



# Teaching Writing across the Curriculum in Years 4–6

## Increasing Progress

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### Introduction

Students in years 4–8 need to progress at a faster rate to achieve appropriate levels in writing. This resource is designed to support you to improve the effectiveness of your teaching in writing to increase your students' rate of progress. It does this firstly by describing, exemplifying, and analysing learning tasks that sit inside big ideas in science, social sciences, and English. The resource then focuses on the sorts of teaching that enable students to use writing in support of their learning in these rich contexts. Another focus of this material is the greater level of independence expected of these students as they create a variety of texts for a variety of purposes across the curriculum.

**Please note:** This resource emphasises teaching students the knowledge and skills required for using writing as a tool across the curriculum. It assumes that students have control over basic spelling, punctuation, and grammar conventions. It does not provide suggestions for dealing with these needs. For more information about supporting students with spelling, punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary, refer to <http://soundsandwords.tki.org.nz/>

# Planning and Organisation

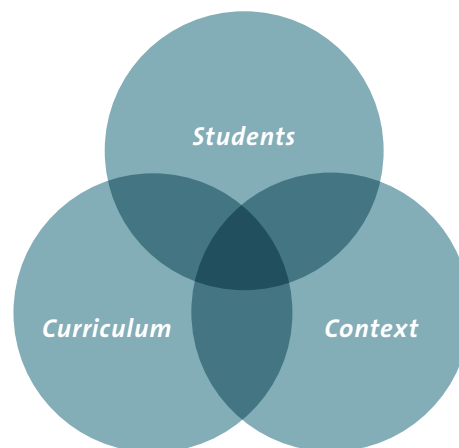
Consider the culture, identity, and language knowledge and experiences your students bring to all learning situations. People in the community, including local iwi and whānau, are valuable sources of information. As much as possible, and where appropriate, consult with them during planning and teaching activities to ensure that learning contexts are rich and authentic for your students – and that you have the knowledge to help them access and make use of their prior knowledge in their learning.

## Three aspects of planning

There are three aspects of planning to consider:

- the big ideas that underpin the New Zealand Curriculum and the big ideas contained in the specific learning area of your focus
- the relevance of the topics and contexts for your students
- the learning strengths and needs of your students.

These three aspects (curriculum, context, and the students' learning strengths and needs) are integral and reciprocal. They naturally overlap, and so learning tasks and activities address each aspect. It is the point where the planning starts that may vary.



## Case studies

Three case studies are used as examples throughout this resource – one at each year level. Each case study exemplifies a different starting point (needs, curriculum, or context) but also demonstrates the significance of all three aspects in the planning and teaching.

<b>Case Study 1: Social sciences</b> (curriculum–context–students)	<b>Case Study 2: English</b> (students–context–curriculum)	<b>Case Study 3: Science</b> (context–curriculum–students)
<p><b>Curriculum</b> Our syndicate is focusing on Continuity and Change. I need to decide on a big idea to explore within that concept.</p> <p><b>Context</b> Toys and games are a social phenomenon that can be explored historically and geographically and is relevant for students.</p> <p><b>Students' strengths</b> What do my students already know about these big ideas that I can build on when teaching the writing skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will support their learning?</p> <p><b>Students' needs</b> What do I need to teach so that my students can use their writing to engage with the social studies ideas and concepts?</p>	<p><b>Students' strengths</b> What do my students know? What can they already do as writers that I can build on? How can I draw on their language, culture, and identity to support the learning focus?</p> <p><b>Students' needs</b> What do I need to teach so that my students can use more precise detail and description in their writing?</p> <p><b>Context</b> I need to find appropriate texts to explore and use as models in a variety of contexts across the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Curriculum</b> I need to check the English curriculum sub-strands of language features and ideas to identify the outcomes for my students.</p>	<p><b>Context</b> We are having a school camp – bush and creek.</p> <p><b>Curriculum</b> I need to check the ecology sub-strand of the science curriculum to identify the specific outcomes that are relevant for my students in this context.</p> <p><b>Students' strengths</b> What strengths, in writing for different curriculum contexts, do my students bring to this learning that I can build on?</p> <p><b>Students' needs</b> What will I need to teach so that the students are able to use their writing knowledge and skills to engage with the science concepts and big ideas?</p>

## Case Study 1

### Social sciences, year 4 – Continuity and Change (“Toys and Games, Past and Present”)

Refer to the level 2 TSMs “Traditions and taonga” and “Weathering and erosion” for more detail about teaching students to use writing in support of their learning in social sciences and science contexts. Go to: <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Pedagogy/Writing-hub/Teacher-support-materials>

Curriculum focus	Planning focus	Learning tasks
<p>A middle-school syndicate planned an inquiry topic around the conceptual strand of Continuity and Change at level 2 of the social sciences curriculum. The conceptual learning was for the students to understand how cultural practices reflect and express people’s customs, traditions, and values.</p>	<p>Jackie, a year 4 teacher, wanted to plan an inquiry that would draw on the cultural knowledge and experiences of all her students, particularly her Māori students.</p> <p>Jackie focused on the big idea that across cultures and time, people have experiences in common, regardless of when and where they live. In particular she wanted the students to understand that although materials and individual games may have changed, the underlying concepts and values have remained the same: children use toys to enhance their enjoyment and entertainment, and to stimulate their imagination, in ways that often involve characterisation and storytelling. They play games together not only as entertainment, but also to develop specific physical and practical skills.</p> <p>Jackie decided to develop this focus by identifying similarities and differences between the toys and games the students engage in now and those of their parents and grandparents.</p>	<p>Jackie engaged her students by sharing a special toy from her own childhood. In doing this, she modelled what would be expected of them during the learning. She encouraged them to share and talk about the games and toys that were important to them and their families, as well as those that have been handed down or become “traditional”. She guided their reading and writing. She also helped them to develop questions for investigation, including interview questions for their whānau, to help them make comparisons and explore shared values. She identified that these activities required the students to use their writing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe a special toy or a game they enjoyed, as a reference point for later comparison with other games or toys</li> <li>• develop questions</li> <li>• record information (in relation to their questions) about toys and games, past and present, in the form of notes, drawings, and graphic organisers and in charts</li> <li>• compare how particular toys were used or games were played</li> <li>• explore why toys and games are important to children.</li> </ul>

#### Starting point: The curriculum led the planning decisions.

The teacher decided on a context in which to embed the conceptual learning. This context supported the concepts and was relevant for the students. The lessons and tasks that she designed recognised the diversity of the literacy learning needs in the classroom.

The students initially chose one of three investigations to pursue: toys that enhance imagination and storytelling, games that develop physical skills, or games and toys enjoyed by their parents or grandparents. Based on her knowledge of the students’ strengths and needs, the teacher was then able to group the students within these investigations, to support their development of the literacy skills they needed to access the learning.

