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# The Writing Framework: Transcription Focus

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# Agenda

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- Handwriting
- Spelling
- Assessment



# The writing framework

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- Focusses on:
  - The importance of reception
  - Transcription: handwriting and spelling
  - Composition
  - Pupils who need the most support
  - Writing across the curriculum
  - Leadership and management of reading



## The writing framework

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# Unpicking the writing framework: Transcription

“For skilled writers, transcription is mainly automatic and unconscious, but novice writers need to expend considerable attention and effort on it.”

# Writing is complex

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- Learning to write is one of the hardest challenges pupils face at school but it is vitally important: learning to speak, read and write well are crucial for children and young people's success in education, life and work.
- Pupils who find it difficult to express their ideas in writing are likely to struggle across the curriculum, not just in English.



## Keeping up, not catching up

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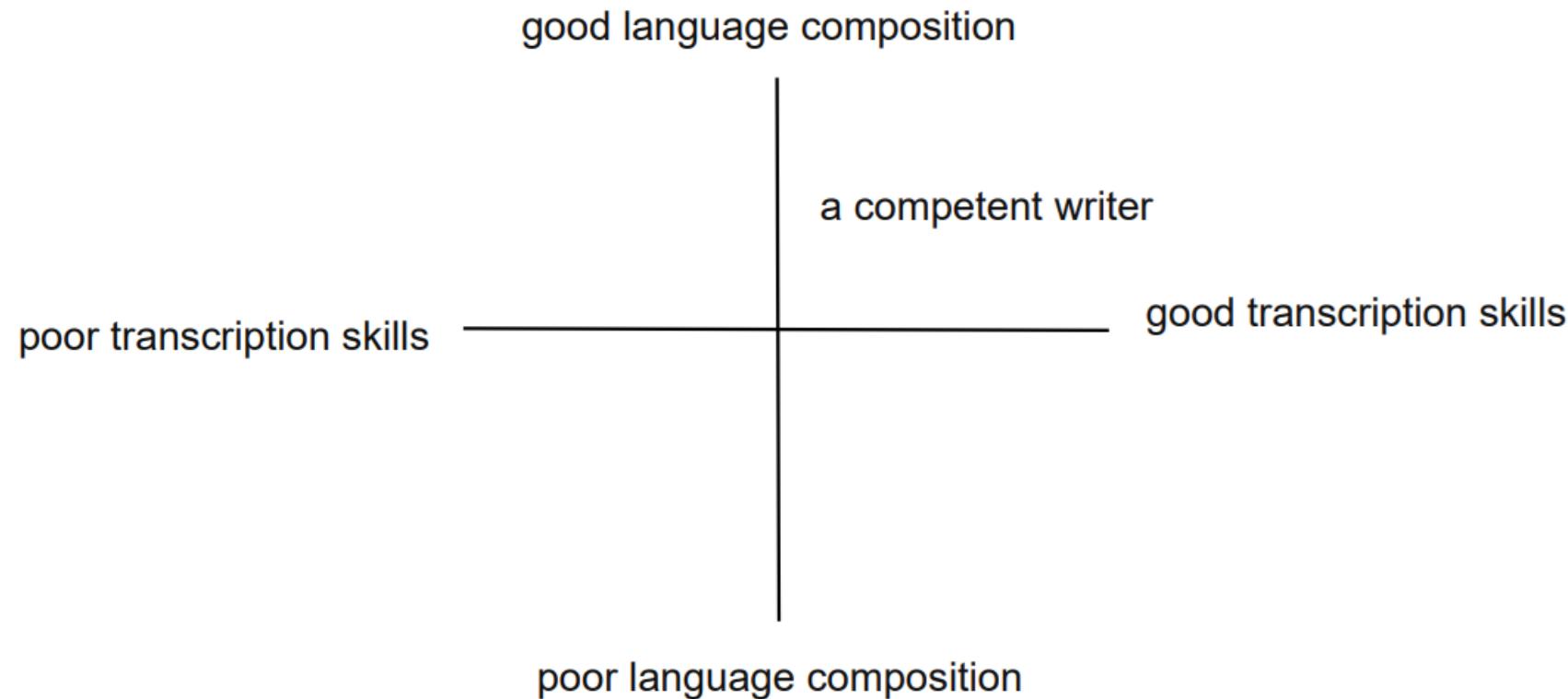
- Early identification
- Adaptations in class
- Targeted support



# Simple view of writing

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**Figure 1: An illustration of the simple view of writing**



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By the end of year 6, pupils' reading and writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in year 7, across all subjects and not just in English.

