

How to pull a rabbit out of a hat:
Conspicuous strategies to
make cognitive processing for
writing explicit.

Why writing remains the most
challenging of literacy based
tasks for some students.

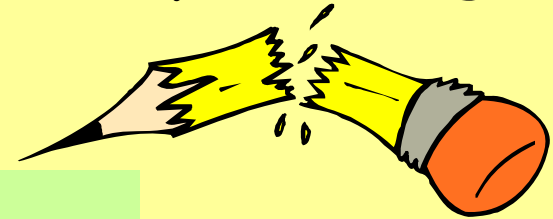


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Why writing is difficult



Processes that underpin writing



Teacher knowledge

Effective Strategies



Common observable behaviours and empirically based strategies

1. Anorexic writing
2. Lack of knowledge
3. Poor editing/revising
4. Time on task issues

Anorexic writing

- Rather than lack of motivation, lack of ability to generate ideas about a topic is the issue (Thomas, Englert & Gregg, 1987).
- Quantity of writing increased by 200-300% when students were prompted to write more and dictate their stories to a scribe. Students know more than they commit to paper (MacArthur & Graham, 1987).

**But writing
is not just
talk written
down**

- Ideas must first be generated before they can be communicated.
- Writing, especially expository writing, is not just 'talk written down' (De La Paz & Graham, 2002).

Deciding on the right instruction

"...students must be able to produce extended texts (and discourse) that will be comprehensible to an unknown audience without the support of others"

(Westby, 1995, p.56)

- Do students lack the spoken language skills to tell a narrative?
Is poor narrative structure the issue?
- Do students have adequate spoken language, but have difficulty presenting this in written form?

Recognise this story?

- **Setting** n a time, in a house in the woods.
- **Character**
- **Initiating event/problem** that was too hot.
- **Internal response** as done it before.
- **Plan** mily decide to go for a walk while it cools down.
- **Consequence /Outcome** While beans are out Goldilocks goes into the house and goes to sleep in Baby Bear's bed.
- **Reaction** e home and find Goldilocks.
- **Reaction/Resolution** s away.

See Berman and Slobin (1994) for full model

Story Retelling -Home Program

Select a book to be the focus of the week

Monday

- Parent reads the story to the child.
- Parents asks questions about the story.

Tuesday

- Parent explains to the child that this time, rather than reading the text, the parent will look at the pictures and retell the story in his/her own words.

Wednesday

- Together parent and child retell the story (i.e., the adult retells one page, then the child retells one page, then the adult...)

Story Retelling -Home Program

Thursday

- Child looks at the pictures of the picture book and retells the entire story independently.
- If the child is unable to do this, the parent needs to offer some assistance.

Over an 8-12 week period the task of story retelling should greatly improve. Children should provide more information about the story, use more complex sentences, more complex vocabulary and retell stories with much greater confidence and ease.

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Diana Rigg, Speech Pathologist and Educational Consultant.

Going from spoken to scaffolded written language for narratives

Recommendations of meta analysis: *Teaching Expressive Writing to Students with Learning Disabilities*

“Explicit teaching of how to write different types of expressive text...the more explicit the examples, the more effectively students learn these writing conventions” (Gersten & Baker, 1999).

Teaching Expressive Writing to Students with Learning Disabilities: A Research Synthesis Gersten and Baker (1999) Retrieved from: www.nclld.org (National Centre For Learning Disabilities USA)

Going from spoken to scaffolded written language for narratives

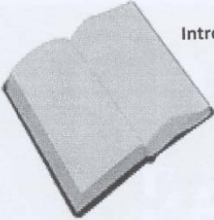
Recommendations of meta analysis: Teaching Expressive Writing to Students with Learning Disabilities

"Teach the critical steps of the writing process explicitly, possibly using a think sheet or mnemonic card... Teachers demonstrate each of these three important steps: planning, writing, and revision" (Gersten & Baker, 1999).



Narrative Story Structure


Comprehension Task: After reading a text summarize the key story elements on the sheet below





Introduction


When?
Who?
What?
Where?

Event/Problem/Complication

 Event/Problem/Complication

 Character(s) feelings


 Character(s) thoughts


 Character(s) plan


1st Attempt

2nd Attempt

3rd Attempt

**Conclusion**

 Character(s) feelings

 Character(s) thoughts

This the Narrative Story Structure from:

Rigg, D. (2007).
*Narrative Program:
The Language-Based
Skills Required for
Literacy Success.*
Concord Printing: Perth.

\$45

Conspicuous Strategies

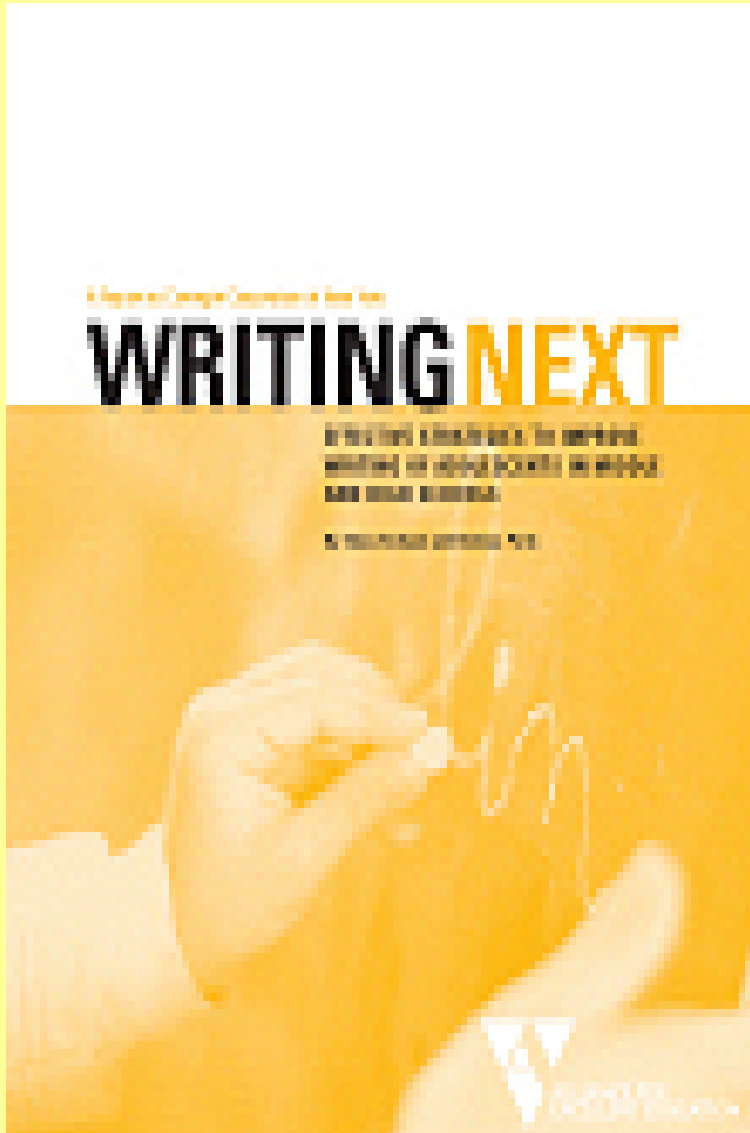
"You tell me, and I forget; you teach me, and I remember; you involve me, and I learn"

