

Story-writing

SCAFFOLDS

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Story-writing scaffolds for Year 3

INTRODUCTION

Story-writing scaffolds Year 3 is intended for use in schools to help teach children how to write effective short stories in a variety of different genres. It improves children's ability to organise their writing so that it has purpose by familiarising them with a system of planning stories which they can apply to any title. As they work through the units, the children assemble a portfolio of stories containing genre-specific vocabulary and writing features. The chosen text types correspond with those in the Framework's text-level objectives for each half-term.

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

THE PROGRAMME CONTAINS:

a teachers' book comprising:

- notes for teachers on the genres
- copies of exemplar stories together with teaching notes
- guidance on how to develop grammar skills in children's writing
- guidance on how to help children write in the particular genre

a resource book of photocopiable material comprising:

- illustrated versions of the exemplar stories especially produced for children
- notes for the children on understanding the grammar (optional reference material)
- photocopiable activity sheets to reinforce the grammar (optional)
- notes and tips for the children on writing stories (optional reference material)
- differentiated story scaffolds which enable them to choose the course of the story they are about to write
- vocabulary banks for them to use and add to.

HOW TO USE THE PROGRAMME

- 1 After examining examples of stories in the target genre by established writers, read and discuss the exemplar story with the children, using the notes in the margin to highlight the examples of the unit's grammatical teaching point and writing feature. The children should follow the story 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 orally together or independently on paper.
- 3 Then explain the 'Helpful hints' and 'Writing features' sections of the unit to the children.
- 4 Read through the story scaffolds with the children. Then give them the differentiated word banks and ask them to record their own vocabulary suggestions in the space provided.

Give the children time to plan, write and edit their stories. Each child can then store the best copies of their stories in a writing folder.

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

The activities in each unit, from reading the model story to composing a story using the scaffolds, can be used in shared or guided time, with the children working collaboratively or individually.

The order of activities for each unit corresponds exactly with the sequence for the teaching of writing outlined in *Grammar for Writing* (DfEE 0107/2000). First the model story 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, story scaffolds and vocabulary banks support the teacher and children in shared writing sessions and in subsequent guided and independent writing.

I find that 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. As the grammar section contains examples from the story, all the children can access it at some level: it is not always necessary to understand the mechanics of the grammar in order to modify the examples for use in an individual story.

This is the sequence of units for Year 3. The story-type and grammatical information and activities for each unit reflect and fulfil the sentence- and text-level requirements of the NLS Framework for each term.

TERM 1

UNIT 1

Genre: stories with familiar settings – family life stories

Grammar and punctuation component: verbs (S3, S5), verb tenses (S4)

devices for presenting texts (S9)

Writing feature: story beginnings (T11)

UNIT 2

Genre: stories with familiar settings – school life stories

Grammar and punctuation component: question marks and exclamation marks (S6); speech punctuation (S7, S8); paragraphs (T15)

Writing feature: vocabulary for introducing and concluding dialogue (W19)

UNIT 3

Genre: playscripts

Grammar and punctuation component: taking account of grammar and punctuation when reading aloud (S2); devices for presenting text (S9)

Writing feature: writing a simple playscript (T14)

UNIT 4

Genre: animal stories

Grammar and punctuation component: verbs (S3, S5), verb tenses (S4); using commas to separate items in a list (S13)

Writing feature: story settings (T11)

TERM 2

UNIT 5

Genre: Egyptian myths

Grammar and punctuation component: adjectives (S2); capital letters (S8)

Writing feature: typical story themes (T2)

UNIT 6

Genre: fables

Grammar and punctuation component: plurals (S4, S5); commas (S6, S7)

Writing feature: elements of fables

UNIT 7

Genre: traditional fairytales

Grammar and punctuation component: collective nouns (S4); capital letters and full stops (revision of Term 1 S10, S11, S12)

Writing feature: styles and voices of traditional story language (T1); story endings

TERM 3

UNIT 8

Genre: adventure stories

Grammar and punctuation component: conjunctions (S5); dialogue punctuation (S4)

Writing feature: creating credibility of events (T4), characters' feelings and behaviour (T5)

UNIT 9

Genre: mystery stories

Grammar and punctuation component: pronouns (S2); commas (S7)

Writing feature: creating a sense of mystery and building tension (T2)

UNIT 10

Genre: humorous stories

Grammar and punctuation component: grammatical agreement between pronouns and nouns (S3); using words and phrases that signal time sequences (S6)

Writing feature: adding humour to a story (T6)

Family life stories

Stories about family life are very popular. Children are immediately able to identify with the setting even if the family types and experiences don't quite match their own.

Family stories can be about all kinds of families and family situations:

- ◆ single parent – *Danny the Champion of the World* by Roald Dahl (Jonathan Cape, 2002);
- ◆ shared parenting – *Two Homes* by Claire Masurel (Walker Books, 2002);
- ◆ life in the past – *From Me to You* by Paul Rogers (Orchard Books, 1995);
- ◆ ethnic groups – *Indian Shoes* by Cynthia Leitich Smith (HarperCollins, 2002);
- ◆ different lifestyles – *The Caravan Family* by Enid Blyton (Mammoth, 1997).