## Case Study 2

### English, year 5 – Making deliberate language choices (“Crafty Writers”)

Refer to the level 3 TSMs “Interdependence” and “Making a difference” for more detail and information about teaching students to use their writing to support learning in science and social sciences contexts. Go to: <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Pedagogy/Writing-hub/Teacher-support-materials>

Students’ learning needs	Planning focus	Learning tasks
<p>Simon, the teacher of a year 5 class, identified (from a range of his students’ writing) that their descriptive writing, in any context, lacked specific details. He noted that they needed to develop the knowledge and skills for using adverbial and adjectival phrases and clauses to add detail. They also needed to know how to choose precise nouns, verbs, and adjectives rather than just add “extra” words.</p>	<p>Simon planned his teaching to emphasise how descriptions are important for writing in a wide range of text types: science reports, explanations, narratives, as well as sensory poetic descriptions. He noted that this emphasis sat under the ideas and language features sub-strands of the English curriculum at level 3.</p> <p>Simon designed an exploration of descriptive writing based on a range of texts, including the School Journal. He also supplemented the students’ learning with carefully selected picture books, both fiction and non-fiction.</p>	<p>Through shared and guided reading and writing lessons, Simon supported the students to identify the effect of precise language and to understand that authors deliberately select language to suit their purpose. In order to transfer their learning, the students practised using particular features and language for different purposes.</p> <p>Simon identified that throughout this study the students would need to use their writing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• record their responses to and analyses of a range of texts</li> <li>• create short descriptive paragraphs (quick writes) on a variety of familiar topics so that they could discuss the differences in their language choices.</li> <li>• create two pieces of writing, one fiction and one non-fiction, based on the same topic, in a relevant social sciences or science focus, using appropriate descriptive features and language for effect</li> <li>• reflect on and describe the strategies they used to provide more detail in their writing, as well as the effect of this detail.</li> </ul>

#### **Starting point: The students’ learning needs led the planning decisions.**

The teacher recognised that most students in his class shared a specific learning need, and he planned how to address this. He designed lessons where students explored texts and authors’ specific language choices. He then supported the students to transfer what they learnt in this English context to their writing in a variety of curriculum learning areas, through a focus on metacognition and on developing their awareness of relevant processes and strategies.

## Case Study 3

### Science, year 6 – Understanding a unique environment (native bush and stream)

Refer to the level 3 TSMs “Interdependence” and “Making a difference” for more detail and information about teaching students to use their writing to support learning in science and social sciences contexts. Go to: <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Pedagogy/Writing-hub/Teacher-support-materials>

Context	Planning focus	Learning tasks
<p>A year 6 class was going on a three-day school camp in term 1. The camp was situated near an extensive stand of native bush and a stream.</p>	<p>The teacher, Nikki, looked at the curriculum plan for the term and realised that this was a great opportunity to explore a planned ecology theme, “Understanding a unique environment – how living things thrive and survive”, at level 4 of the science curriculum. The focus for learning was for the students to explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.</p> <p>To support her own understanding of the big ideas and science concepts related to this theme, Nikki referred to the following books in the Building Science Concepts series:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is This an Animal?</i> (Book 39) – “Scientists group living things.” “We can group animals in many different ways.”</li> <li>• <i>Is This a Plant?</i> (Book 35) – “Scientists group living things.” “There are many different groups and subgroups of plants [in] the bush.”</li> </ul> <p>Nikki also contacted local Māori, some of whom were involved in a conservation group to improve the water quality of the stream. They accompanied the students on their field trips and talked with them about kaitiakitanga, sharing their knowledge of the role of specific plants in the environment and of their use by Māori.</p>	<p>Nikki organised a number of activities to develop the students’ understanding that living things have features and attributes particularly suited to their immediate and wider environment. The activities included exploring the plant and animal life in the bush and near the stream.</p> <p>The students observed the environment closely. They noticed what was growing and living there, saw the differences and similarities, and gathered lots of information and examples (including drawings and photographs) to classify and compare later. The teacher wanted the students to understand that scientists follow careful processes as they gather and record information, so she taught the students strategies and processes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting up science notebooks</li> <li>• recording information in phrases and key words for later retrieval (for English language learners, possibly in their first language)</li> <li>• using specialised vocabulary to describe particular attributes of plants and animals</li> <li>• organising field notes, photos, and information into classification and comparison tables.</li> </ul> <p>The students worked in groups to analyse and synthesise their information. They described their findings; explained how specific features of animals and plants enable them to survive and thrive; and suggested what actions could be taken to ensure the sustainability of this natural environment.</p>

#### **Starting point: The context led the planning decisions.**

The teacher made links between the context and the curriculum and designed tasks and activities that supported and challenged the students’ learning. She encouraged English language learners who had literacy skills appropriate to year 6 in their first language to record notes in this language when it was useful to them.

## Day-to-day planning

Writing in the classroom does not happen only at “writing time”. Provide opportunities throughout the day for your students to use writing in various ways.

### Examples of writing opportunities throughout a day (year 4, case study 1)

Timetable	Learning context	Teacher talk – expectations	Form of writing
9.00–9.15	Planning for the day (oral language about social sciences homework task)	Have your notebooks when you come to the circle. We are going to quickly check in to see what everyone discovered when they interviewed a parent or grandparent about the board games they know how to play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written responses to interview questions, and description of games and toys their parents and/or grandparents enjoyed</li> </ul>
9.15–10.30	Literacy – Reading Writing	You all have independent reading tasks. I will be working with a group. When we come back together, we will look at a text that describes the traditional games Māori children played. We will identify what makes it an effective description and then write a description of our favourite toy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for description of a favourite toy using criteria from effective description</li> </ul>
10.50–12.30	Literacy – Library  Maths	I will continue with our novel in the library. Bring your notebooks – we will be responding to our novel and you may want to make some notes from your research on toys and games.  You will be recording your measurements, and also what you did to find the length.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words and phrases in graphic organiser, and diagrams and drawings, organising information in response to questions</li> <li>Written responses to literature: questions, reflections, wonderings</li> <li>Explanation of particular strategies used to solve a problem</li> </ul>
1.30–2.45	Inquiry topic – focus on social sciences	We will practise the stick game first. Some of you will be crafting and presenting your instructions of how to play the “traditional” board games. Those of you who have finished will be working in pairs and designing your own board game – check the criteria we decided on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures and/or instructions for playing games</li> <li>Plans; diagrams and labels for making board games</li> </ul>
2.45–3.00	Preparation for tomorrow’s learning	Bring your notebooks to the circle. I am going to share a picture book with you, which tells us about the worry dolls of Guatemala. When you get home, jot down a list of the things you think you will need to make a worry doll.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jottings and notes – ideas about resources and materials needed to make the worry dolls</li> </ul>

### ? Questions for the teacher

- What activities will engage my students with the big ideas of this topic?
- What writing knowledge and skills do my students already have, and what do they need in order to support their learning?
- What support do my English language learners need with the cultural and linguistic knowledge necessary in order to be successful in this learning?
- What culture, identity, and language strengths do my students bring to the learning?
- What is the range of my students’ writing needs across the class?

## Expectations: Curriculum Demands

The New Zealand Curriculum Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8 states that:

- by the end of year 4, students will create texts to meet the writing demands of the New Zealand Curriculum at level 2
- by the end of year 5, they will be working towards meeting the writing demands of level 3
- by the end of year 6, they will create texts to meet the demands of level 3.