- Benjamin Franklin

Conspicuous Strategies
make cognitive processes
explicit

Essential for students
with weak executive
function and/or working
memory.

Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School Graham and Perin (2007)



- Meta-analysis
- 11 significant strategies...some with a greater effect size than others
- 0.82 (large) to 0.25 (small)

Download the 206 page report at
<http://www.all4ed.org/publications/WritingNext/WritingNext.pdf>

Teaching Expressive Writing to Students with Learning Disabilities: A Research Synthesis Gersten and Baker (1999)
Retrieved from: www.nclld.org (National Centre For Learning Disabilities USA)

How to Help Your Students Write Well: An Interview with Steven Graham Brown (2007)

"The 'once and done' model doesn't work for these kids...we found in some of the control groups, the teacher presented it once to the class and the kids didn't get it. Kids with learning disabilities need extra help or scaffolding. You need to go over it and be sure they understand."

"Be systematic and explicit. Give a model. Talk about it, show it, and do it. Tell them exactly what you want."

Read the full interview on [www.ldonline.com](http://ldonline.com)
<http://ldonline.org/article/12991>

Knowledge and strategic behaviour must be taught...

"A writer's brain is like a
magician's hat. If you're going to
get anything out of it, you have
to put something in first"

(Louis L'Amour, 1908-1988)

**(See p.2 Instructional Design Principles for Creating a Writing Brain:
Session 1 notes)**

Self-Regulatory Strategies

- What: Strategies to support planning, generating, organising and revising by teaching writing structure explicitly.
- Goal: For learners to independently apply procedures to monitor and manage their own writing.
- Theory: Cognitive-Behaviour-Modification
- Process: from conscious to unconscious application.
- Research: Strongest effect size (0.82) Graham & Perin (2007)

Stages in Acquiring and Managing Use of a Strategy

(Harris & Graham, 1996)

Stage 1: Develop background knowledge

Stage 2: Discuss It

Stage 3: Model It

Stage 4: Memorise It

Stage 5: Support It

Stage 6: Independent Performance

"I need to remember to take my time and not rush"

"When I write a story I will follow the W-W-W, What=2, How=2 Model"

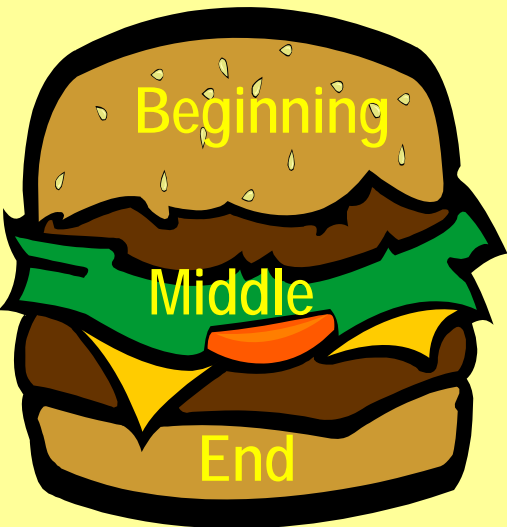
COPS (a proofreading guide)

C capitalisation

O verview

P unctuation/paragraphs

S entences/spelling



PWRR

PLAN

WRITE

REVIEW

REVISE



(Berninger, 2003)

TREE

DARE, SCAN

PLANS

(Graham et al,
1992)

STOP

(De La Paz &
Graham, 1996)

POWER

(Englert, 1992)

See Harris &
Graham (2005)
for a detailed
review of all
these prompts

Self Regulatory Strategy: The Story Grammar Strategy

1. Think of a story that you would like to share with others.
2. Let your mind be free.
3. Write down the reminder: W-W-W-What2-How2

W-W-W

Who, When, Where

What2

What happens when the main character does or tries to do it?

What happens with other characters?

How = 2

How does the story end?

How does the main character feel, how do other characters feel?



4. Make notes of your story ideas for each part.

5. Write your story - use good parts, add, elaborate, or revise as you write or afterwards, so it makes sense.

(Harris & Graham, 1996, p.49)

Model it: Write the script of what *should* be going on in Ruby's head as she prepares to write.

Ruby has never written a complete story but can write sentences. Ruby must be able to read the instructions you write.

Ruby has reasonable 'secretarial' skills, but poor composing skills.

How I wrote the story about the Bad Puppy

What is it I have to do? Write a story about the picture.

What do I see? A sign that says 'Bad Puppy' and a picture of a dog who is not in his kennel. The dog has lots of teeth and a red collar. He is smiling. There is a letter but I cannot read the words. It might be a list. There are some birds drinking out of the puppy's bowl.

Now, I need to look carefully at my story reminder and follow the steps.

W-W-W-What2-How2

W - Who is the main character? The puppy; who else is in the story? I'll have to make that up, the birds and the puppy's family. The puppy belongs to a little girl called Jessica. I will call the puppy Rascal because he is naughty.

W - When does the story take place? Okay, I think I'll look at the picture. It doesn't really tell, so I will make it after school.