- The National Curriculum

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# Ensuring secure foundations

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- Teaching transcription from the reception year is crucial so that these skills become automatic.
- Teaching should be short, focused and developmentally appropriate.
- Needs to sit within a broad, rich curriculum where children also have plentiful opportunities for play, talk, exploration, and creativity.
- Quality not quantity – build in opportunities for dictation exercises.



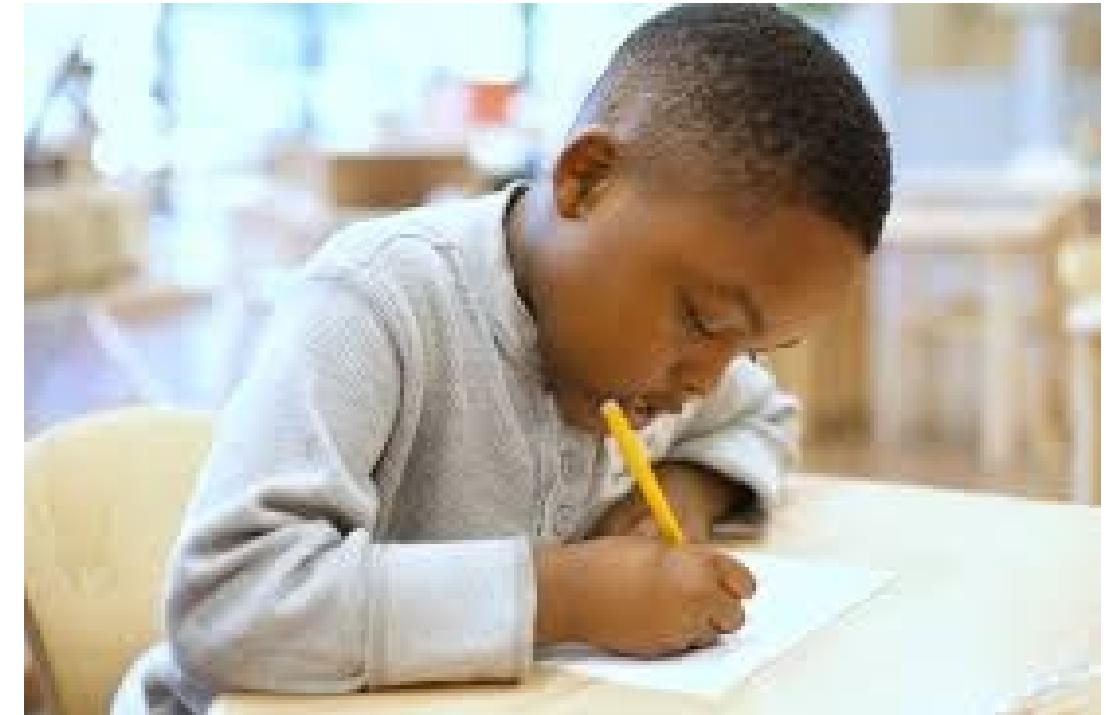
# Unpicking the writing framework: Handwriting

A key objective is for pupils to achieve automaticity in handwriting.

## Handwriting should be taught:

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- Regularly
- Explicitly
- Precisely
- Cumulatively
- In addition to phonics
- At the start of the reception year



# Teaching handwriting

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- ✓ Teach handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from reception, to support gradual acquisition of skills.
- ✓ Have expect consistently high standards, making sure pupils practise handwriting regularly and consistently throughout primary school to develop and maintain fluency and legibility
- ✓ Teach handwriting whole class with additional support for those who need it
- ✓ Consolidate teaching before moving on.
- ✓ Ensure your own handwriting models the high standard
- ✓ Start teaching handwriting in term 1 of reception including the foundations for handwriting
- X Copy and trace letters without supervision

# Handwriting and phonics

- phonics programmes teach letters in an order that will generate the most words for reading. Handwriting programmes, in contrast, sequence teaching by grouping letters with similar formation
- Pupils should be taught both phonics and handwriting consistently and systematically, in line with the programme for each.