Family stories often have a dominant character in them such as an overbearing father, a very busy

mother, an adventurous grandparent or an annoying sibling. In such stories, the tale is usually told from the viewpoint of a member of the family who bears the brunt of these characters' behaviour. The writer does this to help the reader develop empathy with the character – most of us, after all, will have similar people in our own families.

Apart from picture books intended to help children identify with themselves and their family situations, few family life stories are written exclusively about the everyday lives of the family – perhaps this would be too boring for the reader! Most family stories therefore also contain elements of other genres such as mystery, adventure or fantasy.

Family stories usually have a happy ending.

Family life stories

Examples of family life stories

- Crummy Mummy and Me* by Anne Fine (Puffin, 1989)
It's Not Fair! by Bel Mooney (Egmont Books, 1989)
My Naughty Little Sister by Dorothy Edwards (Methuen, 2002)
Sleep Overs by Jacqueline Wilson (Corgi Juvenile, 2002)
Busybody Nora by Johanna Hurwitz (William Morrow, 2001)
Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say (Houghton Mifflin, 1993)
Your Dad, My Mum by Hazel Townson (Anderson Press, 2000)
George's Marvellous Medicine by Roald Dahl (ABC Clio, 1989)
Since Dad Left by Caroline Binch (Frances Lincoln, 2000)
Family Ties by Joanna Ferrone (Simon & Schuster, 2001)

(For advanced readers)

The If Game by Catherine Storr (OUP, 2001)



The children's illustrated version of the story is on page 6 of the Resource book.

It's not fair!¹

Paula slammed the front door, threw her bag on the hall floor and stomped up the stairs. She kicked open her bedroom door and banged it shut. Then she threw herself on her bed and started sobbing.² She was so **ANGRY!**³

"Paula, is that you?"⁴ her mum shouted up the stairs. "What on earth's the matter?"

Paula didn't reply; she was too upset. She could hear her mother coming up the stairs, so she hastily wiped away her tears and sat up on the bed.

"What's wrong?" Paula's Mum asked as she entered the room. "Why are you so late? Where've you been?"

"Mr Jacobs asked me to stay behind after practice. He said he wanted to explain why I wasn't in the team. He said Julia was in it because she's older. He said I'll have to wait a few more years. It's not fair, Mum, it's just not fair. I'm a much better player than Julia ever was at my age and just because she's older *she* gets picked. In fact, I'm sick to death of hearing about Julia at school. You know what, Mum, some people only know me as 'Julia's little sister'. 'Oh, so you're *Julia's*⁵ sister?' they say. They never even ask what MY name is. She's **ALWAYS**⁶ chosen for every school team; she's **ALWAYS**⁶ getting certificates and she's **ALWAYS**⁶ the lead in the school play. It's not fair. It's just **NOT FAIR!**⁶ and with that Paula burst into tears again.

Paula's mum let out a big sigh. As long as she could remember Paula had been jealous of Julia. She had thought that once the girls had gone to the junior school things would be different. But, in fact, things had got steadily worse. Julia was immediately very popular and did very well in everything she did but Paula found it much more difficult to make friends and always felt in the shadow of her big sister.

It was the same at home. Whatever Julia did, Paula wanted to do too. She could never accept that sometimes Julia wanted to do things on her own and have her own friends.⁷

"I know it's hard being the youngest," replied her mum. "I always remember what it was like with your Uncle Bob. He was always allowed to stay up later and go to places I wasn't allowed. In fact I got so fed up one day, do you know what I did?"⁸

Paula sat up again and looked round at her mum. "What?"

"Well, one day when he was getting ready to go to a birthday party that I hadn't been invited to, I did a really terrible thing. I unwrapped the present he was taking to the party and I replaced it with some mouldy old cheese. Then I carefully wrapped it all up again. Bob's never forgiven me for that – but at the time I thought it was really funny!"

"Oh, Mum, that was a really horrible thing to do. What happened?"

"Well, needless to say, Bob didn't stay long at the party. He was so embarrassed that he came home right away. And boy, did I ever get into trouble. My dad made me stay in my room after school for weeks after that."

1 The title immediately tells the reader that something is wrong.

2 An exciting beginning draws the reader straight into the action.

Note: In narrative, verbs are usually in the past tense.

The author has used powerful verbs like 'slammed', 'stomped' and 'kicked' to vividly express the character's feelings.

3 The word is written in capital letters to emphasise the feeling.

4 This is in the present tense – the narrator has finished and a character is speaking.

5 The word is in italics to tell the reader how the character emphasises it when speaking.

6 More words in capitals. 'It's not fair' repeats the title.

7 Sibling rivalry is a common theme in family life stories.

8 The mother commiserates with the daughter by sharing her own experiences about her family life. This serves the purpose of informing the reader that sibling rivalry is common.