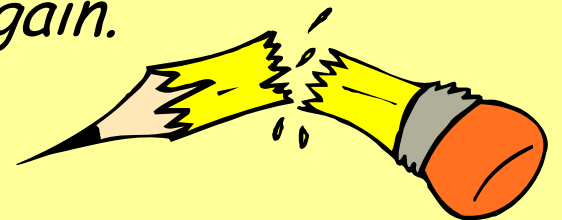
W - Where? It looks like my Aunt's house. She lives in the country, so my story will take place in a small country town called Waroona.

Now I need **What=2**. What does the puppy do? I think the puppy does lots of naughty things like chewing shoes, chasing cats, jumping on the furniture and running away. I think Jessica loves Rascal but her mum makes a list of the bad things he does. Jessica's mum wants to take him back to the pet shop.

Good, I am nearly finished with my planning. The last thing I need is **How =2**.

H - How does the story end? Jessica's mum decides one day that she has had enough of all the bad things the puppy does and she writes a list. When Jessica gets home from school her mum tells her that she is taking the puppy back to the shop. Jessica feels very sad. When Jessica's mum takes the puppy back the pet shop owner says "but all puppies are naughty". Jessica's mum decides to take Rascal to puppy school. Jessica is happy again.

Now it is time to write my story.



The Bad Puppy

This is the story about Jessica and Rascal her naughty puppy. *That sounds good. Look at the story reminder and see what the next part is.* Jessica came home from school one day but Rascal was not waiting for her at the gate.

Okay, now I have to say what happens next. As Jessica walked home alone she heard her mum shouting at Rascal, "You are a bad puppy, look at my favourite shoes. They are wrecked. I have had enough. I am taking you back to the pet shop." *Now I have to say how Jessica feels.*

"But he's only a puppy," Jessica cried. She was worried what would happen to Rascal. *I have to end the story now.*

Jessica's mum rang up the pet shop and read out a long list of all the naughty things Rascal had done but the man said that all puppies can be naughty. Mum decided to take Rascal to puppy school and Jessica was happy.



Going from spoken to scaffolded written language for narratives

Recommendations of meta analysis: Teaching Expressive Writing to Students with Learning Disabilities

"Providing feedback about the quality of work, missing pieces, and the strength of their work. Feedback from a teacher or peer helps students develop writing style. Increasing evidence also suggests the importance of teaching skills such as spelling and punctuation in conjunction with skills such as organization, text structure, and revision techniques" (Gersten & Baker, 1999).



✓ All 7 story parts

Action Words: got, called, waiting, dug, shouted, ate, told, learn

Ruby

Action Helpers: angrily

Describing Words: big, bad

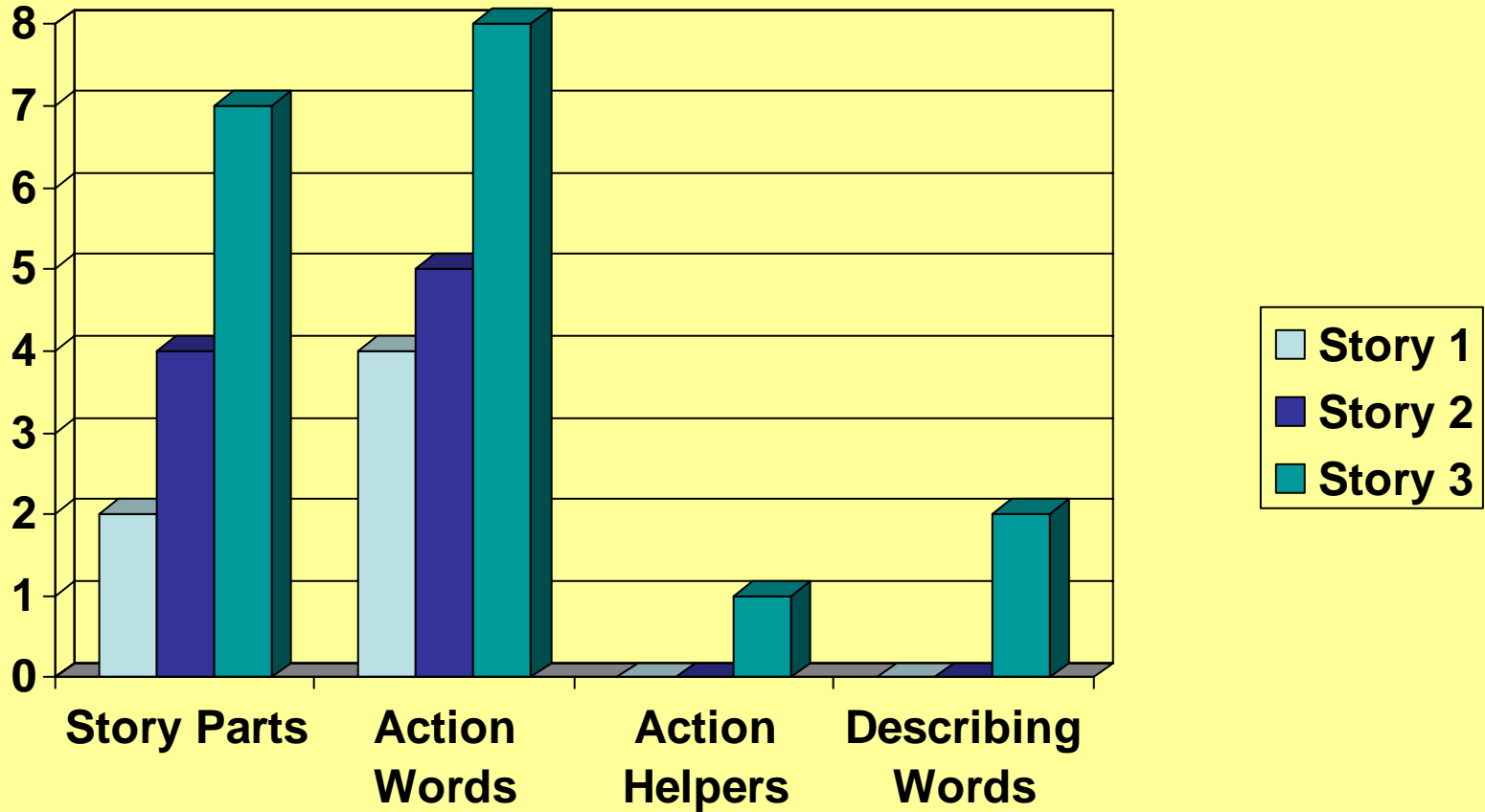


Chart for Action Words (Verbs)

Action words tell what people, things, or animals do, they are DOING words

- He *lifted* the heavy box.
- The book *fell* on the floor
- The horse *galloped* down the road



Chart for Action Helpers (Adverbs)

Action helpers are words that go along with action words. They help tell more about the action. They tell how the action is done.

