

Staff and Parent Literacy Handbook

Reading

Writing

Talking and Listening

Introduction

This booklet is designed to provide staff and parents with support in delivering the outcomes for Literacy under ‘A Curriculum for Excellence’. Literacy is a truly enormous topic and this book is designed to let you know what skills you should be promoting in the three ‘strands’. It will be helpful to the students if we have consistent approaches to teaching literacy skills across the school and consistent expectations in what standard of reading, writing, and verbal communication they need to demonstrate across the school.

Included is a brief run through of the points of punctuation and grammar, which our students will be expected to be aware of, and using, across their learning. The book is not year group specific, the skills and rules within are vital for all stages of secondary education. It is important to know you are not expected to be teaching all of these every time you do something related to a literacy outcome. It will be more manageable to just raise students’ awareness that they need competent language skills in every lesson. Focus only on the skills vital to the outcome you are teaching towards. This document will also be accessible on the school website.

Your ownership of literacy

Like language, and learning itself, literacy isn’t fixed or ever perfect! The coordinators don’t presume to know more about how language skills should be taught in your subject than you do. Please be selective in what you use from this book, which is not meant to be prescriptive. If there is anything which could be added, or made more relevant to your subject area, please get in contact with a member of the Literacy Working Group, and we will do our best to update and improve for the subsequent session.

Contents

Topic	Page
Puzzling Punctuation	4
Miscellaneous Mistakes	6
Common Spelling Confusions	7
Classes of Words	8
There/Their/They're	9
You/You're	10
Its/It's	10
To/Too/Two	11
Who's/Whose	11
The Awful Apostrophe	12/13
The Curious Comma	14
Terrible Tenses	15
Beautiful Bibliographies	16/17
Quizzical Quotations	18
Literacy Support - writing	19/20
Literacy Support - reading	21
Literacy Support – talking & listening	22

Puzzling Punctuation

Warning!

This list applies to literacy. Many marks (like the bracket) can have very different uses in numeracy.

Called	Looks Like	Functions
Apostrophe	'	Gets a section of its own! See pg. 12/13
Bracket	()	Used to contain information which could be removed without destroying the meaning of the sentence – often called parenthesis Example: <i>Mrs. Pennyfarthing (Yes, that was her name!) was my landlady.</i>
Comma	,	Gets a section of its own! See pg. 14
Dash	-	(Not to be confused with the hyphen) 1. Can be used around parenthetical expressions – <i>such as this one</i> – instead of brackets 2. To indicate a close relationship between things Example: <i>the Edinburgh-London flight.</i> 3. To compound two pieces of information into the same adjective Example: <i>post-apocalyptic</i>
Ellipsis	...	1. To indicate a sentence trailing off Example: <i>Now where did I put those...</i> 2. To indicate a deliberate ambiguity Example: <i>When Count Dracula says, "I do not drink ... wine."</i>
Exclamation Mark	!	Ends a sentence in a way that implies heightened emotion or volume Example: <i>Ouch!</i>
Full Stop	.	1. To indicate the end of a sentence 2. To indicate a word has been contracted Examples: <i>Dr. Prof.</i>

Called	Looks Like	Functions
Hyphen	-	To join ordinarily separate words into single words Examples: <i>fig-leaf</i> , <i>ice-cream</i>
Question mark	?	To end a sentence requesting information
Quotation marks (Speech marks)	“”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To indicate someone is speaking Example: <i>Mark yelled, “Watch your heads!”</i> 2. To indicate you are quoting from another source Example: <i>When Othello says, “It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.”</i> 3. To indicate irony or sarcasm Example: <i>He shared his “wisdom” with me.</i>
Semi-colon	;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To connect interdependent statements Example: <i>A master chooses; a slave obeys.</i> 2. To separate items in a list if the list has other punctuation (if the things being listed are more complex to explain than a list which can be separated by commas) Example: <i>Ken, an Aberdonian; John, from Glasgow; and Campbell, a pleasant, young islander.</i>
Slash	/	To make a join between two words. Example: <i>The Hemmingway/Faulkner generation</i>

Note: It is important to note the slash is quite informal – fine for note taking, but to be discouraged in formal extended writing tasks (the word ‘or’ is an excellent substitute).