The text and task demands of the curriculum for students in years 5 and 6 are similar. However, by the end of year 6 students are expected to create more complex texts, demonstrate increased fluency and accuracy, and generally have a greater level of control over processes and strategies. To gain a deeper understanding of the expectations for students at years 4, 5, and 6, go to: <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/National-Standards/Reading-and-writing-standards/The-standards>

The *Literacy Learning Progressions* details the skills, knowledge, and attitudes your students need to acquire. To develop your understanding of these progressions, go to: <http://www.literacyprogressions.tki.org.nz>

The National Standards illustrations display the skills, knowledge, and attitudes demonstrated by students at various year levels as they meet the writing demands of a particular curriculum task. To develop your understanding of the expectations for different year levels, go to: <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations>

### ***Understand the relevant curriculum demands and literacy expectations for all students***

Students' purposes for writing involve more complex concepts and understandings as they move from years 4 to 6. Therefore, they need to become increasingly independent in choosing the most appropriate process, content, structure, and language to suit their purposes. This requires specific support for the development of students' metacognition so that their choices are informed and deliberate.

Refer to the Building Science Concepts series for more background information about science concepts and their development across the curriculum: <http://scienceonline.tki.org.nz/What-do-my-students-need-to-learn/Building-Science-Concepts>

Refer to *Building Conceptual Understandings in Social Sciences* for information and examples to support planning and inquiry-based teaching in social sciences contexts: [http://ssol.tki.org.nz/social\\_studies\\_years\\_1\\_1\\_0/teaching\\_and\\_learning/effective\\_teaching\\_in\\_social\\_studies/building\\_conceptual\\_understandings](http://ssol.tki.org.nz/social_studies_years_1_1_0/teaching_and_learning/effective_teaching_in_social_studies/building_conceptual_understandings)

### ***Identify writing demands***

The writing demands of the curriculum are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need to use as they write for specific purposes in relation to learning tasks across the curriculum. The demands also relate to the texts that students create as they respond to ideas, record and clarify their thinking, and communicate their own and others' ideas.

English language learners work towards the same outcomes as students who are native speakers of English. However, identifying the demands for these students requires a slightly different emphasis. For these students, you need to pay particular attention to identifying the following aspects of the specific texts they need to create:

- vocabulary
- cohesive devices
- phrase, clause, and sentence structures
- features of text types
- tone and register
- embedded cultural knowledge.

When identifying the writing demands of learning activities, assess whether the students can currently achieve them. Plan lessons to address any needs you identify. Be clear about precisely what your students need to learn in order to fulfil the writing demands. For example, your students may need to: use topic-specific or academic vocabulary; record specific information; organise notes; explain their own or others' thinking; describe a phenomenon; or analyse an aspect of a text they have read or heard.

Writing frames and graphic organisers are useful ways of supporting the writing of English language learners. They need explicit instruction in the areas listed above – including by modelling (exploring models), explaining, and discussing – as well as many opportunities for repetition and scaffolded practice. They also need opportunities to build on the cultural and linguistic knowledge they already have, including the chance to use their first language and develop their literacy in it. To be able to complete a particular writing task successfully, some students will need specific instruction in the academic language required in a topic. For more information about specific strategies to support your English language learners, go to <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy>

## Plan writing activities for the curriculum

Build your understanding of the many purposes for writing that support the students' learning across the curriculum. The following table gives ideas for planning writing tasks.

### Examples of writing purposes and tasks across curriculum contexts

Learning area	Purposes for talking, reading, and writing (levels 2 and 3)	Writing tasks
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and create texts</li> <li>• Reflect and evaluate</li> <li>• Shape and construct</li> <li>• Convey</li> <li>• Communicate</li> <li>• Express</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jottings, notes (responding to ideas in literature and information texts)</li> <li>• Descriptions of people, places, things, and events</li> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Arguments</li> <li>• Personal narratives</li> </ul>
The arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and describe</li> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Investigate</li> <li>• Express</li> <li>• Respond</li> <li>• Share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptions</li> <li>• Personal responses, reflections</li> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Instructions</li> <li>• Labels</li> <li>• Captions</li> </ul>
Health and physical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe</li> <li>• Develop (rules)</li> <li>• Express ideas</li> <li>• Explore</li> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factual descriptions</li> <li>• Instructions</li> <li>• Personal responses, reflections</li> <li>• Arguments</li> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Notes, lists, game rules</li> </ul>
Mathematics and statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record and interpret</li> <li>• Describe</li> <li>• Gather, sort, display</li> <li>• Communicate</li> <li>• Evaluate</li> <li>• Investigate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists</li> <li>• Statements</li> <li>• Captions</li> <li>• Plans</li> <li>• Instructions</li> <li>• Tables and labels</li> </ul>



<i>Learning area</i>	<i>Purposes for talking, reading, and writing (levels 2 and 3)</i>	<i>Writing tasks</i>
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Ask questions</li> <li>• Explore</li> <li>• Explain</li> <li>• Find out/investigate</li> <li>• Describe</li> <li>• Compare</li> <li>• Observe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal responses, reflections</li> <li>• Record of findings</li> <li>• Notes, jottings</li> <li>• Factual descriptions</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Labels [diagrams]</li> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Tables</li> </ul>
Social sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions</li> <li>• Gather information</li> <li>• Explore</li> <li>• Consider</li> <li>• Reflect</li> <li>• Evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal responses, reflections</li> <li>• Explanations of social phenomena</li> <li>• Questions for inquiry</li> <li>• Descriptions</li> <li>• Narratives</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Arguments</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan</li> <li>• Describe</li> <li>• Investigate</li> <li>• Trial and evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans</li> <li>• Record of findings</li> <li>• Instructions</li> <li>• Personal responses, reflections</li> <li>• Factual descriptions</li> <li>• Explanations</li> </ul>

For more on purposes for writing across the curriculum, see The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars: English: Purposes and Text Forms at: [www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/index\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/index_e.php). Also, the online illustrations that support the writing standards provide useful examples of tasks and the texts students create in relation to demands across a variety of curriculum contexts: <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations>

## Build students' knowledge of text characteristics across the curriculum

As students progress through the year levels, the texts they create should show increasingly complex ideas and be presented in increasingly sophisticated ways. In year 4, students learn about the specific purposes and features of different text types and start to use these with guidance and support from the teacher. By the end of year 6, students should be making their own choices about the most appropriate text type to use – sometimes a combination of several types, depending on the purpose. They should also know appropriate processes for creating text. For example, they need to know when to plan and why; when it is more appropriate to get ideas down quickly; and when to craft a text. The Ministry of Education DVD *Making Language and Learning Work 3: Integrating Language and Learning in Years 5 to 8* gives specific examples of strengthening the reciprocity of oral language and writing, particularly for students who require language support.