- The dog ran away *quickly*.
- She smiled happily.
- The book *fell* on the floor
- The horse *galloped* down the road

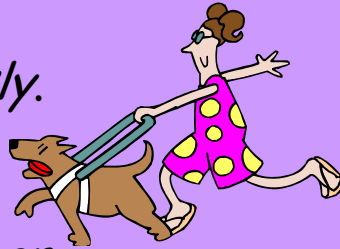
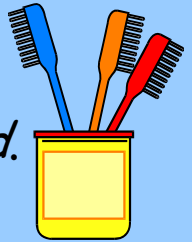


Chart for Describing Words (Adjectives)

Describing words tell more about people, things, or animals. Describing words help to PAINT A PICTURE. Describing words may tell about: colour, shape, how many, size, feelings, smells, sounds, taste, etc.

-The *three, colourful* toothbrushes are mine.

- She was a *nervous* person.
- The *pretty* flower was *red*.
- I like *hot salty* chips.



*Making the writing process work:
Strategies for composition and
self-regulation*

(Harris & Graham, 1996, p. 69)

To develop Laura's background knowledge, before writing...

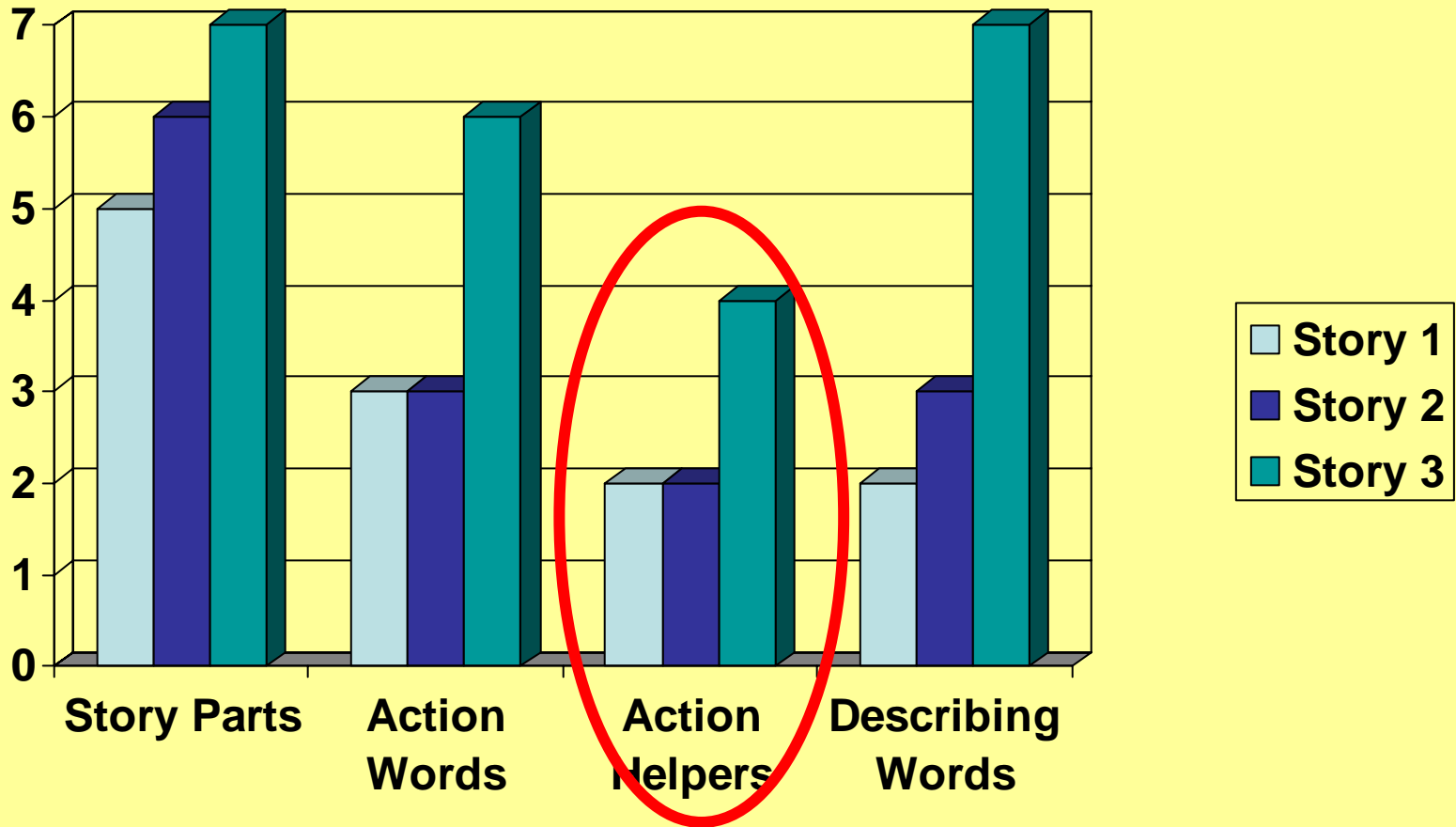
Laura

All 7 story parts

Describing Words ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Action Words ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Action Helpers ✓✓✓✓



Action helpers are adverbs... "the puppy chewed mum's slippers *happily*"

See power point notes from SPELD NZ website for extra slides modelling the process using *For the Birds*.

For the Birds can be viewed at www.itunes.com

There are two other films that lend themselves to the same treatment: *Knick Knack* and *Tin Toy*.

Knowledge



Rules and conventions

- Writing conventions including capitalisation and sentence construction are not applied consistently.

Mechanical breakdown

- Transcribing oral to written is problematic: slower production of letters (Weintraub & Graham, 1998), poor spelling, poor capitalisation...impedes the ability to think and compose.

Self perception

- Less of aware of what constitutes good writing and how to produce it.

Thank you Mr Dirk...Year 6 Exchange Teacher from Canada

The Parts of Speech Rhyme

Every name is called a **noun**

As field and fountain, street and town.