## Letter families and relative sizes

Pupils should be taught to develop a consistent style by paying attention to how letters in each family are formed.

The 'families' are grouped according to where each letter starts, although these families may differ slightly, depending on the handwriting programme used.

Typical families are:

- c o a g q d
- i l t k j
- v w u y f
- r n m h p b
- e s x z

Pupils should be taught to write each 'family' of lower-case letters correctly on the line, and then to write words that include letters from that family.

## Diagonal and horizontal joins

Pupils should be taught two basic joins: diagonal joins and horizontal joins.

The diagonal join connects:

- letters from the line to small letters
- letters from the line to tall letters
- letters from the line to a, d, g, c, o, q (These letters need an extra stroke backwards across the top of a, d, g, c, o.)

The horizontal join connects:

- v, w, x, f, r to small letters
- v, w, x, f, r to tall letters
- v, w, x, f, r to a, d, g, c, o, q

## Supporting children with the physical demands of handwriting

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- Explicitly teach letter formation **and** the physical element.
- Model the correct way to hold a pencil and maintain posture when writing.
- Provide sufficient time for practice in an appropriate classroom set-up.
- Encourage children to sit comfortably.

# Physical elements

- Consider the use of adaptive equipment
- Establish good habits of posture and position early on
- Teach children how to use a stable writing position sat at a table with paper and pencil
- Use painting/play dough only for developing finger and hand strength. Children need to be taught explicitly how to hold a pencil.
- ‘Ready to write’ routines until automatic

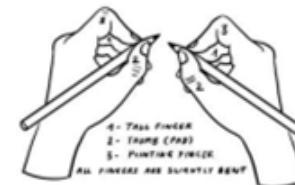
## Appendices

### Appendix A: Handwriting guidance

#### Maintaining a correct and comfortable sitting position and pencil grip

Teachers should encourage pupils to maintain correct finger positioning. Most pupils find the tripod grip the easiest to learn and support grips can help. Teachers should show pupils how to pinch the pencil with the index ('pointing') finger and the thumb, about a finger space from the end (on the coloured part just above the sharpened point); and how to rest the middle finger underneath the pencil to support it. If necessary, a sticker can show pupils where to place their fingers. The way a child grips the pencil will affect the quality, speed and flow of the handwriting. The grip should be relaxed, not pressing too hard on the pencil or the paper.

Finger positioning using the tripod grip:



Paper positioning for left-handers:

Paper positioning for right-handers:



## Choice of writing instrument

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- Think about the size in relation to the child.
- Pen and paper provides more friction and control than whiteboards.
- Classroom set up – sat at tables for handwriting.
- Make sure equipment is ready e.g. sharpened pencils, grip-supporters, finger markers if needed, paper in position etc.



## Left-handed pupils

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Need specific demonstration and adjustments, including by making sure they:

- have space to write
- sit to the left of any right-handed pupil to prevent their arms colliding
- slant their paper to the right
- use softer pencils that require less pressure
- grip the pencil at a slightly higher point so they can see around their fingers
- do not hold the pencil too tightly or press down too hard

## Keep up, not catch up

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Teachers should consider:

- closely observing the way in which the pupil forms a letter or letters and providing individual support
- providing regular instruction and opportunity to practise handwriting which should be done urgently
- whether it might be appropriate to provide extra time
- supporting pupils with writing through digital devices

# Typing

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- It would be most appropriate to introduce it formally in upper key stage 2
- Typing, like handwriting, requires sequential teaching in small steps with considerable opportunities for practice and an expert instructor.