### Example: Supporting students to learn the features of text types they are expected to use across the curriculum (year 4, case study 1)

**Curriculum learning area:** Social sciences (Continuity and Change)

**Big idea:** Across cultures and time, people have experiences in common, regardless of when and where they live.

A class of students was asked to compare a contemporary toy with one from the past and describe the similarities and differences in how they were used. A diecast-metal toy car was compared with a plastic remote-control car, and a rag doll was compared with a modern plastic doll. In small groups, the students discussed the features of both pairs of toys, using a graphic organiser to list differences and similarities. The next day, with guidance from the teacher, Jackie, they found information on the Internet and in the school library about the old-fashioned cars and dolls. Jackie also shared an article from a School Journal, "The First Rugby Ball: A Smelly Story" (SJ 1.2.11) and guided them to recognise how the writer had made comparisons between the first rugby balls and today's standard balls. They then discussed the different ways the toys were used. From this, the students were able to co-construct the following criteria for writing comparative texts:

- Write a title that explains which toy you are comparing – for example, "How dolls have changed".
- Describe the old toy, providing the audience with some background information – for example, "Rag dolls have been made for thousands of years ..."
- Describe the contemporary toy – for example, "The new dolls are made out of plastic ..."
- Use subordinating conjunctions (although, after, before, unless, because).
- End with a statement about each toy and what you could do with it, for example, "Metal cars didn't break and the wheels didn't come off ..." "Rag dolls were floppy. You couldn't move their arms or legs."

#### Example of student's writing

##### *Old Cars New Cars*

*Poeple began making toys cars for over 100 years. They were made with metill before plastic. Poeple made them to look just like real cars and they are very strong because they are made with metill. I found out the first old metill cars were made to avetise cars and weren't real toys. When people wanted toys for thier children they made them smaller to fit little kids hands. You can still get metill cars althogh most new cars have lots of plastic. The remote controle cars are quite big because you don't need to put them in your hand because they are remote. You just hold the controles. The new cars are easier to play with there are lots of diffrent ones and they can do lots more things like whiz around car tracks and zoom along the floor. Metal cars don't turn as easily as the new ones. But they last longer.*

## Develop independence

As young writers develop independence, they need support to reflect on their own writing and to monitor their own progress. The conversations you have with your students will help develop their metacognitive processes as they build on their learning and will also enable you to monitor their understanding. For example, they should be able to:

- read their writing
- highlight the joining words
- circle words that precisely describe something
- underline places where they have deliberately provided some background information
- check that their writing meets the purpose of the task, for example, by describing what the old toys could do and what the new toys can do.

Over time, the students can be encouraged to carry out this process with a peer or peers. Gaining control over their writing processes and strategies, and understanding how and when to use them, are important steps in developing independence. For further examples, refer to the paragraph about developing metacognition on [page 21](#).

English language learners will also benefit from the support of clear criteria for revising their writing as they are developing independence. Specific prompts or sentence starters may be helpful when they are working with peers.

### ? Questions for the teacher

- Am I clear about the writing knowledge and skills I need to teach to support the students' learning?
- Do I know what sort of writing will support their learning in the curriculum area in which they are working?
- Do I know which literacy learning progressions are relevant to my students?
- How can I differentiate my teaching so that specific literacy strengths and needs are addressed?
- How can I ensure that the development of my students' metacognition is an ongoing aspect of my teaching, day to day?

## Knowledge of the Learner and Partnerships

Get to know your students by:

- finding out what they know and what they need to learn, through assessment, observation, and interaction
- developing and maintaining effective learning partnerships with them.

There is a range of needs within any classroom. When making planning and organisation decisions, take care to ensure that learning opportunities are accessible to all students. For example:

- A group of students who are English language learners, and who are clarifying their thinking when they talk to each other in their first language, need to have opportunities for such interactions several times a day.  
Decision: "I will rearrange the desks to make that easier."
- A group of boys who have similar needs in writing will benefit from several short, manageable writing tasks each day.  
Decision: "I will plan to direct them to record a variety of ideas and information during reading, maths, and topic time, and I will monitor how they manage this task."

For information about the writing demands of the curriculum, refer to the "Expectations" section on [page 7](#).

## Identify needs

Monitoring your students' writing regularly and noticing how they respond to tasks will tell you what they already know about writing and what they need to learn.

You can move the students towards the expected level by:

- designing lessons that explore models of effective writing
- leading the discussion to identify the effect of selected words and phrases
- supporting students to create a piece of shared writing in order to practise what they have discussed.

### Example: Maximising a teaching opportunity to identify students' learning needs (year 5, case study 2)

#### Making deliberate language choices

The students observed that a large flock of seagulls had landed on the school field. The teacher, Simon, directed them to make notes about the gulls' size, colour, and movement. He then asked them to craft a short, independent, expressive description of the seagulls so that a reader would be able to visualise their appearance.

Simon wanted to use these descriptions to identify his students' specific strengths and needs in describing an animal's physical features. This information would help him to plan the next science inquiry, which required precise observational description of animal features in relation to their survival.

#### Teacher's anecdotal notes for a group of year 5 students

After an initial analysis of their writing, Simon noted that the students:

- attempted to write descriptive language by using adjectives
- had a limited grasp of written language features
- included some content that was not relevant
- were not making deliberate choices for the purpose (they were not providing enough detail, or using precise descriptive vocabulary, to meet the purpose of the writing).

Following this analysis, Simon modelled how to use descriptive phrases. To do this, he shared a piece of writing that had little description and then showed the students how to include descriptive language more effectively. They compared the effect of the first and second pieces of writing on the reader's visualisation of the scene.

*The seagulls are quite big. They land on the school feild and look for food. They have big wings and white nearly all over. They have a beek and they peck each other. The beek is big. The seagulls' wings are big and they spread their wings to take off. There are black bits on the wings.*

Simon used this example with the whole group to model and co-construct how to add more useful detail by using more precise verbs, adjectives, and adverbs as well as adverbial and adjectival phrases and clauses.

*The black backed gulls are quite a bit larger than other seagulls and swoop in one by one. They land on the school field and immediately start scavenging for food. Their wings are big and black with black splotches on them. Over most of their bodies, their feathers are white and smooth. Their beaks, which are quite long and sharp, are red and the gulls peck each other when they are going for the same food. They spread their wings to take off.*

## Monitor students' writing

Your students' writing books, draft books, and notebooks provide valuable data about their progress and development as writers.

Their writing across all learning areas should show:

- mileage – students improve their writing by writing often
- variety – students need to create a range of texts for various purposes and in various forms (Beginning writers must develop an understanding that all writing is for a specific purpose.)
- evidence of self-editing and proofreading – students need to know that part of the writing process includes checking and adjusting as they write (Through the use of online documents, you can look at your students' changes in each revision, give feedback, and ask questions about their decision making.)
- evidence of responding to feedback – students' draft writing should show signs of an ongoing partnership between the writer and the teacher, peers, and whānau, with feedback and next steps described
- evidence of using models of text – beginning writers of all ages will learn about writing by exploring the writing of others and having a go themselves. (Glue models of text into the students' books. They can be directed back to the models from time to time to explore them with a different learning focus. Models are particularly important for English language learners. Help your students to use the models to explore examples of vocabulary, different types of phrases and clauses, sentence structure, cohesion [linking ideas between sentences and paragraphs], and text structure.)