In place of noun the **pronoun** stands,
As he and she can clap their hands.

The **adjective** describes a thing,
As magic wand and diamond ring.

The **verb** means action, something done -
To read, to write, to jump, to run.

How things are done, the **adverbs** tell.
As quickly, slowly, badly, well.

The **preposition** show relation,
As in the street, or at the station.

Conjunctions join, in many ways,
Sometimes, words, *or* phrase *and* phrase.

The **interjection** cries out, Hark!
I need an exclamation mark!

Through poetry we learn how each,
Of these make up the Parts of Speech.

'Run on' sentences are common and sentence structure can be taught in a number of ways.

1. See the lesson from SRA Programs *Reasoning and Writing* (1995) in your notes or Language for Writing (2006) (see pp.14-17 of notes) (www.sraonline.com)
2. See *How to Write a Paragraph* (a Hawker Brownlow Publication)
3. Teach the formula for writing a simple and complex sentence: C + I + P = simple sentence.

1. How to correct run ons



1. Everybody, pencils down. Find part B.

I'll read the instructions: Fix up the run-on sentences in this paragraph. Not all the sentences are run-ons.

2. I'll read the first sentence: Don found a lost dog and the dog had a collar around its neck.

Everybody, is that a run on sentence? (Signal.) *Yes.*

So we'll find where the first sentence should end by finding the subject and the predicate. The subject is *Don*.

Everybody, what words tell more about Don? (Signal). *Found a lost dog.* That's the predicate, and that's where the sentence should end. Put a full stop after *dog...*

(Reasoning and Writing, Lesson 42, p. 134).

Revising = Proofreading

- Less than 20% of the revisions made by students with LD actually change their writing beyond mechanical miscues and simple word changes (Graham & Harris, 2005).
- These students place too much emphasis on spelling and handwriting and see revising as identifying minor errors (MacArthur, Graham & Schwartz, 1991).
- Students with LD lack the effective strategies for making substantive revisions (Graham & Harris, 2003).

How to Teach Proofreading

1. Each week/fortnight collect a writing sample from each student. The assignment can be from any learning area or topic, but remember that teaching proof reading is your focus.
2. Read each response and take notes on the types of errors you observe: punctuation, spelling, capitalisation, too many 'ands' etc.
3. Choose the most prevalent error in students' work.
4. Write down at least three - five instances of the error.

Ignore other errors...

For example:

One day nin Litte Rascals had a club hows.

We Went To witman's purk.

My mum Says I can play.

One day nine Little Rascals had a club house.
We Went To whiteman's park.
My mum Says I can play.
I'm having a Cake.

5. Identify the rule that has been broken in the first example and have students spot the same error in other examples. Highlight errors on the board and ensure students can explain the correction.

The first word in a sentence and names of places have a capital.

6. Write down the rule and have students copy it into their exercise books on an allocated page. Keep the rules simple or commensurate with student ability.

The first word in a sentence and proper nouns (names, days, months, places, streets) have a capital.

7. Identify those papers that have the error and write **P** for proofread and **OK** to indicate the error is not present. Ignore other errors and do not mark the paper in any way.

8. Remove the edited examples and ask the students to proofread their papers if necessary and correct the target error.

9. Next time you collect work review it for all previously taught rules and write **P** to indicate one or more errors have been made.

9. Explain to students and their parents that during these proofreading activities you are only looking for particular errors and ensure you review work thoroughly in other contexts for multiple errors.
10. Keep adding to the rules. By writing out the rule students can work out which rule they have broken.

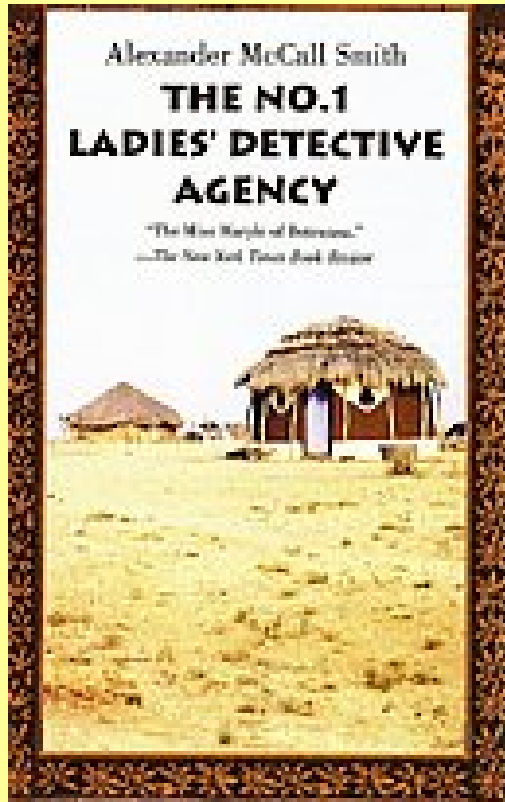
Some examples of rules...

1. Use a question mark at the end of sentence that asks for information. *Where is my pencil?*
2. The plural of *sheep* is *sheep*.
3. This is how to spell *yesterday*.
4. Check for too many 'ands' (run ons). Put a full stop instead.

Time on task

- When asked to write an essay, upper primary school students spend about 6 minutes on task (Graham, 1990).
- Knowledge about different genres, devices and conventions is limited.
- Students with LD of any age often omit basic story elements: setting, problem, ending, or moral (Graham & Harris, 1989).

Self discipline...



When I am finishing a book I will go away...far away. Most recently I went to South America and wrote 3000 - 4000 words per day. As an author you have to be disciplined and you cannot wait for inspiration to come. I write a serial novel for the *Scotsman* newspaper - and that's 1100 words per day every day.

I wish I had the same discipline with chocolate.

Alexander McCall Smith

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters>



www.finncragg.com



Digital animation,
stills, storyboards...

Caravan

**3D Animation DVD and
multimedia resource for K-12
and adult learning.**

After viewing *Caravan*

"What was the story about?"

Capital letters?
Punctuation?

Timothy, 10 yrs
Year 5



Why is writing such a struggle for students with attentional issues?

