

Non-fiction writing

SCAFFOLDS

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Non-fiction writing scaffolds for Year 5

INTRODUCTION

Non-fiction Writing Scaffolds Year 5 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 order of activities for each unit corresponds 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 5 and revise components from Year 4, 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.

TERM 1

UNIT 1

Genre: Recounts – historical event (T24)

Grammar: 1st and 3rd person account (S8); past tense and active verbs (S8, S9)

Punctuation: dashes (S6); connectives (S3)

Writing features: Recounts based on historical event (T24). Written in the past tense and in chronological order.

UNIT 2

Genre: Recounts – personal experience (T24)

Grammar: nouns; agreement between nouns, and verbs (S2)

Punctuation: direct and reported speech (S5)

Writing features: Recounts based on personal experience (T24). Written in form of informal letter. Organised into paragraphs.

UNIT 3

Genre: Instructional text (T25, 26, 27)

Grammar: present tense, imperative form (S8, S9)

Punctuation: use of colon (S6)

Writing features: Gathering information and taking notes (T26); contains diagrams/illustrations.

TERM 2

UNIT 4

Genre: Non-chronological report (T22,26,27)

Grammar: passive verbs, present tense (S8)

Punctuation: paragraphs to organise similar topics (T14)

Writing features: Planning, composing, editing and refining non-chronological reports (T22).

UNIT 5

Genre: Non-chronological report (T22, 23)

Grammar: pronouns (S4, S10)

Punctuation: complex sentences (S8)

Writing features: Comparing and contrasting. Acknowledging sources (T23)

UNIT 6

Genre: Explanatory text (T22)

Theme: how something works/happens (processes, systems, operations) in the natural world

Grammar: passive voice; use of cause and effect linking words (if, when, then, why, consequently); commas within sentences (S9)

Punctuation: paragraphs

Writing features: Organisation methods – introductory statement followed by series of logical steps. Includes glossary.

TERM 3

UNIT 7

Genre: Persuasive writing (T19)

Grammar: adapting writing for appropriate audience (S2); powerful verbs; adjectives

Punctuation: exclamation marks

Writing features: Using persuasive language. Using illustrations and slogans to persuade.

UNIT 8

Genre: Persuasive writing (T17)

Grammar: prepositions (S3)

Punctuation: apostrophe for possession (S5)

Writing features: Writing letters to put a point of view (T17). Arguing the case for a point of view and using evidence and reasons to persuade.

UNIT 9

Genre: Discussion text (arguments for and against) (T18)

Grammar: connectives to link clauses within sentences (S7)

Punctuation: use of paragraphs; punctuation in longer more complex sentences (S4, S6)

Writing features: Presenting arguments and information from differing viewpoints (T18)

Recounts Impersonal

A recount text is a text written to retell for information or entertainment.

A non-fiction recount may:

- ◆ begin with a scene-setting introduction; then
- ◆ retell events in chronological order.

A recount may be an impersonal account of events as they occurred or a personal account of events that were experienced by the writer.

An impersonal recount would be written after the writer had researched the subject matter and gained facts and information.

For instance, an impersonal recount of an historical event such as the sinking of 'Titanic' would present the facts in chronological order and be in the past tense. It would use specific names of people, places, objects and so on. It would provide accurate information and may comment upon them.

Features of impersonal recounts:

- ◆ uses the past tense;
- ◆ uses the third person;
- ◆ focuses on named people or individuals;
- ◆ has time connectives to help chronological order;
- ◆ often contains interesting details to bring incidents alive to the reader;
- ◆ may contain a representative selection of incidents that will amuse or interest the reader, or that are of significance;
- ◆ may end with a comment on the event.

Recounts

Examples of impersonal recount texts

War in Grandma's Day by Faye Gardner (Evans, 1999)

Family Life: Second World War by Nigel Smith (Hodder Wayland, 1998)

'History of Britain' series (Heinemann Library)

The Great Plague by Pam Robson and Dez Marwood, 'All About' series (Hodder Wayland, 1996)

'What Happened Here?' series (A & C Black)

Modern Britain 1901 to the 1990s by Andrew Langley (Read International Book Ltd, 1994)

Anne Frank by Angela Bull (Evans, 1993)

The children's version of the recount is on page 6 of the resource book.