It is helpful to meet regularly with teaching colleagues to discuss students' writing, the monitoring of their progress, and the effect of teaching. This develops a collective responsibility for students' learning and provides a collaborative inquiry into students' needs and into planning decisions to address these. It also ensures ongoing moderation and understanding of appropriate expectations for students. Over time, these discussions provide rich opportunities for professional development in writing. When reviewing students' writing, use *The Literacy Learning Progressions* as well as progress indicators from the writing exemplars (<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-tools-resources/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum-Exemplars>) to support your decisions. Also refer to *The English Language Learning Progressions* when reviewing and discussing the writing of English language learners. The online illustrations for the writing standards may also be useful for identifying appropriate writing knowledge and skills for particular curriculum tasks (see <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations>).

### Example of student's writing (year 6, case study 3)

Nikki, the year 6 teacher from case study 3, used the piece of writing on page 14 to identify her student's strengths.

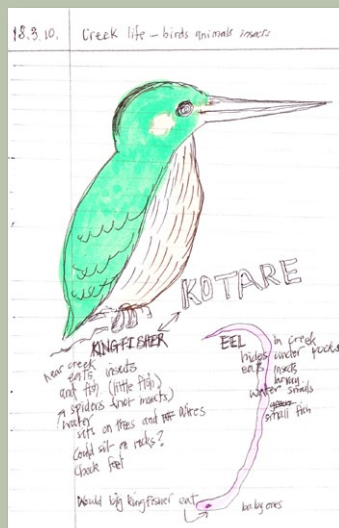
#### **Curriculum context: Science (Living World) – Ecology**

**Purpose for writing:** To explain how the features of a particular bird or animal enable it to survive and thrive in the stream environment.

**Writing task:** In discussion, it was decided that the students could write a letter to persuade a creature that the stream environment would be appropriate for its needs in terms of food and shelter. The following criteria were co-constructed to support the students in their writing:

- Describe a creature you have observed in the creek and a different kind of creature that may be able to thrive in the same environment.
- Give strong reasons why the environment would be good for the creature (based on what it needs to survive and thrive).
- Use rhetorical questions, imperatives, and facts that are relevant to the creature's needs.

## Student's science notebook



## Student writing – persuasive postcard

Dear Kotare

Have you ever considered shifting? I know you would love it here! There is plenty to eat here. I don't have to go very far at all to fill my belly with insect larvae and water snails. Sometimes I have a worm or two. And there are quite a lot of little fish, which I can eat when I'm a bit bigger. There's also water spiders you would like and there's a tree branch hanging over the water. There are lots of smooth rocks and boulders. They are good for me to swim around and hide under. They will also be perfect for you to land on. And I will teach you to swim! Please give this your attention. Come and share my place you'll love it!

With regards, Eel Junior

## Evidence

This writer:

- shows an understanding of purpose – to persuade the kingfisher that this environment would suit it
- chooses content that would interest a kōtare – for example, the food it could eat and the rocks it could sit on
- shows a developing use of language and structures – for example, the opening question to appeal to the reader (the kingfisher) and emotive language (“perfect”, “you’ll love it!”)
- uses some topic-specific vocabulary related to the stream environment
- uses mostly simple sentences
- includes some irrelevant detail (“I will teach you to swim!”).

After discussion with her colleagues, the teacher, Nikki, decided that she needed to teach the student (and several others demonstrating the same need) how to link ideas within and between sentences so that their writing was more connected. She realised that, in teaching how to explain scientific concepts about how features of plants and animals enable them to survive and thrive, she had not focused enough on the importance of linking those features with their purpose. For example:

“I don't have to go very far at all to fill my belly with insect larvae and water snails. Sometimes I have a worm or two. And there are quite a lot of little fish, which I can eat when I'm a bit bigger. There's also water spiders you would like and there's a tree branch hanging over the water. There are lots of smooth rocks and boulders.”

Nikki planned to use this part of the writing to show how the inclusion of a few extra sentences would provide links.

“There would be enough for both of us” would make it clear that the kōtare eats the same food as the eel, rather than imply that it does. Also, including “You could sit there and use your good eyesight to watch for your dinner” would indicate that the kōtare is a predator, has good eyesight, and hunts for its food in the stream. By inserting “Just as well you have a pale underbelly, because they wouldn't be able to see you down on the water”, Nikki demonstrated how to link the bird's features with its ability to survive in that environment.

Refer to Building Science Concepts, *Birds: Structure, Function, and Adaptation* (Book 3), *Is This an Animal? Introducing the Animal Kingdom* (Book 39), and *The Bush: Classifying Forest Plants* (Book 7) for more information about the concepts and the development of scientific ideas for this topic: <http://scienceonline.tki.org.nz/What-do-my-students-need-to-learn/Building-Science-Concepts/Titles-and-concept-overviews>

## Set broad achievement goals

Use *The New Zealand Curriculum Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8* to set achievement goals for where your students need to be by the end of the year. Share examples of the sorts of text they need to read and write in order to be at the appropriate standard. The online illustrations for reading and writing are a good place to start.

These goals will be based on the demands of the curriculum. Tools such as asTTle will help you to identify progress within and between curriculum levels. *The Literacy Learning Progressions* (at the appropriate year level) or *The English Language Learning Progressions* provide the detail for what your students need to learn and be able to do. They also give good guidance about what you need to teach. Consider the opportunities you have within your programme to gather evidence about your students' progress over time.

## Use assessment information from normed data

To find out how your students are achieving in relation to curriculum expectations, plan to use appropriate assessment tools (such as an asTTle writing assessment that has been marked, levelled, and moderated). Reports from e-asTTle provide several different types of information about your students – individually, as groups, or as a whole class. When you are determining the students' needs, refer to the rubric that you will use to mark the writing assessment samples. Placing normed assessment information alongside authentic cross-curricular writing tasks will enable overall teacher judgments to be made.

For more information about using asTTle reports, go to <http://e-asttle.tki.org.nz/resources/Teacher-resources#r5>

For more about approaches to assessment for English language learners, go to <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Impact/Progress-and-achievement>

## Nothing is a secret

Share assessment information with your students to make it clear what they can do well and what they need to work on. The specific language that you use in your classroom when you are talking about texts, in both reading and writing settings, will help them to understand what aspects of writing they are focusing on.

### Example: Sharing assessment information with the students (year 5, case study 2)

Towards the end of the first term, the students completed a writing assessment based on the description of a particular scene – at the market. Simon, the teacher, noticed in the assessments of a group of students that, although they could describe what they saw, they did not use more sophisticated ways (such as adjectival or adverbial phrases or clauses and more precise vocabulary) to effectively describe the scene. Some students attempted to include detail and description but included some irrelevant information. They generally used topic-specific vocabulary, and most of their sentences were simple or compound, with simple punctuation. Across the group, spelling approximations showed an understanding of many spelling patterns. Simon looked at the students' writing in their topic books and reading response books and noted a similar pattern in their writing.

