Non-fiction writing scaffolds for Year 6

## INTRODUCTION

**Non-fiction Writing Scaffolds Year 6** is intended for use in schools to help teach children how to write effectively in a variety of non-fiction genres. It improves children's ability to organise their writing so that it has purpose by familiarising them with a system of planning which they can apply to any title. As they work through the units, the children assemble a portfolio of non-fiction texts containing genre-specific vocabulary and writing features. The chosen text types coincide with those in the Literacy Framework's text-level objectives.

Many non-fiction texts are essentially cross-curricular. Thus the ability to write specifically and purposefully about a subject will benefit other areas of study.

Each unit includes information and activities on at least one sentence-level objective. Therefore the book also enhances the children's knowledge of grammar, punctuation and style.

### THE PROGRAMME CONTAINS:

#### a teachers' book comprising:

- notes for teachers on the genres
- a bibliography for each genre
- copies of exemplar texts together with teaching notes
- guidance on how to develop grammar and punctuation skills in children's writing
- guidance on how to write in the particular genre and on specific features of each non-fiction text.

#### a resource book of photocopiable material comprising:

- illustrated versions of the exemplar texts especially produced for children
- notes for the children on understanding the grammar and punctuation (optional reference material)
- photocopiable activity sheets to reinforce the grammar and punctuation (optional)
- notes and tips for the children on writing non-fiction texts (optional reference material)
- differentiated scaffolds which give the children choices and guide them through the course of the text they are about to write
- vocabulary banks for them to use and add to.

### HOW TO USE THE PROGRAMME

- 1 After examining texts in the target genre, read and discuss the exemplar text with the children, using the notes in the margin to highlight the examples of the unit's teaching point and writing feature. The children should follow the text using their own illustrated version from the Resource book.
- 2 Next, read through and explain the 'Understanding the grammar and punctuation' section of the unit. The children can do the activities together, either orally or using whiteboards, or independently on paper.
- 3 Then explain the 'Helpful hints' and 'Writing features' sections of the unit to the children.
- 4 Read through the scaffolds with the children. Then give them the differentiated word banks and ask them to record their own vocabulary suggestions in the space provided.
- 5 Give the children time to plan, write and edit their non-fiction text. Each child can then store the best copies in a writing folder.

### NOTES

When using the scaffolds, give the children strict time limits to plan and write each of the sections. This will give them practice in writing timed non-fiction texts as preparation for the Key Stage 2 writing test.

However, the system is entirely flexible. The activities in each unit, from reading the exemplar to composing their own text using the scaffolds, can be used in shared or guided time, with the children working collaboratively or individually.

The sequential order of activities for each unit coincides exactly with the sequence for the teaching of writing outlined in Grammar for Writing (DfEE 0107/200). First the model can be discussed and its grammatical and thematic features interrogated during shared reading. Next the grammar and punctuation activities can be undertaken to reinforce the children's understanding of the relevant sentence-level objectives. The helpful hints section, scaffolds, and vocabulary banks support the teacher and children in shared writing sessions and in subsequent guided and independent writing.

The method works well with children of all abilities and with bilingual pupils, as it offers the security of a detailed framework and a bank of appropriate vocabulary together with the challenge of a grammar and writing features component for each unit.

The units fulfil the text-level and sentence-level requirements of the NLS Framework for Year 6 and revise components from Year 5, many of which feature in the Key Stage 2 tests. The following units may be used specifically in literacy lessons or they may be linked with work in other curriculum areas and used accordingly.

### UNIT 1

**Genre:** autobiographies (T1, T12, T13)

**Grammar and punctuation:** imagery – similes, metaphors, personification, clichés, sensory images; parentheses; dashes. (T1, S6)