## National Curriculum expectations Y1

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- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0–9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways)

## National Curriculum expectations Y2

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- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters
  - use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters, so that later joins do not create extra, confusing shapes

## National Curriculum expectations : KS2

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Focuses on increasing the legibility, consistency and quality of pupils' handwriting, with the aim of increasing the fluency and speed with which they are able to write down what they want to say.

Once pupils are fluent writers, teachers should make their expectations clear about the nature of the handwriting that is appropriate for a particular task.

## Audit: Handwriting

Handwriting routines	Current practice
<p>Handwriting is taught explicitly and regularly across the school to all pupils. This begins early in reception and is in addition to writing in phonics lessons.</p>	
<p>Pupils across the school are taught consistent routines for handwriting that support a comfortable writing position and enable them to form letters legibly and to develop fluency. Routines consider</p>	

# Unpicking the writing framework: Spelling

## Spelling should be taught:

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- Systematically
- Starting with phonics in reception
- Through opportunities for plenty of practice such as dictation activities.

# Spelling

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- The goal is to make sure pupils can spell accurately, so that it becomes automatic.
- While children are learning to read and write, the teaching of spelling should follow the progression of the school's phonic programme.
- All validated phonics programmes support children to develop their spelling by ensuring that they learn to segment spoken words into their constituent phonemes.

# Teaching spelling

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- Systematic teaching, with opportunities to practise and reinforce their spelling knowledge.
- Explicit, cumulative and engaging. It should be regular and consistent, taught in small steps, with lots of opportunity for practice.
- From the start of the reception year until year 2, spelling should be taught through phonics. After that, they then use known GPCs to represent the individual phonemes with the correct corresponding graphemes.
- Pupils should be asked to write at other times of the day so they are able to apply their phonics knowledge and begin to build their identity as a writer.
- Dictation as part of phonics teaching should also begin at the start of reception to help improve spelling.

# Orthography, morphology and etymology

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- Pupils should continue to use phonics throughout primary school to help them spell.
- 'ay' in day, 'a-e' in make, 'ai' in snail, 'a' in apron, 'aigh' in straight, 'eigh' in weight, 'ei' in rein, 'ea' in break and 'é' in café.
- The national curriculum emphasises both teaching GPCs and building pupils' wider understanding to help them choose the correct grapheme to represent each phoneme.
- This can be supported if pupils know letter pattern conventions (orthography), the units of meaning in words (morphology) and (to a more limited extent) the origins of words (etymology), all strengthened by their exposure to words in their reading.

- Orthography
- Morphology
- Etymology

## Appendix B: Morpheme Matrices

Morpheme matrices<sup>130</sup> can help pupils to understand and learn how to combine Latin and Greek prefixes, roots and suffixes to support their spelling and comprehension. There are other versions.

### Using morpheme matrices to assemble Latin forms

Teachers can pronounce the root, explain its meaning and then show how to assemble roots and suffixes to form new words. A discussion on meanings and changes should follow. The same process can be followed for assembling prefixes and roots, building to assembling prefixes, roots and suffixes.

The teacher can then guide pupils to re-read, spell, say and write new words, including using them in sentences.

#### Example morpheme matrices (Latin form):

Prefixes	Latin root and meaning	Suffixes	New word
dis	rupt to break or burst	s ed	disrupts disrupted
inter	rupt to break or burst	er ible	interrupter interruptible

# Practising spelling – regular and consistent

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It should include:

- learning new words
- practising previously taught words to develop speed and automaticity,
- **writing dictated sentences containing words that have already been practised**
- learning common exception words
- independent practice activities
- planned opportunities to explore the morphology of words
- encouragement, acknowledgement and feedback

## Pupils who struggle with spelling

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Phonics is the primary way to teach spelling. Teachers should assess pupils' knowledge of GPCs and their spelling should also be regularly assessed.

Pupils who continue to struggle with spelling beyond the end of their key stage 1 phonics programmes may benefit from continuing with phonics for spelling.

They may also benefit from explicit teaching of morphology and etymology.