Miscellaneous Mistakes Common Spelling Errors to Look Out for

Incorrect

Alot

Acheive

Accross

Atall

Begginning Begining

Concious Conscous

Definetely Definatly

Dissappeared

Indapendent Independant

Labratory

Libary Librery

Neccassary Necessery

Parralel Parrallel

Recomend Recommend

Ryhthm Rythm

Sentance

Correct

A lot

Achieve

Across

At all

Beginning

Conscious

Definitely

Disappeared

Independent

Laboratory

Library

Necessary

Parallel

Recommend

Rhythm

Sentence

Common Spelling Confusions

Loose

not secured

Lose

to misplace, get rid of or fail

Affect

a verb that acts on something or someone

Effect

a noun, e.g. The Greenhouse Effect

Principal

those who are responsible, e.g. principal teacher

Principle

a truth or value

Except

something left out

Accept

taking something or entering into an agreement

Compliment

praising someone or something

Complement

common meaning – matches something well
specific meanings in maths, grammar, art, music

Which

the inquiring word

Witch

someone associated with magic

Practice

A noun, e.g. went to football practice

Practise

a verb, to actively or habitually, e.g. you must practise to get better

For a definition of nouns and verbs, see page 8.

Classes of Words

Type	Examples	Definition
Common Noun	city, table, clown, dream	names a 'general' thing, person, place, or concept
Proper Noun	Stephen, Edinburgh, Eiffel Tower	names a specific thing – needs a capital letter
Verb	jump, throw, go	describes an action or process
Adjective	placid, tall, mean, notorious	describes a noun . For example: <u>dirty</u> faces; <u>cunning</u> , <u>slender</u> fox
Adverb	beautifully, quietly, grimly	describes a verb . For example: coming <u>heartbreakingly</u> close
Pronoun	you, they, we, this	substitutable for a noun (less specific)
Conjunction	and, or, yet, but	a connecting word linking words or phrases within, or between, sentences
Preposition	on, near, in, throughout	a word indicating the relationship between different things mentioned in a sentence For example: the little house <u>on</u> the prairie
Participle	eaten, eating; sung, singing	a derivative of verbs used in defining tense (see page 17)
Interjection	Yeah! Cheers!	a word without direct connection to any others, simply expressing an emotion on the speaker's part

Common Grammar Confusion - Their/There/They're

Many students (and even quite a few adults) get confused by words with the same sound but very different meanings. The next few pages deal with some of the very common errors students make every day.

Spelling	Example	Meaning
Their	The class were told to get out their jotters.	Indicates something belongs to a group
There	Put them over there . There were too many barriers.	Indicates a place Indicates the existence of Something (even if that's an abstract idea or concept)
They're	They're complaining about the food again.	A contraction of the separate words 'they are'

They're hanging out their washing over there...

Common Grammar Confusion - You/You're

Spelling	Example	Meaning
Your	Be careful with your spelling!	Indicates possession
You're	You're going to trip over those laces!	Contraction of the separate words 'you are'

Common Grammar Confusion – Its/It's

Spelling	Example	Meaning
Its	The dog chewed its toy.	Indicates possession
It's	It's just not fair	Contraction of the separate words 'it is'

Common Grammar Confusion – To/Too/Two

Spelling	Example	Meaning
To	Give the pen back to him.	A preposition, which relates a thing to an action; a noun (e.g. pen) to a verb (e.g. give)
Too	Grammar is too complicated!	Excessive, more than was needed
Two	In essays, we should write two , never 2.	The number

Common Grammar Confusion – Whose/Who's

Spelling	Example	Meaning
Whose	Whose pencil is this?	Possessive form of who, meaning belonging to whom.
Who's	Who's throwing pencils?	Contraction of the separate words 'who is'

The Awful Apostrophe

Apostrophes have two uses in grammar:

Apostrophe Rule 1

To show that letters have been taken away in a contraction

Examples:

I'll	for	I will
Could've	for	could have
Didn't	for	did not

Note that the apostrophe is always placed where the letters have been removed.

There is the odd example where the spelling is changed as well, for example:

Won't	for will not
-------	--------------

There is no particularly good reason for these exceptions; it's just one of the many ways English is annoying!

Teaching tip:

Contractions like this are generally suitable for any informal piece of writing, but you should discourage their use in formal writing (such as an essay the SQA are going to see).

Apostrophe Rule 2

To show you something belongs to something else; this is done by placing the apostrophe before or after an s.