Air raids during the Second World War

Alfred Mason, born July 14th, 1929, can remember vividly, as if it was yesterday, the air raids over London, where he lived with his mother and older brother, Tom.¹ His father was off fighting² somewhere in Africa so they had to look after themselves. The German air force began to bomb London and other large British cities in September 1942. This sustained attack became known as the Blitz (a shortened version of the German word *Blitzkrieg*, which means 'lightning war') and caused terrible devastation to factories, shops and homes.³ The raids were usually during the hours of darkness and went on night after night.

The government and local councils did many things to try and protect ordinary families like Alfred's and their property. One of the first things they did was set up ARP committees.⁴ ARP stood for Air Raid Precautions. These committees organised teams of wardens whose job was to: sound the air raid siren, help people get to the shelters and provide emergency help when needed.⁵ Leaflets were sent to every home giving advice on what to do if there was a raid, and how to black out the windows of buildings. Alfred remembers his mother reading it to him and discussing what they must do. Tom, being the tallest, had the job of fixing blankets, which had been dyed black, to all the windows in the house. Alfred had to make sure a bucket of sand and a bucket of water were always ready by the back door in case the house caught fire.⁶ Although Alfred didn't realise at the time, they would have been of very little use if there had been a real fire. It was probably his mother's way of making them feel safer.⁷ Everyone was issued with a gas mask which they had to carry with them at all times. People would get into terrible trouble with the warden if he spotted someone without it.

Alfred remembers that it was very difficult going to sleep at night knowing that any time during the night an air raid might begin. They were given advance warning of a raid through the sounding of the air raid siren. This made a loud wailing sound that could be heard over a large area, and when people heard it they would stop what they were doing, even if they were at work, and quickly go to the nearest shelter.⁸ Alfred's nearest shelter – the local tube station –⁹ was large and always crowded with men, women and children.

There was barely room for everyone, and the conditions in the shelter were not very pleasant. The very first time Alfred went into the shelter he just had to come out again because¹⁰ he felt sick. It was so dark you could hardly see anything and the smell was awful. There were thousands and thousands of people lying head to toe, all along the platform and with no facilities. At the beginning of the Blitz there were only four earth buckets down the far end behind screens that were used as toilets. Alfred felt terribly sorry for the old people because they were obviously terrified.¹¹ They'd usually come down in their pyjamas and dressing gowns and they would sit up all night huddled together.

Later,¹² things got a bit better organised and¹³ the platforms had mattresses on them. The first to arrive at least had some comfort but¹⁴ late arrivals would often have to try and sleep on the escalators. Eventually¹⁵ bunks were built along the platforms, and boilers and ovens provided so everyone could have hot food and drinks.

- 1 Orientation – setting the scene, introducing the topic. The focus of the recount, Alfred Mason, is mentioned right at the beginning.
- 2 Written in the past tense.
- 3 Brackets contain an explanation of the word 'Blitz' to provide extra information for the reader.
- 4 An abbreviation is followed by an explanation.
- 5 A colon is used to signal that a list is to follow.
- 6 The writer recounts a significant event in the daily life of the boy.
- 7 Personal opinion or comment – the writer adds his/her own comment on a significant event.
- 8 Use of the third person, 'they'.
- 9 Dashes are used to signal that this is a phrase in apposition which provides additional information; ie where the local shelter was.
- 10 Use of 'because' as a connective.
- 11 Personal opinion – adds interest to the account.
- 12 'Later' is a time connective to aid chronological development.
- 13 'and' is a conjunction used to join two simple sentences.
- 14 The use of 'but' as a conjunction to join two simple sentences.
- 15 'Eventually' is a connective indicating the passage of time.