Simon discussed the e-asTTle reports with the students, mostly in groups. With students whose progress was markedly behind or ahead of the rest of the class, he discussed their results individually. During the discussions, Simon supported the students to notice where they were demonstrating good use of particular writing knowledge and skills. He then focused on areas in which their achievement was less than expected or where improvement was clearly required. As groups or individuals, they set targets for achievement.

For example, in discussion with one group he made the following points:

- Overall, your writing assessment was at 2P for this piece. The area where your writing was strongest was in general vocabulary use, but the area we need to strengthen, so you can be at 3B by the end of the year, is in using adjectival and adverbial phrases and clauses, and precise vocabulary, to provide more detail and description in your writing.
- So the goal is: to use phrases, clauses, and precise vocabulary to provide detail and description. Let's write that on the whiteboard so we can all remember it and refer to it, because it is more than just "adding detail". I think if we focus on how writers make deliberate language choices to provide detail and description, you will quickly learn how to include detail and description in your writing, and you will be achieving at 3P in your next assessments. Let's keep track of how well you are doing this over the next month or so in all your writing.

## Help students to develop specific goals

A specific goal for a student may be broad – for example, learning to use paragraphs in order to organise ideas and information more clearly, learning to use complex sentences in order to provide supporting detail and information, or learning to write persuasively. However, there will also be opportunities for achieving focused, short-term goals, such as the “next steps” that teachers may record in their students’ draft writing (for example, recognising where there are sentence breaks and using full stops consistently).

Students can achieve some of these goals very quickly when they are fully aware of the purpose of the goals, and when they know what they need to do as writers and how to do it. Whatever the goal, be very clear about the length of time it should take. As a rule of thumb, no goal should take more than a couple of weeks to achieve, with many needing only a couple of focused lessons. However, you may need to revisit the goals over time with English language learners, providing multiple opportunities for them to practise and develop new skills and knowledge, for achievement to be retained. For examples of how to plan deliberate acts of teaching to help the students meet specific goals, see Instructional Strategies on [page 20](#).

### Example: Developing a learning goal (year 4, case study 1)

<i>Develop the students’ awareness by focusing their learning goals</i>	<i>Personalised instruction: Deliberate acts of teaching in shared and guided instruction</i>	<i>Possible teacher–student interactions</i>
Learning how to organise ideas	Make explicit links between reading and writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to the sequence and organisation of the text in reading.</li> <li>• Provide a framework (for example, a graphic organiser based on the sequence from the reading text) on which the students can record, organise, and build on ideas when writing.</li> <li>• Build on what the students know.</li> </ul>	The board games that you designed are great. Now you need to describe how you went about designing them. It will be important to get the ideas in the right order. Let’s remind ourselves to sequence ideas when we write instructions.

Support the students to meet their writing goals by planning deliberate acts of teaching, such as:

- Select rich texts for reading sessions and direct and prompt the students to notice what effective writers do.
- Model your thinking and make the links between reading and writing explicit as you explore texts with the students.
- Prompt a personal response so that they develop an understanding of effect.
- Ensure that the students discuss language use and features and engage in regular tasks and activities to support their vocabulary development.
- Build on their prior knowledge and scaffold their transfer of new knowledge.
- Prompt them to recall from reading sessions what was discussed about the language choices.

### ? Questions for the teacher

- Am I clear about the next steps for this student or these students?
- What will be the shortest route to achieve the intended learning?
- Do I know which students have similar needs so that I can work with them together as a group?
- How do I need to adapt my teaching to meet the different needs of students, across groups?



# Knowledge of Literacy Learning across the Curriculum and Engaging Learners with Texts

To lead students' learning and accelerate their writing progress with confidence, you need to be secure in your own knowledge of the English language and how it is put together. You have to be able to recognise effective writing (and its features) in published texts and in your students' work. You also need to be able to identify the characteristics, structure, and features of the various text types that your students need to write in order to meet the demands of the planned learning tasks.

## **Improve your knowledge of language and text types**

Work collaboratively with other teachers to identify the writing opportunities and challenges that students come across as they write in the context of a particular inquiry or topic.

### **Example: Discussion at a syndicate meeting (year 4, case study 1)**

For our “Toys and Games, Past and Present” topic, our students will be reading for information, talking to people, and talking about what they find out. As they explore these concepts, they'll need to use their writing in lots of different ways. For instance, they'll need to take notes during an interview and write these up. They may write a factual description of how a particular type of toy works or explain how a game is played. They'll be making comparisons, and there will certainly be opportunities for personal narratives when they recall a time they played a particular game. Do we all know what the characteristics of all these forms of writing are? Where can we find out? Has anyone got any text models that would be useful?

Collect and share text models with your students. Include a variety of topics, types, and forms (poems, stories, descriptions, reports, letters, and advertisements) from a range of sources (novels, magazines, the *School Journal*, textbooks, and anthologies). Be careful when sourcing texts from the Internet – consider the suitability of the content and level as well as the quality and authenticity of the information.

Study your own personal reading, too. A sentence, paragraph, or short excerpt could offer your students an opportunity to explore and enjoy the way language is put together for a particular effect.

## **Lead the learning**

You don't have to have all the answers; the students will respond to your enthusiasm and your “wonderings” when you share a text. Leading discussions on the features of texts and the effect they have on the reader will become easier with practice.

All texts have something to offer, whether it's the content, the features, the structure, or the conventions. Sometimes it is one particular sentence that provides opportunities for teaching and learning. Decide how many grammatical terms to introduce to your students. The important thing is to lead them to notice the purpose and effect of the selected language.

## Example: Using Patricia Grace’s “Beans” (School Journal 3.2.11) to innovate on text structure and help a particular group of students transfer what they know about descriptive language to their own writing (year 5, case study 2)

### Describing an event

“Every Saturday morning in the winter term, I bike into town to play rugby.”  
(The opening sentence from “Beans”)

We need to notice what the main idea of the sentence is (I bike into town to play rugby) and then what the other parts of the sentence do:

- “Every Saturday morning” (tells us how often)
- “Saturday morning in the winter term” (tells us when)
- “into town” (tells us where).

Let’s have a go ourselves. Think of something your mum, dad, or teacher does.

- On Mondays, before the bell goes, Mr Grant lines up the chairs in the hall.
- Every Sunday, winter and summer, Dad and I go for a run along the riverbank.

The important learning here is the effect of the selected adverbials – the phrases and clauses that tell us where or when something happens. We learn more about the character named and the event being described through the inclusion of the detail that the adverbials provide. We can transfer this learning to a different purpose for writing:

- In the olden days, when my grandparents were little, marbles were popular. (information report)
- Every year, just before my birthday, I look in the bookshop. (personal narrative)

## Use clear terminology

When discussing texts with your students, use language that is useful and understandable. Include the terms “purpose”, “relevant content”, “structure”, “language features”, “sentences”, and “vocabulary”. But also use the correct terms for describing the parts of language – nouns, verbs, adjectives, adjectival phrases, adverbs, adverbial phrases, prepositions, articles, and so on. Use these terms when discussing both reading and writing, so that you make the links explicit for your students. Refer to *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8*, Chapter 5: Engaging Learners with Texts for examples, descriptions, and anecdotes that support using terminology with students.