Note: This rule is subordinated to rule 1, which causes a lot of confusion, as in the examples of **whose** and **its** discussed on previous pages.

Examples:

1. This refers to a single possessor.

In which case the apostrophe is always before the s,

The cat's whiskers
Edinburgh's Old Town
The woman's coat
Aisha's homework

2. To refer to multiple possessors where the plural is indicated by an s at the end.

In which case the apostrophe is placed after the s,

The cars' wheels (more than one car)
The customers' complaints (more than one customer)

3. For multiple possessors where the multiple number is indicated in the nature of the word, often by a change in spelling.

The apostrophe goes before the S (as in example 1):

The men's room (as a has been changed to e)
The crowd's cheering (effectively a crowd is a single possessor)

“What if the word ends in s but is singular? Do I add an extra s or not?”

Either is acceptable – Dickens' novels is correct. Dickens's novels is also correct! It indicates a slight difference in pronunciation, both will be grammatically acceptable!

The Curious Comma

Lots and lots of uses here!

Where there might be some doubt as to the part of the sentence the description refers to, it has been put in *italics*.

1. To contain *parenthesis* (similar to brackets)

Example: The Founders Bridge, *which spans the Connecticut River*, has long been in a dangerously dilapidated state.

2. To divide up items in a list, including the last two.

Example: He hit the ball, dropped the bat, and ran to first base.

3. To separate clauses in a sentence

Example: I trimmed the hedge, which had become very bushy.

4. To separate an *introductory element* to a sentence

Example: *Running for third base*, he suddenly realised what a mistake he'd made.

5. To separate adjectives describing the same thing

Example: A tall, dark, handsome stranger

6. To separate a *quotation* from the rest of the sentence

Example 1: To echo Mr Obama's words, "*Yes, we can!*"

Example 2: For when there is an interruption in the middle of the quotation (2 commas)
"*The question is,*" said Alice, "*whether you can make words mean so many things.*"

7. To separate out sides of a contrast

Example: The fever had reached a new stage. Now it was ice, not fire.

Terrible Tenses

Like many things in this booklet, you could worry too much about tense. Most English speakers wouldn't use the terms below, but they can speak fluent English and communicate effectively. For Literacy, it helps to know about tenses, but don't become obsessed with them. Ninety nine percent of the time the students will get this right if they write naturally. Only go through this when a student is having trouble with mixing their tenses.

There are three tenses; grammar books will further subdivide these, but this is quite enough for our needs.

EXAMPLES

PRESENT tense - to indicate something happening now, is always true, that happens all the time, or happens often.

Paul is looking for the cat.	(now)
Paris is the capital of France.	(always true)
The child brings joy into their lives.	(all the time)
I go to the shops on Thursdays.	(often)

PAST tense - to indicate things that have happened, were meant to happen.

It was a wonderful day for all of us.	(has happened)
Fred had been about to leave when the telephone rang	(meant to)

FUTURE tense - to indicate things about to, expected to, or intended to happen.

Stephen goes to college next week.	(about to)
The wedding will be in June	(expected)

I am going to stop smoking.

(intended)

Beautiful Bibliographies 1

Plagiarism is taken seriously by the SQA. It is increasingly important for our students to acknowledge their sources. There are a couple of different systems used for citing sources, detailed below. You may wish to make sure that students properly cite anyone else's work in any extended piece of writing that has used it, or on an accompaniment like PowerPoint in a Talking and Listening assessment, where the bibliography can be less formal than those shown below.

Method 1: Numbered Endnotes (Most commonly used in the arts and humanities)

Each reference to a source is noted by a number at the end, preferably in raised superscript, as shown below:

Dr Jekyll is an example of a character that is seemingly a pillar of society, but hides sociopathic tendencies¹. The author, Robert Louis Stevenson, was very concerned with the idea of hypocrisy in society².

The references would then appear at the end of the essay and look like this: ¹Carruthers, G. Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' (Scotnotes, 2004): 4

² Harman, C. Robert Lois Stevenson: a Biography (Harper Collins, 2005): 201

Method 2: Name and Date within text (More common in the sciences and social sciences)

Instead of numbers the author's surname, source's title, and the year it was published are given within the text immediately after the reference, and all sources are listed in an alphabetical list (by author) at the end. Example below:

It was long accepted that the weather could be blamed for sudden shifts in human moods, especially among blonde and red-headed people (Wilkinson and Humphrey, 1980, pp 117-120). However more recent experiments have been totally unable to find any evidence of this (Goellnitz, 1986, pp 121-135

Unless your particular course arrangements tell you otherwise, either of these is more than acceptable as a method of citing sources at secondary school level.

