

Non-fiction writing

SCAFFOLDS

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Non-fiction writing scaffolds for Year 3

INTRODUCTION

Non-fiction Writing Scaffolds Year 3 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 3 and revise components from Year 2. The 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: reports – information texts (T21; T22)

Grammar: verbs and verb tenses (S3; S4)

Punctuation: revision of capital letters and full stops (S11; S12)

Writing feature: organising and presenting ideas, labelled diagrams (T21; T22)

UNIT 2

Genre: reports – holiday guides (T22)

Grammar: verbs; verb tenses (S3; S4) use of third person

Punctuation: devices for presenting text (S9)

Writing features: headlines, presentation, content, language and layout (T21; T22)

UNIT 3

Genre: instructions – making or doing something

Grammar: verbs, especially second person verbs for instructional writing (S10) adjectives for clarity (not effect) (S2)

Punctuation: commas for lists (S6; S7)

Writing features: how instructions are organised – numbering, lists (T14; T16)

TERM 2

UNIT 4

Genre: instructions – directions

Grammar: plurals (S4)

Punctuation: use of capitalisation (S8)

Writing features: the importance of sequencing and diagrams (T16; T21)

UNIT 5

Genre: note taking – historical information

Grammar: deleting words and retaining meaning (S9)

Punctuation: commas (S6; S7)

Writing: how to make notes, identifying key words, using simple formats for notes, using shortened forms of words (T17; T20; T25; T26)

UNIT 6

Genre: recounts – informal letters

Grammar: pronouns (S2)

Punctuation: letter punctuation (S12; S8)

Writing features: features of personal letters, email messages, style and vocabulary appropriate to reader (T20)

TERM 3

UNIT 7

Genre: recounts – formal letters

Grammar: grammatical agreement of pronouns and verbs (S3)

Punctuation: organising letters into paragraphs (S23)

Writing features: features of formal letters selecting appropriate style and vocabulary (T20)

UNIT 8

Genre: recounts – newspaper reports

Grammar: adjectives to get attention and interest (S2), verbs – past tense (S4)

Punctuation: dialogue punctuation (S4)

Writing features: features of newspaper reports (T22, T21)

UNIT 9

Genre: explanations: encyclopaedias

Grammar: joining complex sentences using a wide range of conjunctions (S5)

Punctuation: commas and dashes (S7)

Writing features: features of encyclopaedia texts (T17; T24)

Reports

Information texts

Reports are used to describe or classify something. They usually begin with a general introduction to orientate the reader then move on to a description of particular characteristics and end with a summary. They often also include details of sources of further information and a bibliography to acknowledge sources of information.

The main difference between a report and a recount is that a report is usually non-chronological.

Report writing needs careful planning, use of research, logical organisation and editing skills. Children need to be made aware that when they are researching a subject and then writing it up, they are in fact writing a report on the information they have found out.

Illustrations and diagrams are often included to present information in a simplified form to clarify ideas.

Other features of non-chronological writing include the use of:

- an impersonal third person style;
- technical language;
- language to describe and differentiate;
- the present tense in most cases;
- the passive voice;
- linking words and phrases.

Understanding the technique of non-chronological writing in the third person is important for many areas of the curriculum.

Reports

Examples of information texts

www.henryandjoey.com about two pet pygmy goats by David Watts. Original version 1999 at age 12.

My Pet Kitten by Honor Head (Belitha Press) 2002

Snail by Chris Macro, Karen Hartley, Jill Bailey, 'Bug Books' series (Heinemann library, 1999)

Horse and Pony Care Funfax (Dorling Kindersley, 1999)

Bats by Philip Richardson, 'Life' series (The Natural History Museum, 2002)

Raging Rivers by Anita Ganeri 'Horrible Geography' series (Schmidt Interactive Software Inc. paperback book, 2000)

The Cloud Book by Tomie de Paola (Holiday House, 1985)

A Visit to France by Peter Roop (Heinemann Library, 2000)

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

Pet Pygmy Goats¹

General Information²

³Pygmy goats originally came from parts of Africa⁴ – in particular from Nigeria⁴ and Cameroon.⁴ They are not completely white like many goats that are kept to produce milk. They can be brown, white with black or brown markings or many shades of grey and sometimes with a shade of blue. Some of the best looking pygmy goats have an attractive combination of several of these colours.