- Poor planning
- Uneven tempo
- Erratic legibility
- Inconsistent spelling and use of conventions
- Uneven memory flow
- Poor self-monitoring, careless errors
- Impersistence

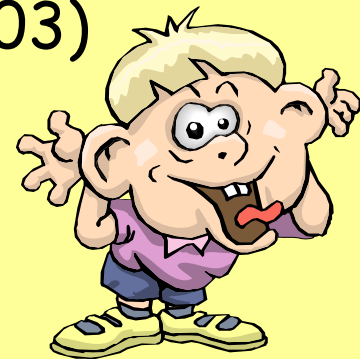
"Writers must divide their time among thought processes, language, recall of rules, and organisation. Attention to such synchronised details may be too taxing for children with attentional deficits..."

...illegible handwriting can be thought of as a tracing of erratic memory, much like an EKG is a tracing of erratic heartbeats" (Levine, 1998, p. 357).

Timothy, 10 yrs Year 5

Problems with Executive Function are symptomatic of ADHD and can be observed in Timothy's performance:

- Fails to finish schoolwork or 'early burnout'
- Difficulty planning, organising and revising writing.
- Difficulty sustaining attention
- Difficulty producing cohesive narratives
- Associated issues with social skills (Renz et al, 2003)
- EF deficits (hyperactivity/impulsivity) are exacerbated if Timothy does not take medication



Unlike many children with ADHD, Timothy has only minor problems with transcription (handwriting and spelling).

One term later...



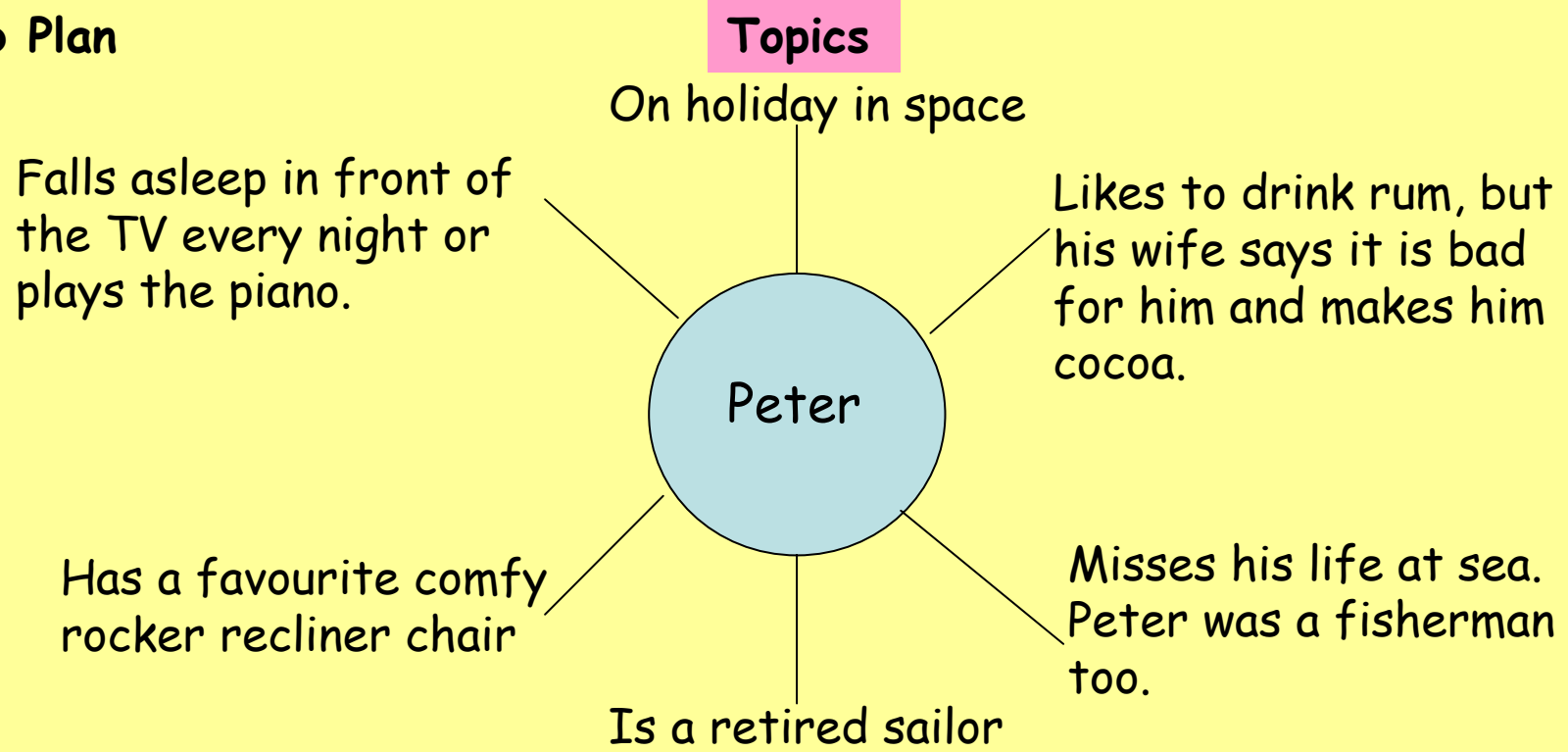
Lesson Structure

(Based on *PAL, Lesson 10, Set 7, Tier 2, p. 198*)

PLAN

- Introduce PWRR (Plan, Write, Review, Revise) (Berninger, 2003) and explain the task: to write a series of storyboards for the DVD *Caravan* that tell *interesting* things about the two characters.
- Introduce 'Plan' component of the writing framework by using a Graphic Organiser Organiser (Berninger, 2003, *PAL, Lesson Reproducibles, p. 141*) and model process with the first still of the DVD.
- Address sentence structure and vocabulary with writing activities linked to the content of the DVD.

Web Plan



Sad

He misses his grandchildren.
The caravan is too small and he is bored.

Sub-Topics Grouping Plan

Sailor

He was the captain of the QE2.
He wore a clean white uniform.

