

## How can you help your child?

Talk to your child regularly about things they are interested in. Ask them questions and encourage them to add detail to their answers.

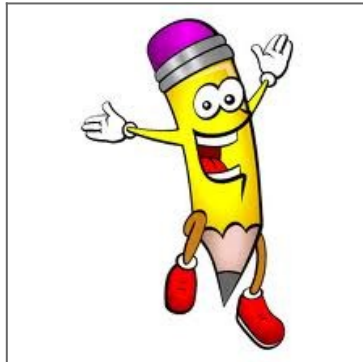
If they use a word incorrectly give them the correct word or a better word.

Read regularly with your child, whatever their age or level and discuss what they have read.

Encourage children to listen to books on CD as well as reading.

Take an interest in the Talk Homework. As it is a talking activity it can be done anywhere at any time! Encourage them to be grammatically correct when talking and don't be tempted to finish their sentences for them.

REMEMBER "IF A CHILD CAN'T SAY IT THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO WRITE IT."



## Wootton Wawen CE Primary School



## A guide to Big Writing

## Vocabulary

**VOCABULARY:** The range of ambitious words a child knows and can use correctly, also known as WOW WORDS.

Every child is encouraged to widen their use of language in order to make their writing richer.

e.g. 'The sirens filled the sky.' - not that interesting!

However, by developing their vocabulary children can improve their sentences dramatically and make them more interesting for the reader:



e.g. 'The **screaming** sirens were **suffocating** the quiet night.'

## Connectives

**CONNECTIVES:** The range of ways pupils have of joining ideas, phrases and sentences.

Every class displays examples of powerful connectives (joining words). The children are encouraged to use these in their writing to join sentences and paragraphs, therefore improving the organisation of their writing.

Each year children are introduced to a wide-range of connectives and taught how to use them correctly.



Lists of these words can be provided on request.

## Talk topics

In school we will be helping to develop the children's "Talking Voice" through literacy, drama and topic.

They will be given opportunities to work with Talk Partners, groups, TAs and Teachers to develop their vocabulary.

To develop the understanding of standard English they will play games such as *talking like the queen*.



## Talk homework

The premise of Big Writing is "If the children can't say it, they can't write it." Therefore we need to develop extended conversations - and this is something parents and carers can do to help their child improve their writing skills.

To support Talk Homework it is a good idea if as many family members as possible join in. Encourage everyone to give their opinions and use the word 'because' to explain why—contrasting opinions are always a good way to get a conversation flowing!

There are some helpful ideas on the next page to help improve sentence structure, and you can incorporate these into Talk Homework, e.g. use a WOW word, change the sentence opener, add in a connective.

Children should not write anything down—they just need to talk about the theme for the Big Writing task.

Take the opportunity to talk to your child as often as possible - talk about the things you see in the supermarket, how places have changed over time, how your day has been. You could also play word games, e.g. a WOW word for each letter of the alphabet.

## What is Big Writing?

Big Writing is a whole school initiative to develop children into expert and independent writers. It promotes the development of writing through fast, lively, fun activities both written and oral and children from Year 1 to Year 6 take part.

We make children aware that they have a talking voice and a writing voice, which are very different; Big Writing aims to develop talking skills so that writing skills improve.

**“If a child can’t say it then they will not be able to write it.”**

## How does Big Writing work?

Big Writing focuses on the four key aspects of quality writing, **V**ocabulary, **C**onnectives, sentence **O**peners and **P**unctuation, you may hear your child refer to them as **VCOP**.

Throughout the year children will have plenty of opportunities to write using different text types and alongside this they will undertake short focused activities that help them to develop their VCOP skills.

Every few weeks children will undertake a Big Writing session where they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have developed using different text types (e.g. stories, explanations, recounts). Following this, children will then identify which features of their writing they need to improve.

A couple of days prior to Big Writing children will bring home ‘Talk Homework’ which explains the task and gives them some guidance for talking the task through.

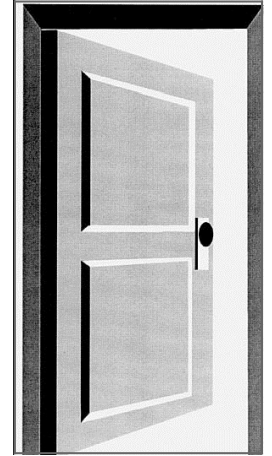
On the day of Big Writing they will undertake some fast, fun VCOP activities before planning their writing and are then given 30 – 45 minutes (depending on age) to write. All writing is marked with a level and filed in a special folder.

## Sentence Openers

**SENTENCE OPENERS:** The strategies pupils have for opening sentences in different ways.

Every class displays and discusses good sentence ‘openers’ (sentence starters) that the children can use in their writing to make their sentences and overall texts more interesting.

We teach ways of improving a basic sentence by changing how it begins e.g. ‘She opened the door’ to a better sentence,  
Cautiously, she opened the door.’



## Punctuation

**PUNCTUATION:** The range of punctuation a child can use and the accuracy with which they can use it.

Every class has a 'Punctuation Pyramid' displayed, showing the levels of punctuation.

Children are taught the names of the higher level punctuation from Year One onwards and they learn to use them in their writing.

The levels of punctuation are National Curriculum levels which children are assessed against, ranging from full stops (Level 1) to using more sophisticated punctuation such as colons and semi-colons (Level 5).



## WOW WORDS

**GLIMMER**

**DEVOUR**

**WIZENED**

**LUSCIOUS**

**SCUTTLE**

**DELICATELY**

## AIMING HIGH

### DON'T SAY SAID SAY...

Roared

Whispered

Raged

Stuttered

Moaned

Cackled

Commented

Uttered

Reported

Confessed

Pleaded

Insisted

Explained

Suggested

Drawled

Joked

Muttered