## Co-construct an authentic purpose for writing

Establish a purpose for writing that is related to the curriculum. Your students can help to identify the purpose, and they will be more motivated and involved if they can see how the writing task is relevant to their cross-curricular learning. Be alert to opportunities of writing for authentic purposes – in planned learning areas, in current events, and in the students’ responses to what they are learning.

In particular, be alert to the contributions of students from other cultures, who bring knowledge and expertise gained from other languages and experiences. Encouraging your students to use their own language to discuss ideas, or to write what they know, helps them to make links to the texts they read and write in English and to continue to develop academic literacy in their first language.

Find connections across settings so that students can build on what they know. Help your students to transfer their learning as they gradually build up their repertoire of writing skills and strategies.

### Example: Making connections (year 5, case study 2)

“What do we know about factual descriptions?” “What do we know about fictional or poetic descriptions?”  
 “What do we know about writing descriptions that we can use in any context?”

When you work with your students – one to one, in a group, or as a whole class – the instruction you provide should add to their repertoire of knowledge and skills in writing. When they are faced with a writing task, they will then be able to draw on this repertoire. Make the links explicit for your students.

### Example: Making links explicit (year 4, case study 1)

A couple of days ago we were reading a narrative – a short story – and focusing on its structure – the way the writer had organised her ideas. Today we are working on comparing toys and games. Our focus will be on structuring our ideas into paragraphs. Let’s think about what the first paragraph will contain.

### Provide a time for your students to share their writing with one another

Students need to be able to respond to the writing of others and, in doing so, use the “language” of writing.

Set aside time for this. It may mean finishing the “writing time” ten minutes early or, if possible, adding an extra ten minutes for your students to read, listen to, and discuss their own and others’ writing. They will need training in how to respond to their peers and how to give constructive feedback. They can practise these skills by responding to published texts.

Students in year 4 may need more structure and written prompts as they learn the “language” and practise the skills of feedback. This will be important for English language learners as well – possibly at all year levels. Students who are not English language learners will need to be aware of the demands of learning a second language (and to understand that English language learners in their class may have the same – or better – writing skills in their own first language) and know how to give useful feedback. It may not always be appropriate to have classmates give English language learners feedback.

By the end of year 6, students need to have good control of the skills for providing feedback to a peer, using the criteria for success or the student’s particular goals. For more information on self- and peer assessment, go to: <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-in-the-classroom/Assessment-for-learning-in-practice>

### ? Questions for the teacher

- Am I building my own knowledge of texts?
- Am I collecting models of specific text types that engage my students?
- Have I found some useful text models for my class to deconstruct?
- How can I draw out the students’ metacognitive understandings about language and help them to see how these understandings can transfer to other contexts and other purposes?

## Instructional Strategies: Teaching Strategically

To accelerate the progress of your students, deliberately teach the skills and knowledge they need in order to use their writing successfully across the curriculum. They may need explicit instruction in:

- understanding and using the types of text needed to meet particular curriculum demands
- creating relevant content and using appropriate media
- selecting appropriate processes for meeting specific purposes
- selecting appropriate language, including vocabulary and structures.

To find out more about deliberate acts of teaching, refer to *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8*, chapter 4.

### Use planned instructional approaches

Decide which planned instructional approach (for example, shared writing, guided writing, or independent writing) is most appropriate for meeting your students' needs at a particular time. Identify your students' strengths and needs and group them for planned instruction.

For more on instructional approaches to writing, see *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4* (pages 102–109) and *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8* (pages 111–118).

### Example: Deliberate instruction: Supporting students to write scientific text (year 6, case study 3)

Nikki, the teacher, identified that the students needed to know how to record information relevant to their questions. She suggested a straightforward framework for this. See one student's example below.

<i>My question: What does each plant living near the stream need to survive and thrive?</i>	
<i>What I can see</i>	<i>What I want to know more about</i>
<i>Bush track            Kauri - bigger than I thought. is people round, tall            not many - bit rough and a bit smooth bark            Ti Kouka many -            Harakeke spiky leaves tropical looking            Ponga - silver ferns and lots of dead bits falling off            Toetoe feathers near creek            Manuka near creek quite thin and not very big, prickly            leaves            Windy and exposed along the stream - away from the bush</i>	<i>I wonder how the toetoe survive here - they don't seem as strong as the harakeke or manuka.            Need to find out whether the harakeke have been planted or naturally occurring. Look like they're planted.            Has it always been like this?</i>

After the visit to the stream, Nikki modelled using a writing frame to develop the information into a simple scientific structure. The student then developed her notes into a more extended piece, using the writing frame. During a group conference, Nikki prompted her to include more specific information relevant to her question.

"In your notes, you said it was windy and not sheltered. Was this information relevant to the features of the plants that you observed?"

"Yes, I think so, because all the plants living there had tough leaves. If they weren't tough, the wind might rip them or break them."

"And remember how you noticed that the harakeke looked as if they had been planted? What did you find out from Mr Roa? Make sure you include that, because it is particularly related to the special attributes of harakeke."

### Student's draft writing

My investigation:

What does each plant living near the stream need to survive? Why are these features important for their survival?

What I noticed:

The three plants that grow the most near the creek are manuka, toetoe and harakeke. They all have strong leaves, specially the harakeke and toetoe, but the manuka leaves are small, and spikey and very dark green. The flax leaves are hard to touch but much bigger than the manuka ones. They are more like a bush than a tree, with leaves all coming from the ground. They feel smooth but tough. I thought that they had been planted because they were in a row, but the other plants were random. The toetoe are like a bamboo stick with fethers at the top. They look a bit like the flax plants but the leaves are very long and thin and hang down. They are softer than the flax. It is very windy near the creek, and not that sheltered.

What I think: I think that plants that have strong leaves, or prickly leaves that protect the plant are more likely to survive here. If a plant had big soft leaves, it would not cope with the wind, rain and sun.

What I found out:

Something special about harakeke. Harakeke can stop rivers and streams from becoming polluted! Mr. Roa told us that Māori plant flax near rivers and streams because the plants filter toxins that come from farmland nearby. The harakeke prevent the stream from getting polluted.

### Provide specific, constructive feedback

Precise and explicit feedback is an important instructional strategy for helping students to accelerate their progress in writing. Effective feedback affirms, informs, and guides further learning. It can be oral or written. In particular, make sure your feedback supports your students to develop independence and to transfer their writing knowledge and skills across contexts.

### Develop the students' metacognition

Provide opportunities throughout the day for your students to reflect on their learning and to develop their metacognitive awareness. Develop a classroom environment in which there is a shared language of writing so that the students can articulate their thinking about the purpose, content, structure, and features of texts. Your thoughtful prompting and questioning will help them to monitor their own learning.

