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# **"Big Talk, Big Write"**

## *Information for Parents*

**"If the kids can't say it, the kids  
can't write it."**



# Your child is now taking part in the "Big Talk, Big Write!"

## What is the "Big Talk, Big Write"?

Students will never be able to write any English words until they have a good use of English vocabulary. To support student's writing, teachers will actively encourage more 'talking'.

Schools in the United Kingdom have developed a way of teaching writing to students which focuses on four main aspects of writing - **Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers** and **Punctuation (VCOP)**.

Through weekly writing sessions (known as Big Writing), students will develop their skills in these areas, as well as learning about and revising several different genres, therefore improving their overall writing ability.

We have started our VCOP activities and we are now introducing The Big Write. We are sure that the student's enthusiasm for writing will increase along with their confidence. They will become better at improving their own writing through self-assessment and develop a greater understanding of the writing process.

## Ingredients that make a Big Writing lesson.

- A lively, fun lesson that focuses on the VCOP and generates ideas or writing - games, activities and active learning.
- An undisturbed writing session, special pens and books, and silence!
- Lots of experience of writing different text types chosen for Big Writing e.g. story, report, news article, diary entry.
- A chance to read through good examples of similar writing - we call this 'hooking in'.
- Talking homework - discussed in class and sent home (important discussion and planning time).
- Reading the writing with a partner and helping one another to make improvements.
- Setting targets for how to make progress.

## The Four Elements of the Big Write

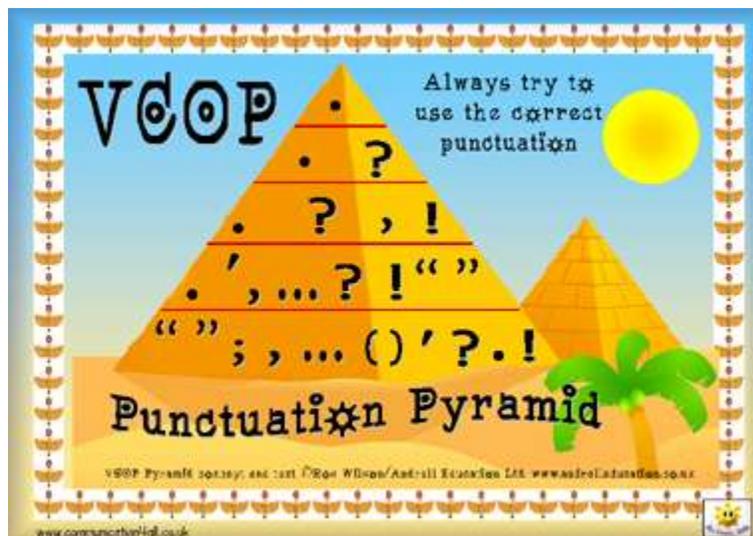


**Vocabulary:** Students learn the different types of words that we use to add meaning and description to our writing. New and impressive words that the students have used and found in good quality texts, are shared with everyone. The students are encouraged to use these words where appropriate in their writing.

**Connectives:** Every class will display examples of powerful connectives (joining words). The students are encouraged to use these to improve the organisation of their writing. They will learn how to use a variety of sentence types to improve their work.

**Openers:** Every class will display and discuss good sentence 'openers' (sentence starters) that the students 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. 'Suzy walked across the room' to a better sentence, 'With her heart pounding, Suzy slowly crept across the creaking floor boards'.

**Punctuation:** Every class will display 'Punctuation Pyramids' showing the levels of punctuation. Students are taught the names of the higher level punctuation from Year One onwards and learn to use them in their writing.



## Talk Homework



As part of the preparation for The Big Write, students will be given a Talk Homework. We need to encourage the development of language and listening skills in order to develop the student's writing ability. Talk Homework is an approach developed to promote the development of conversations.

To help your child get the most of their Talk Homework task, we suggest that you try to do the following:

- Encourage as many family members as possible to be involved in Talk Homework, possibly around the meal table.
- Switch off the T.V. Try to ensure this is dedicated talking and listening time.
- When giving your opinion, use the 'because' word to explain why you think that.
- Give the possible opinions of two contrasting family members who are not present for the talk, and use the 'because' word to explain why they may be different.
- Ask others around the table to give their opinions and use the 'because' word.
- Ask your child his/her opinion and ask them to use the 'because' word.
- Link the topic you are given to discuss something you remember from when you were a child and say why things may be different now. Project forward to how things may be different in the future.

Here are some ways in which you can help your child at home with their writing:

- Talk! Talk! Talk! - ask children to describe anything and ever thing.
- Write! Write! Write! - encourage them to write letters, a diary, email friends and family, send postcards, make lists, play vocabulary games, write stories and illustrate them.
- Take the opportunity to comment on interesting use of VCOP when reading with your child.
- Use a dictionary or a thesaurus to find interesting words to use.
- Encourage children to think about how to improve work completed at home through use of VCOP.
- Be prepared to explain new words to your child and give examples of how to use them.
- Read often and widely with your child.
- Encourage children to use phrases or words seen in a book in their own writing.
- Take it in turns to tell a story. One person starts it, the other says what happens next etc.
- Look at a picture or photo and describe it; use it to tell a story.