# Spelling audit

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## Audit: Spelling

Spelling	Current practice
A school-wide systematic approach to spelling that acknowledges and includes phonics, orthography and morphology is taught in all year groups.	
A clearly defined curriculum ensures that spelling instruction begins in reception and progresses throughout the school.	
Direct spelling instruction takes place regularly.	
For pupils learning systematic synthetic phonics, instruction includes regular spelling practice.	
Pupils are taught how to apply their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences to spell using dictation.	
Pupils are given tasks that allow them to practise and apply what they have been taught.	
Spelling is monitored consistently in all year groups. Teachers assess whether pupils are on track to spell all words on the national curriculum word lists correctly.	
Effective procedures identify pupils who struggle with spelling.	
When editing written work, feedback to pupils on incorrect spelling relates to spelling patterns, morphology and etymology.	
<b>Actions to be taken:</b>	<b>Term actions to be reviewed by:</b>

# Unpicking the writing framework: Assessment

# Marking and assessing spelling

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- Underline, lightly in pencil, common errors in words that pupils have been taught and already practised.
- A wavy line might be used under words that pupils have attempted to spell, but incorrectly; the correct spelling can be added in pencil.
- Teachers should decide how to best support children to learn a misspelt word correctly. Pupils should not be asked to correct the spelling themselves by looking it up in a dictionary.
- Pupils must be supported and encouraged to take an active role in learning how to spell the word correctly (for example, by writing it correctly in their personal spelling book).
- Teachers of younger children may consider using underwriting as a teaching tool (transcribing a child's writing using conventional spelling).
- Use low-stake testing rather than weekly formal spelling tests.

## Objective and subjective measures

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Objective measures are specific and often require a list of criteria. Examples include:

- handwriting speed
- grammar
- spelling
- punctuation
- accuracy of sentence structure

Some of these measures can be particularly useful for identifying gaps or weaknesses in transcription.

Subjective measures tend to assess a complete piece of writing for its overall effect. These can be particularly useful for identifying gaps in composition, vocabulary and language development. Examples include:

- success criteria
- comparative judgement
- writing moderation

## Formative assessment

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- Integrated into daily classroom activities, focusing on ongoing feedback, pinpointing areas where pupils need additional support and informing teaching to meet the needs of individuals and the whole class.
- Peer reviews and teachers' observations.
- Pupil surveys can therefore be a useful formative assessment tool to monitor pupils' self-belief.
- Teachers can use summative assessments to inform planning and teaching. Leaders should build in summative assessment points in each year group.

# Assessments

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- EYFS
- KS1
- KS2
- Do you have opportunities built in across the year to look at writing across the school?



## Audit: Writing in reception

Writing in reception	Current practice
Leaders make sure that every child is supported to reach the expected level of development in the early learning goal for Writing by the end of the reception year.	
Plans are put in place to support all children who do not meet the expected level of development in Writing by the end of reception to access and meet the expectations of the year 1 curriculum.	
A clearly defined curriculum extends children's language and vocabulary in each of the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning.	
Explicit handwriting instruction, in addition to phonics, begins early in reception for all children.	
Children are taught transcription skills and practise them. They should practise what they have been taught through dictation.	
Teachers focus on developing the quality of children's writing (letter formation and spelling) and not the length. Children are not expected to write extended pieces.	
Children are taught to practise oral composition. They compose sentences orally and say out loud what they want to write.	
Children are supported to hold their pencil comfortably for writing through a range of activities that develop fine and gross motor skills and strength, in addition to handwriting instruction and practice.	

## Key messages

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- Handwriting must be a focus throughout the school and starting in reception.
- Handwriting must be taught explicitly, regularly and systematically.
- Focus on the writing instruments, posture, classroom set up for teaching handwriting.
- Spelling must be taught through phonics including for those in KS2.
- There should be regular opportunities for pupils in all year groups to practice taught spellings and handwriting through dictation exercises.
- Focus on quality rather than quantity – get the basics right first!
- Ensure targeted, timely support for those who need it – keep up not catch up.

## Next sessions/ Questions

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- 2<sup>nd</sup> October: Writing – transcription
- 10<sup>th</sup> November: Reading for Pleasure
- 2<sup>nd</sup> February: Reading fluency
- 5<sup>th</sup> March: Writing composition