What students need to know:	Teacher prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is involved in various kinds of writing; for example, in a quick write, notes, planning and organising ideas and information, creating an extended text</li> <li>• When, and how much, planning is required for specific tasks</li> <li>• What content is relevant or irrelevant for their purpose, and why</li> <li>• What specific and precise vocabulary will make their message or purpose clearer</li> <li>• How to make the most appropriate decisions about content, text structure, and language for their writing purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the quick write a useful way of getting your ideas down? Why?</li> <li>• Did your plan help you to transfer the detail and description into your writing?</li> <li>• What would have helped get your ideas more organised at the beginning?</li> </ul>

## Monitor the effect of teaching

Identify what to look for as evidence of your students' understanding and progress relating to the learning goals. Deliberately look for this evidence – during the lesson, throughout the day, and over the week – to gauge the effectiveness of your teaching. A key indicator of teaching effectiveness is the students' own articulation of their learning, their ability to describe what they can now do as writers and how they do it. Asking them what you do in your teaching that particularly helps them may also be really insightful. Their overall sense of self-efficacy and motivation for writing is also a strong indicator of the effect of your teaching. If you don't see the evidence you are looking for, review your teaching strategies or approaches and plan ways of adapting your teaching. Asking a friend to observe your teaching critically, or even videoing or audiotaping your teaching, are also excellent ways of gaining more precise information about the effect your teaching has.

### Example: Monitoring a lesson (year 6, case study 3)

#### *Before the lesson*

I have supported the students to know how to select the types of writing that best suit their learning purposes as they explain how plants thrive and survive in the stream environment. During our writing lesson today, I will be checking that they are making appropriate language choices for scientific writing. I expect all the students to be able to do this.

#### *During the lesson*

(Reviewing a model of a scientific explanation about how plants and animals adapt to their environment)

I have prompted the students to identify the language features and text structures we discussed. I have checked that they all understand.

(Independent writing)

I have noticed that four of the students are including information that is irrelevant. I need to scaffold their learning further by reminding them of the ideas and information they still have in their notes and by referring to the model again.

#### *After the lesson*

From their topic books, I can see that most students are clear about their purpose and have the content and the ideas they need. Some of them haven't given the precise details that a reader needs in order to completely understand what the plants all have in common that enables them to survive. Tomorrow we will discuss some Connected texts, which we can explore together to look at how the writer has ensured that the reader gets enough information to understand the scientific ideas.

## Plan opportunities for students to practise

As students learn to use the skills and knowledge in their writer's tool kit, they need lots of opportunities to practise what they have learnt. This is especially important for students in year 4, who are building on the knowledge and skills gained from their first three years of schooling, so that they can develop proficiency and independence in using writing across the curriculum. As the students practise, support them to make decisions about content, vocabulary, structure, and language features. Encourage them to articulate their thinking with you and their peers as they share their writing.

## Support students who have higher needs

You will need to engage in deliberate acts of teaching to support learners who have higher needs. The chart from page 79 of *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8* has been extended (see below) to demonstrate some possible interventions.

### How students learn and what teachers do

How students learn	What teachers do: Effective literacy practice for all	What teachers do: Intervention for high-needs students
Imitating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model.</li> <li>• Demonstrate.</li> </ul>	In small-group settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• model your thinking – talk them through it</li> <li>• demonstrate – show them what you mean.</li> </ul>
Identifying and facing challenges, overcoming problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set instructional objectives based on the students' identified needs.</li> <li>• Plan activities with appropriate kinds and levels of challenge.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to solve problems independently and also by interacting with others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify specific learning needs by reading draft writing entries daily.</li> <li>• Design mini lessons with small, manageable learning steps.</li> <li>• Monitor writing behaviours during group work and in whole-class guided revision “helping circle” – adjust instructional objectives when necessary.</li> </ul>
Understanding, and helping to set, learning goals for tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct shared learning goals with individual students and groups of students.</li> <li>• Help students to understand the learning goal of the task.</li> </ul>	Ensure that the student understands the task, the reason for the task, the purpose of the writing, and the learning goal within the task. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am writing about my Nana. (task)</li> <li>• I am writing this because we are finding things from our own lives to write about. (reason for the task)</li> <li>• I am writing to describe Nana and the things she does. (purpose of the writing)</li> <li>• I am learning to choose the words that tell us when things happen. (learning focus)</li> </ul>
Making connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show the students how to activate their prior knowledge.</li> <li>• Help them to see relationships between what they know and what they are learning.</li> <li>• Help them to develop awareness of when to activate their prior knowledge and monitor them to make sure they make connections.</li> </ul>	Be aware of pace. Hook them in quickly with prompts for what they know about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the topic – for example, use a picture book to prompt discussion, tell a personal anecdote, and model how to make connections (“This story reminds me of the time when I was asked to ...”); or use questioning – invite them to tell the person next to them what they have found out about the topic</li> <li>• writing – for example, “Remember the story we read yesterday? We looked at how the writer helped us to get a good idea of what was happening. We noticed how she used groups of words that told us about the place and the time. Today we are going to ...”</li> </ul>

<i>How students learn</i>	<i>What teachers do: Effective literacy practice for all</i>	<i>What teachers do: Intervention for high-needs students</i>
Practising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for practice through text-based activities.</li> <li>• Monitor learning and plan next steps.</li> </ul>	<p>The text-based activities need explicit teaching. In the group setting, the students may be engaged in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practising a particular sentence structure</li> <li>• dictation</li> <li>• innovating on a sentence</li> <li>• identifying what writers do</li> <li>• working collaboratively with a buddy</li> <li>• verbalising their ideas.</li> </ul> <p>Support students to develop stamina in writing by getting them to go through the process: planning, writing, checking (includes editing and crafting, for effect), and publishing. Monitor how they are getting on in the guided revision “helping circle” and ensure that they are aware of their learning steps.</p>
Developing the ability to apply their learning and transfer it to new concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan opportunities for the students to apply their learning.</li> <li>• Show them how to use their learning in new contexts.</li> <li>• Monitor this transfer.</li> </ul>	<p>Provide multiple opportunities for the students to write a variety of texts.</p> <p>Remind them what their learning focus is.</p> <p>Model how they can transfer what they have been practising to a new context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You have used those phrases correctly in your description of your nana. We are going to see how the same sorts of phrase can be used in an information report.”</li> </ul>
Responding to and seeking feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give timely and appropriate feedback.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for the students to act on the feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>Acknowledge the students’ successes.</p> <p>Provide descriptive feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You have tried out the groups of words that describe when this happens. Next time, we will have a look at how writers choose words that tell us more about what’s happening.”</li> </ul>
Reflecting on and regulating their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help the students to build metacognitive awareness.</li> <li>• Encourage them to evaluate and reflect critically on their learning.</li> </ul>	<p>Engage in conversations with the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I notice that you are editing your work carefully. Tell me about the strategies you are working on for recording tricky words.”</li> </ul> <p>Encourage them to discuss what they have done and what they have learnt. Support them to articulate the writing process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “First we had to decide what to say, and it was helpful to share our ideas and practise together, too. When I had a go myself, I knew which words were going to do the job ...”</li> </ul>

### **?** *Questions for the teacher*

- In my lessons, am I actually teaching my students about writing, not just providing them with a task?
- Am I clear about how the learning goal supports and enhances their learning in this context?
- Do I know how to make connections with what my students already know?



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