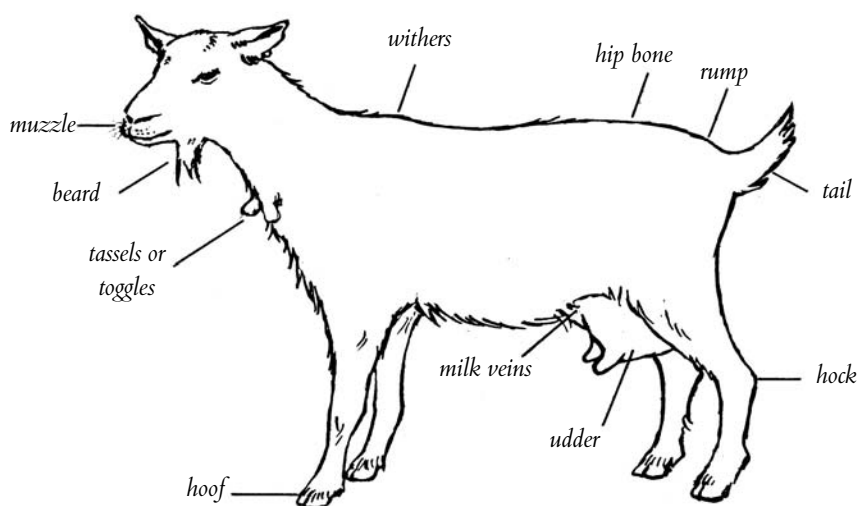
³These goats are very small: most are less than 60 centimetres from the ground to the top of the back of the goat. Most⁵ have a barrel-shaped body with a fat stomach and quite short legs. They grow horns as they grow older although sometimes the horns are removed to make them safer as pets. A beard usually grows under the chin. There are also two small tassels called 'toggles' on the neck. A short tail is usually held up, looking rather like a flag! Females have udders that produce milk for baby goats, which are called 'kids'.

³Some pygmy goats were taken from Africa to zoos in Britain, often to be kept in paddocks where children can stroke them.⁶ Their kids were often sold⁷ as pets. Pygmy goats make⁷ great pets. In some ways, these small goats are similar to dogs. Goats enjoy human company, and will sit⁷ as close to a human as possible. They are very playful, frequently butting balls and running around. They also like to butt each other playfully.

Parts of a pygmy goat⁸

9

Parts of a pygmy goat



Food¹⁰

Goats do **not** eat everything they can find! They may sniff¹¹ and nibble at things, like clothes, but they certainly do not eat them! In fact pygmy goats can be quite fussy; for example, if a piece of dirt such as mud gets on their food, they will not eat it because it is dirty!

1 A big bold title makes it clear what the information is about.

2 A subheading for each section helps to divide the information and help the reader to find points of interest.

3 The first three paragraphs are written to orientate the reader and create a picture in the reader's mind of typical pygmy goats. The intention is to get the reader's interest by describing these attractive and amusing pet animals. Some historical details are given using the past tense. The third person is used throughout.

4 An initial capital letter is used for the names of continents and countries.

5 An example of a full stop at the end of a sentence and a capital letter at the beginning of the next sentence.

6 Suitable language for the reader – whether child or adult.

7 A verb. Without a verb the sentence does not make sense.

8 The diagram has a clear title.

9 Labels on a diagram make information very clear and easy to understand. A diagram can be used instead of a paragraph of description.

10 Another subheading, followed by a short paragraph.

11 Auxiliary verb and verb.

Pet pygmy goats should¹² be fed plenty of hay and a special goat mix which can be bought from shops that supply farmers. They also enjoy most vegetables that are eaten by humans. It is best to give small amounts of various types of leftover vegetables, such as carrots, along with plenty of hay. Eating too much of one type of food can cause bloat – a painfully swollen stomach. The goats love to eat treats such as the occasional biscuit but remember they are vegetarians!

Their food can be put in a bowl of the type used for feeding a large dog. It is best to put hay in a rack to keep it off the floor of the goat shed where it could get dirty. It is important to provide a mineral lick, which is a brick-sized solid lump of salt and other minerals, which the goats will enjoy¹³ licking. This helps to keep them healthy. Two or more water bowls (about the size of a washing up bowl) should be kept full and clean. They should be checked at least once a day and more often in hot weather. Smaller water containers are not a good idea because the goats will pick them up with their mouths, play with them and butt them!