**Writing features:** the narrator as the subject; influences on the writer; descriptive writing; bias.

### UNIT 2

**Genre:** biography (T1, T11, T14)

**Grammar and punctuation:** taking notes (T3, T17, T18); first and third person; capital letters.

**Writing features:** writing chronologically – the opening, childhood to adulthood, young adulthood/maturity.

### UNIT 3

**Genre:** informal letters

**Grammar and punctuation:** using slang (T3, S2, T2, T20); apostrophes for omission and for possession.

**Writing features:** layout, structure and audience.

### UNIT 4

**Genre:** formal letters – to complain, to inform, to persuade (T2, T20)

**Grammar and punctuation:** formal language (T2, S2); simple, compound and complex sentences; using commas (T2, S3).

**Writing features:** format, style and tone.

### UNIT 5

**Genre:** instructions (T3, S1)

**Grammar and punctuation:** verbs and verb tenses (T3, T16); the use of the imperative (T2, S2); layout punctuation.

**Writing features:** organisation methods – numbered points and bullets, subheadings with paragraphs, continuous writing.

### UNIT 6

**Genre:** leaflets and advertisements (T1, T12, T3, S1)

**Grammar and punctuation:** alliteration; puns; punctuating statements, questions, commands and exclamations.

**Writing features:** persuasive devices (T3, S1); language, fact and opinion (T1, T11); illustrations.

### UNIT 7

**Genre:** recounts and chronological reports (T3, S1)

**Grammar and punctuation:** adjectives; adverbs; using capital letters for emphasis; asterisks.

**Writing features:** style and structure – personal and impersonal writing (T2, S2, T3, T20); orientation and reorientation; sentence starters.

### UNIT 8

**Genre:** non-chronological texts – reports and explanations (T1, T12, T17, T3, S1, T15, T20)

**Grammar and punctuation:** paragraphs and linking paragraphs (T3, T21); the use of the passive voice; colons and semicolons (T2, S1, S6).

**Writing features:** gathering information and acknowledging sources including using quotes and writing a bibliography.

### UNIT 9

**Genre:** journalistic writing (T1, T15, T16, T18)

**Grammar and punctuation:** clauses; phrases (T2, S3); prepositions; quotation marks.

**Writing features:** balance and bias; headlines (T3, S2); the inverted pyramid.

### UNIT 10

**Genre:** discursive texts (T2, T15, T16, T18, T19)

**Grammar and punctuation:** using connectives (T1, S4, S5); how punctuation can alter meaning.

**Writing features:** structuring arguments.

## On arrival in an alien land

(an extract from 'A different kind of Christmas')

He wasn't there.

Why not? Where was he?

Travel weary, dishevelled, excited and eagerly anticipating the reunion with Tom, my big brother, I had planned this moment for months, travelled over 5,000 miles and now here I was, baggage collected, through customs and keenly scanning the sea of oriental faces for his blond head and his familiar grin.

But ... no Tom.

I could feel anxiety flutter in my stomach like the wings of a butterfly and panic rise like bile in my throat as my eyes darted up and down the arrivals lounge.

Where was he? Who to ask? Where to go? What to do?

Everything was alien – the people, the language, even the signs were written in unrecognisable Chinese characters. I was here, in China, 14 years old, on my own, and not a clue as to what to do next. What should have been the best day of my life was rapidly becoming a nightmare.

Minutes ticked by, hours maybe...

"There you are!" A breathless and apologetic voice behind me, then I found myself enveloped in a giant bear hug.



"Sorry, Soph, I overslept. Come on, let's go!"

Relief flooded through me; fear and disappointment were quickly forgotten and I could even find it quite amusing that I had travelled all these miles to see him and he'd actually overslept on the big day of my arrival.

Tom grabbed my bag and guided me out into the freezing Beijing air.

"The taxi wouldn't wait, we'll catch a bus," said Tom and I was bundled on to an ancient ramshackle vehicle with black smoke belching from its exhaust. So much for luxurious travel!

That journey was most definitely hair-raising and one that I'll never forget.



I'm told that I tend to exaggerate and to jump to dramatic conclusions but I swear that I am not exaggerating when I tell you that I saw my whole life flash before my eyes as the breath was literally knocked out of me. This bus looked like an ordinary bus but there the similarity ended. At each and every stop, more and more people clambered over each other to squeeze in, until it seemed that at least two hundred people were crushed together! The noise! The air was fetid, thick with the strong tobacco smoke prevalent in China. An occasional harsh clearing of the throat could be heard as someone hawked and spat a glob out of the window regardless of the unsuspecting pedestrians below.