Beautiful Bibliographies 2

What should be put in a bibliography?

At the end of the text all sources used, books and web sites, should appear.

Citing Books

A reference for a book requires:

The name(s) of the author(s)

The title of the book

Publisher*

Year published*

Students can find this information on the title page, or its reverse.

Example: Darwin Charles, 'The Origin of Species' (Penguin Classics, 2006)

Citing Websites

Internet sources are becoming equally important as traditional paper ones in the life of school, and are certainly used more often by our pupils. It is vital that they are also given full credit for any information taken from them.

Method:

The name(s) of the author(s) if known (for example who wrote the speech on the website)

Full URL location address

Example:

King, Martin Luther (<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm>)

It will help students get into the habit of citing sources if they are encouraged to include them in any visual aid to a presentation, such as the last slide of a PowerPoint.

Quizzical Quotations

How to insert quotations into an essay

There are times when students need to use others' words in their work. This is not plagiarism as long as it is made very clear by the pupil that they are quoting. Here is a guide for how they should go about this.

Very short quotations

These are best worked into the structure of the text around it, as in the example:

Example:

According to the Department of Defence, Trident is 'central and essential' to the nation's security.

Quotations of two lines or shorter

These are likely to require the previous sentence coming to a halt before launching into the quotation. In this case, the quotation should be preceded by a colon.

Example:

Dr King's words had a power that made people listen and are still often quoted today: '...little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.'

Longer Quotations

If the quotation runs on for longer than a couple of lines it needs to be put in a separate block, slightly indented from the rest of the text.

Example:

Bradbury displays several impressive descriptive techniques in the emergence of the monster:

'It towered thirty feet above half the trees, a great evil god, folding its delicate watchmaker's claws close to its oily reptilian chest. Each lower leg was a piston, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in thick ropes of muscle, sheathed over in a gleam of pebbled skin like the mail of a terrible warrior.'

It's worth knowing that there are very few contexts where students should be using quotations so long that they need to be blocked off, as this tends to indicate the student is relying too much on others' words. Exceptions are in subjects like English where the language itself is being considered in depth (like a soliloquy). The arrangements for many subjects, like Geography, specifically ban quotations of longer than a sentence.

Remember that one of literacy's golden rules is: if you can't explain it in your own words you don't understand it!

Glossary

This glossary gives definitions of many useful terms, as well as examples of them in use.

It covers more specific writing skills than the earlier pages in this book, and many may not touch on your subject area very often.

Literacy Support – Writing

Term	Meaning and use
Carrot and stick	a persuasive technique that contrasts the good consequence of following the writer's opinion with the bad consequence of the alternative. <i>Example:</i> "Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?" William Shakespeare
Figure of speech	anything not meant to be taken literally, commonly used in both persuasive and creative writing. Examples include the metaphor and the simile .
Hyperbole/Exaggeration	a persuasive technique that deliberately overstates the facts in order to strengthen the reader's reaction. <i>Example:</i> "I will never understand my wife's insistence on carrying around everything she has ever owned all of the time." Jeremy Clarkson
Linking word/phrase	show that information or ideas are being progressed. <i>Examples:</i> now, later, more so, subsequently, furthermore, additionally
Metaphor	a form of figurative language that describes something as something else that it is not literally, in order to bring out qualities in the thing being described. <i>Example:</i> "He's a shadow of his former self"
Onomatopoeia	a word which describes a sound, and sounds like that sound itself, lending immediacy to the description. <i>Examples:</i> crash, tinkle, scrape, rip
Long Vowel	a slow vowel sound, which generally implies that something is moving slowly, takes a long time, or that it is boring. <i>Example:</i> "slow sinuous movements" (try saying the above phrase out loud, you should hear how the vowels are emphasised)