They can be fed the goat mix once a day or it can be divided into two portions so they get it twice a day. They will soon get used to being fed at a particular time and will bleat if you are late!¹⁴

Goats will search for food to eat in their paddock, such as grass and leaves from trees. They browse rather than graze. This means they bite off the best bits while walking around, rather than steadily eating grass like grazing sheep.¹⁵ Pygmy goats will eat garden flowers, particularly roses, which can get them into trouble if they are not kept away from them!¹⁴ It is important to read about poisonous plants, perhaps in books in the library, to make sure you can recognise them and make sure goats do not eat them.

Shelter

Pygmy goats need a place to sleep in at night and a paddock – an area of grass – to eat and move about on during the day.¹⁶ A simple shed will do for their night shelter and this is where their hay, water and other food should be put. They do not need a large field. An area large enough for them to run around and get exercise is sufficient.

Pygmy goats are experts at escaping! They think this is great fun. It is not because they want to run away but because they are curious and want to explore ... and eat the roses!¹⁷ It is important to have a strong fence all round their paddock with a gate fastened with two bolts. They are clever animals and soon learn how to undo a bolt so they should be fitted where the goats cannot reach them. Thick wooden posts and rails are necessary; one and a half metres high. (They can jump high off the ground when feeling lively!) Strong wire netting called 'sheep wire' must be fixed to the wooden fence to keep them in. Pygmy goats do not like being tethered¹⁸ (tied up using collar and lead) unless it is for only about fifteen minutes at a time and there is plenty of interesting food to eat!

They should have boxes and benches to sit and play on plus some balls they will like to butt around!

Goats also like each other's company. A pygmy goat must never be kept on its own. They are herd animals and one goat would be lonely and unhappy.

Health and care

Pygmy goats need their hooves trimmed regularly; otherwise they will start skidding everywhere! To do this you need¹⁹ to tether the goat to a fence and give it some greenery to eat to take its mind off what is going on at the hoof-end of its body. Hoof trimming is like cutting toenails and does them no harm.

12 'Should' is a modal verb. Modal verbs are used to tell people to do things.

13 Future tense.

14 Use of humour to interest the reader.

15 Clarification of technical terms which may be unfamiliar to the reader.

16 Use of simple sentences makes important points easily understood so that there is no risk of ambiguity. Again a word that may be unfamiliar is explained.

17 Again, the use of humour.

18 Again a word that may be unfamiliar is explained.

19 The reader is addressed directly.

Pygmy goats will grow horns. Some goat keepers leave them to grow, but a horned goat, as a pet, can accidentally cause damage to people, fences and other goats. Many pygmy goats have their horn 'buds' removed by a vet when they are very young and before they start to grow horns. It is much more difficult for a vet to remove horns after they have grown.

In autumn the pygmy goat grows a thick fur coat and a layer of wool next to its skin. This keeps it warm enough not to need heating in its shed. After the winter the goat's coat moults, as the weather gets warmer. This makes it look very 'shaggy' and untidy for a time. It may be necessary to give the goat a shampoo to wash away the old coat and clean the skin. It is best and kinder to do this on a warm day. The goat should be tethered and fed with leaves to take its mind off the washing as it will not like it. It should be sprayed with a hose and a special animal shampoo used to get rid of any dandruff and loose hair. The shampoo should be rinsed off and the goat thoroughly dried with some old towels, trying not to let it chew the towels!²⁰

Pygmy goats are usually very healthy. They are normally lively, happy, bright eyed, frequently bleating, keen to feed, friendly to humans and, most of the time, their tails are held up higher than their backs, showing they are happy. (Except, of course, when feeling sleepy!) If a goat is not like this, it is important a vet is called to see it.

Your vet will advise on any forms to be completed for a government department, simple regular treatments to prevent worms in the stomach and annual vaccinations that are important to prevent some illnesses.²¹

20 More humour to enjoy. It helps the reader to imagine what the goat might get up to while being shampooed!

21 The reader is addressed directly again – this helps to add importance to the point that regular vet visits are recommended.

The above text is based on the website www.henryandjoey.com about two pet pygmy goats by David Watts at the age of 12 in 1999.