

English as an Additional Language

Seven steps to teaching writing

Step 1: Familiarisation with the genres

Integration with reading and oral language is vitally important, for example, comparing samples of the genre.

Step 2: Use an example to devise a framework

Use a problem-solving approach where the child is active in their own learning, when teaching a new genre of writing. Ask children to look at various examples and through teacher-questioning and paired discussion children figure out the framework.

Step 3: Modelled writing (teacher only)

The teacher ‘thinks aloud’ as he/she writes, while the class observe. The teacher justifies decisions, for example, in relation to the content or the language that is to be used, and also clarifies thoughts and ideas.

Step 4: Shared writing

The teacher has the pen and continues to ‘think aloud’ but uses children’s ideas also. This is an effective and non-threatening way to support children’s writing and involves the teacher and the children writing together. Children make suggestions and the teacher writes these down on a flip chart, thus modelling the writing conventions.

Step 5: Children plan their writing

Children compose with a partner, or in a small group, so that there is peer support as they write, using the framework they have devised. The teacher’s role is to guide and encourage students by giving explicit feedback that refers to the structural or language features required in the text form.

Step 6: Independent writing

The child writes independently using the framework, as a reference. The teacher is always on-hand to facilitate this process through encouragement, feedback, guidance and affirmation.

Step 7: Presentation to an audience

The children present the writing to a variety of audiences, for example, read aloud to parents, publish in a school newsletter, e-mail to a friend, or display on a notice-board.