Pattern of three	a persuasive technique that puts three arguments, or pieces of evidence, together to reinforce the power of each, especially the third. <i>Example:</i> “You’ve let me down, you’ve let the team down, but most of all you’ve let yourself down!”
Pronouns	words that identify a person or thing, without naming it. <i>Examples:</i> you, they, we, this They can be used effectively in persuasive writing or talk to make the reader/audience feel part of the argument.
Repetition	using the same word or phrase over and over again to help it gain force, very common in both creative and persuasive works. <i>Example:</i> “we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender” Winston Churchill
Rhetorical Question	a persuasive technique that presents a question with only one sensible answer in order to make alternatives to the argument seem foolish. <i>Example:</i> “Must we always stigmatise strangers? Is compassion only to be extended after the event?” George Monbiot
Simile	a form of figurative language that describes something being similar to something else, in order to bring out qualities in the thing being described. Easily identified, as almost all contain either ‘like’ or ‘as’. <i>Examples:</i> “The water glowed - as if lit from within” “The day melted away like a snowflake”
Topic sentence	the sentence at the outset of a paragraph that states what piece of information, or what opinion, the rest of the paragraph will expand on. <i>Example:</i> “For many people, the fortnight at the end of the year is a time not full of love and reassurance but of stress and loneliness” Terence Bleaker
Turn Signal	similar to linking words, but convey a change in tone or ideas is to follow. <i>Examples:</i> however, but, on the other hand, conversely...

Literacy Support - Reading

Term	Meaning and use
Alliteration	Device where the start of words next to, or near each other, start with the same sounds. <i>Example: His ideas were greeted with a <u>s</u>tony <u>s</u>ilence</i>
Analysis	One of the key reading skills . Looking at the style of the writing and its effectiveness. <i>Example: Why does the writer repeat the same phrase at the start and the end?</i>
Context	The information around a particular sentence or word that makes its exact meaning clear. This can be the rest of the sentence, the rest of the paragraph, or just the overall subject of the whole passage.
Emotive words	When the author selects words with a heightened emotional attachment for a greater impact. <i>Example: Torturous instead of boring</i>
Evaluation	One of the key reading skills . Making judgements on the success of the writing in fulfilling its purpose – how entertaining, informative, emotional, persuasive (and so on) it was. <i>Example: Comparing the bargain hunters to vultures, which are scavengers, really got across how desperate and greedy they were.</i>
Skimming & Scanning	A useful skill in reading for information . When you know what information you're looking for, quickly surface read most of the text. stop to deeply read, and take notes on, only the bits relevant to what you need.
Understanding	One of the key reading skills . The ability both to find separate points of information (or separate arguments), and show comprehension by explaining it in your own words.

Literacy Support - Talking and Listening

Term	Meaning and use
Content	The quality and relevance of the key points of information, or key arguments, the speaker gives.
Challenge	A positive quality in listening , where someone (respectfully) Points out flaws in someone else's argument, or asks for justification of it.
Jargon	Words specific to a given topic or subject. Jargon is, generally, a negative quality in talk, as all talks should be suited to the target audience. Too much use of jargon implies that the speaker either has no deep understanding of the topic (and is 'parroting') and can't put it into their own words, or hasn't considered how to communicate information to their audience. The only time jargon should be used is when the whole audience is sure to have a sound grasp of its meaning. <i>Examples of jargon: (subject: cricket) "Caught in silly mid-off trying to fend off a plumb Yorker!"</i>
Justification	The evidence someone is able to provide to prove facts in informative talk , or the reasons they give for their opinions or beliefs.
Opinion as fact	A persuasive technique that implies something, which could in fact be debated, is an accepted, established fact. <i>Example The Civil War was one of the bloodiest in history, and yet it was only through the crucible of the sword, the sacrifice of multitudes, that we could begin to perfect this union, and drive the scourge of slavery from our soil.</i> Barack Obama
Standpoint	The overall point of view someone is trying to promote or defend in persuasive solo or discussion .
Summarise	A positive quality in both solo talk and discussion . In solo talk, a speaker will round up their key points at the end. In group discussion, a listener will simplify a complex point someone else has made to help consistent understanding within the group.
Tone of Voice	The effective use of tone of voice to convey what the key points of information are (Informative), or the speakers feelings on a subject (Informative and Persuasive). There are very many different tones that can be effective, <i>examples: enthusiastic, sarcastic, disapproving serious...</i>

We would like to acknowledge the work of James Gillespie's High School in the production of this handbook.