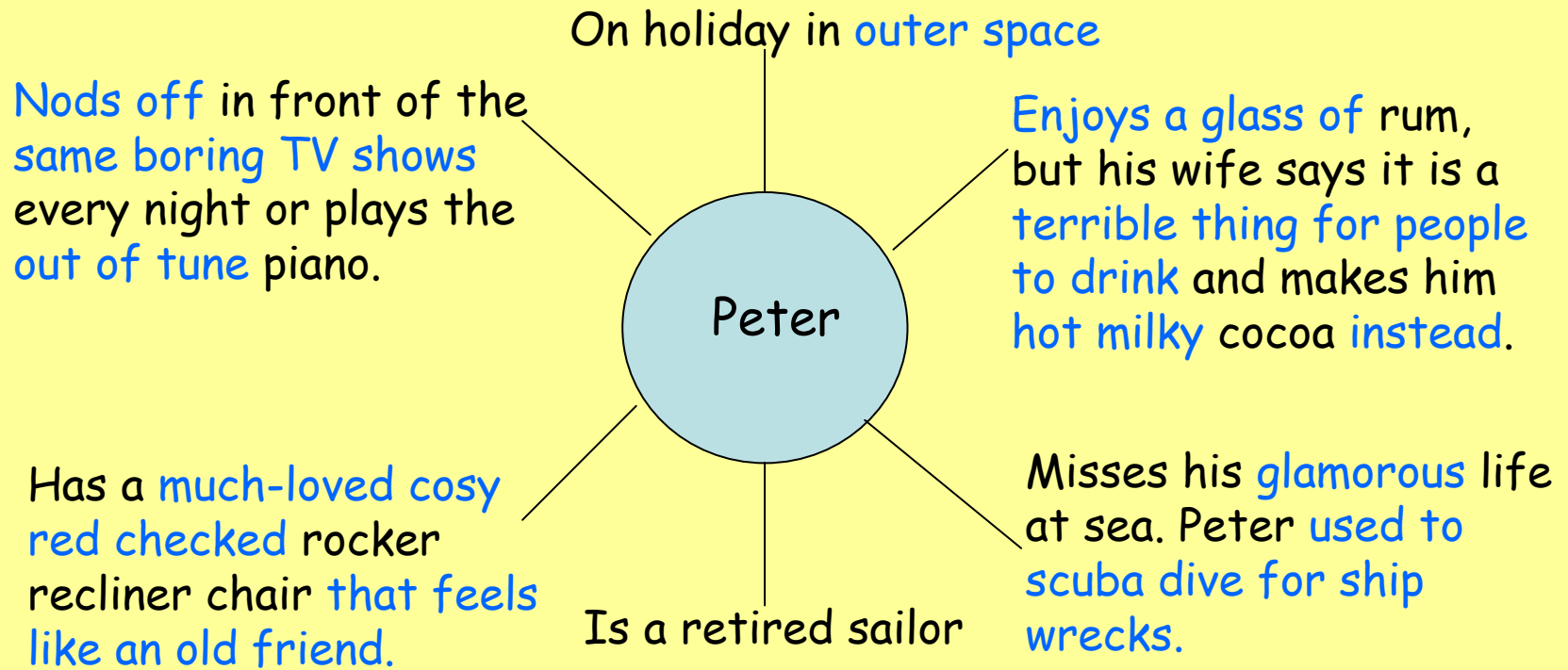
Space

His wife has friends who live on Mars.
Everyone holidays in space.

Holiday

Drive the caravan.
Sleep in his comfy chair.
Look into space with his telescope.

Web Plan (Berninger, 2003, p. 141)



Sad

He misses his grandchildren.

The caravan is too cramped and he gets restless being inside all day.

Grouping Plan

Sailor

He was the captain of the QE2, a luxury cruise liner.

He wore a crisp white uniform.

Space

His popular wife has friends who live on Mars.

Holiday

Cruise the universe in comfort.

Gaze into space with his NASA telescope.

When the spacecraft took off

.....

Word Bank for the 'When' page

space blast-off whoosh star
asteroid planets zooming

astronaut spinning smaller

landed aliens atmosphere fun
adventure rocket floating moon

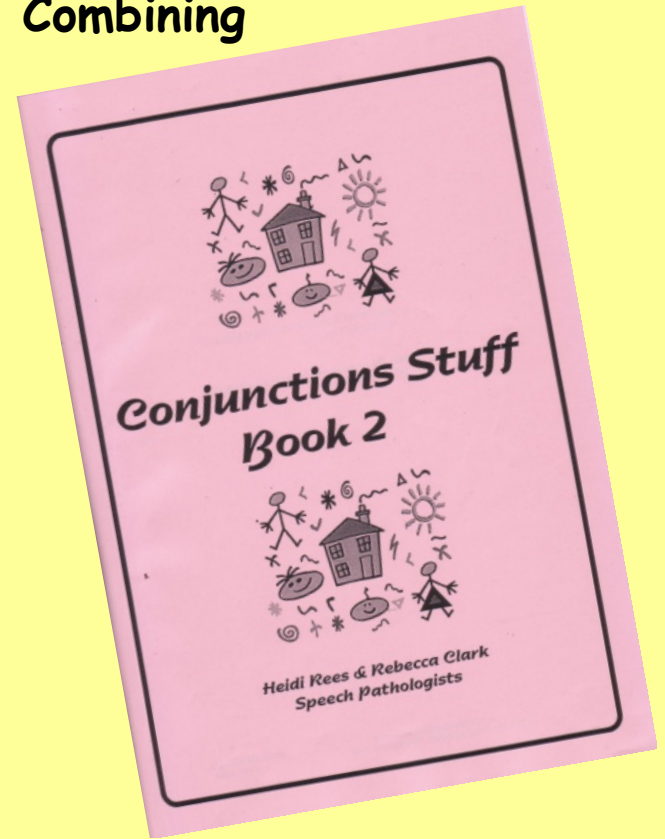
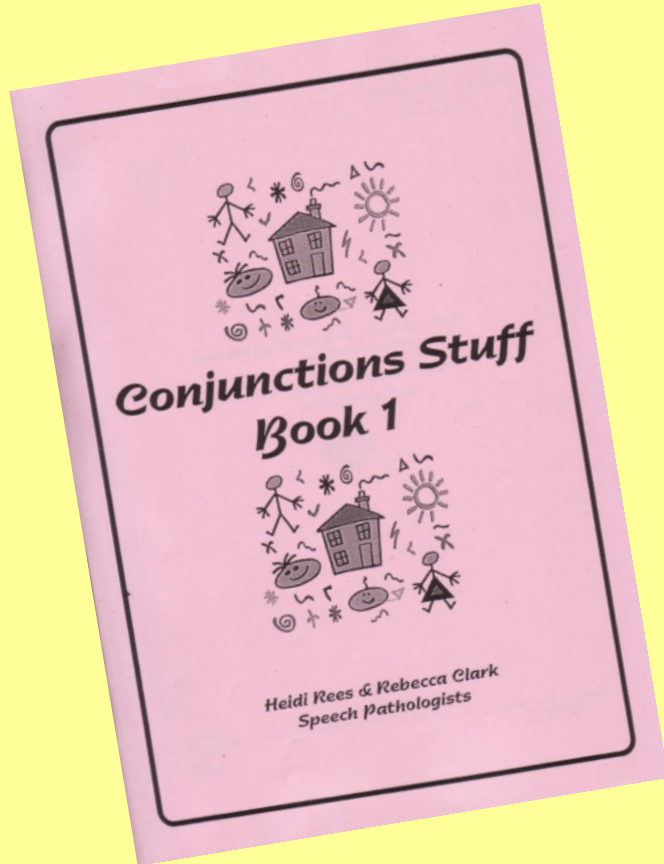
ready arrived exciting flying