The bus grumbled and wove its way along the main streets of Beijing; really wide streets but lacking any apparent system – no lanes as such – drivers simply criss-crossed at breakneck speed.

"It takes a lot of skill to drive in Beijing," remarked Tom dryly, observing the look of disbelief on my face.

"Yeah, sure," I said sarcastically, peeping out from behind my fingers.

"You need to know how to accelerate, brake and keep your hand permanently on the horn!" he joked.

I ventured a look out of the window, my nose pressed against the glass. The roads were jam-packed with buses, taxis and bicycles. The din of car horns hooting, of people shouting and of bicycle bells incessantly ringing. Bicycles were everywhere – hundreds, no thousands of them! Men on bicycles, women and children on bicycles, bicycles piled as high as houses with crates of produce – bread, beer, fruit and even live chickens, all clucking and squawking and adding to the cacophony.

No vivid colours in this city, however. Drab grey skies matched drab grey buildings and even the people looked colourless and careworn – not a true reflection of their character, though, as I later came to discover, for the Chinese people are friendly, generous and eager to please.



# Understanding the grammar and punctuation

## Similes

We use similes to make a description come alive.  
A simile compares one thing with another by:

using the word 'like'

*I could feel anxiety flutter in my stomach  
like the wings of a butterfly*

Using the words 'as ... as ...'

*... bicycles piled as high as houses with  
crates of produce*

## Personification

Personification is a special type of metaphor where an object is treated as if it were a living thing with feelings.

*... the bus grumbled ...*

## Parentheses and dashes

Parentheses (brackets) are used when giving additional information.

*Beijing (also known as Peking) is the capital city of China.*

Dashes used in pairs act in the same way as parentheses.

*... wide streets but lacking any apparent system – no lanes as such – drivers simply  
criss-crossed at breakneck speed*

Dashes can be used to emphasise a word or phrase.

*Bicycles were everywhere – hundreds, no thousands of them!*

A single dash is often followed by an afterthought.

*... the people looked colourless and careworn – not a true reflection of their character.*

## Clichés

A cliché is an expression that has been overused.

*It's raining cats and dogs.*

Clichés should be avoided in original writing.

## Metaphors

A metaphor is more powerful than a simile. Instead of saying that one thing is like another, it says that it is another.

*My feet were blocks of ice.*

A metaphor also refers to a word or words which do not have literal meanings.

*the vast ... ocean of the square*

*... snaking queues of people ...*

**Imagery**

Insert a word or phrase to complete the following.

1. *The old bus rumbled along the road like \_\_\_\_\_*
2. *The noise of the traffic was as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_*

In each of these sentences there is an overused simile. Rewrite the sentences with a new simile of your own.

1. *When Tom arrived at the airport he was grinning like a Cheshire cat.*  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. *The men sitting on the bench looked as old as the hills.*  
\_\_\_\_\_

In each of the pairs of sentences, one of them uses words **literally** and the other one uses them **metaphorically**. Write next to each one 'literally' or 'metaphorically'. The words underlined are the ones which matter most.

1. *Tom ploughed through the crowds to reach his sister. \_\_\_\_\_*  
*The farmer ploughed the field after the harvest was gathered in. \_\_\_\_\_*
2. *"I'm afraid I don't know where he is," she said. \_\_\_\_\_*  
*"I'm really afraid of being left alone," said Sophie. \_\_\_\_\_*
3. *Angry black clouds were threatening a storm. \_\_\_\_\_*  
*The angry driver threatened the boy on the bicycle. \_\_\_\_\_*

Write the literal meaning of these clichés.

1. *This is the last straw! He has overslept again!*
2. *He won't lift a finger to help and I need all the help I can get!*

In the text, Sophie is anxious and worried when Tom doesn't arrive to meet her. Complete these sentences about anxiety using similes, metaphors, personification and sensory images.

1. *Anxiety gnawed at me like \_\_\_\_\_*
2. *Worry was a huge \_\_\_\_\_*
3. *It stalked me like \_\_\_\_\_*