When the spacecraft took off there was a loud whooshing sound.

When the astronaut looked out into space he saw the earth get smaller.

When planets are hot no one wants to live on them.

Spoken and Written Sentence Combining



Compound Sentences

because and
but so

Complex Sentences
When when If if
After after Before
 before
 Unless unless

To Order, contact Heidi Rees at: heidir@bigpond.com.au

Super Sentences

Subject	Verb	Predicate
<u>Granny</u>	decided	to explore the night sky outside the caravan.
<u>Granny and Grandpa</u>	are swinging	on the television antenna.
<u>The modern caravan</u>	will zoom	past Earth on its way to Mars.
<u>The supernova</u>	shimmered	in the night sky.
<u>Timothy</u>	would love	to ride in the magical caravan.

Write

- Referring to their plan and the storyboard, students are directed to verbalise the content of the speech bubble and narration, referring to the previous activities.
- Remind students of the use of capital letters and punctuation. Students write their first draft.

Review

- Students review their own work, then a partner's for meaning, capital letters and punctuation and descriptive words. All adjectives and adverbs are underlined. Students graph the number of descriptive words per storyboard.

Revise

- Teacher helps with revision writing and notes spelling errors or other issues working with the particular student at the point of need.
- Students complete final copy.

Why did it work?

Small group instruction (45mins, 1/7 for 6 weeks) that included:

- Multiple opportunities to observe, practice and review every stage of a writing prompt PWRR (Berninger, 2003).
- This self-regulatory process has shown to be effective with weak writers (Graham & Harris, 2006) including those with ADHD (Reid & Lienemann, 2006).
- Exercises on sentence construction using *Cool Conjunctions*.
- Graphing the overall number of words as well as adjectives and adverbs used in each story board (and linking this to extrinsic motivation).

Finally, can you think of something you learned that made you a better writer?

Transitions and cohesive ties (Gregg, 1986).

"words and phrases that clarify and facilitate the flow of ideas. These include appropriately used phrases such as *for example, in fact, of course, therefore, finally and however*"

Memory cards, or a list of sentence starters copied into a book are a useful prompt.

Starting Sentences 1

Last week, Year,
Friday
A long time ago
In the beginning
First of all
Many years ago
When
On the way to

Starting Sentences 2

Next, Soon
A little while later
Before long
After
Later
The next day, week
That evening, morning
At last
Finally

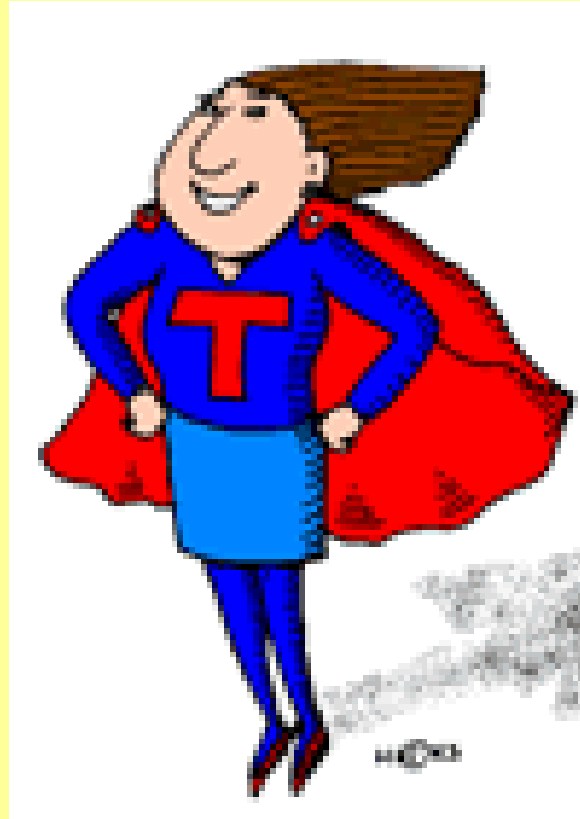
Starting Sentences 3

In spite of
At first
Sometimes
Before long
Although
As it happened
While
From that moment

Memory Cards

Sutton Dyslexia Centre, UK

There is a very poor trickle down of research to teachers...arguably those who potentially make the most difference in children's lives.



We must apply the principles of best practice in writing instruction to work smarter in the classroom.

How I wrote the story of 'For the Birds'

What is it I have to do? Write the story of the film.

What was the film about? A bird that wants to be accepted but is ostracised because he is different. He has the last laugh because the other birds need to hide behind him when they lose all their feathers.

Now, I need to look carefully at my story reminder and follow the steps.

W-W-W-What2-How2

W - Who is the main character? The bird who is different but the other birds who are the same play supporting roles. They are mean to the big bird.

W - When does the story take place? Okay, this is tricky, because it doesn't say. Anytime I guess.

W - Where? On a telephone line somewhere on a country road.

Now I need **What=2**. What happens? The big bird wants to be included but the smaller birds exclude him by teasing him and moving away. The big bird joins them anyway on the telephone line and they peck his feet until he falls off.

Good, I am nearly finished with my planning. The last thing I need is **How =2**.

H - How does the story end? The smaller birds are thrown off the telephone line into the air losing all their feathers. They have to hide behind the big bird because they are naked and embarrassed.

Now it is time to write my story.

