

PRIMARY BLOG

Primary language teacher and consultant **Clare Seccombe** discusses writing at Key Stage 2

HOW TO
explores
challenging
texts

“Pupils can access different kinds of text, such as stories, poems, information texts, adverts and messages, and write for different purposes, such as to inform and to entertain.”



PROFILE



Clare Seccombe

Clare was a secondary languages teacher for 14 years, seven of those as an AST specialising in primary languages and the international dimension. Since 2009 she has taught Spanish and French in Sunderland primary schools, as well as working as a consultant. Clare is an avid blogger and tweeter who set up and maintains the MFL Sunderland website (www.lightbulblanguages.co.uk) and is a member of ALL's Primary Special Interest Group and ALL Council.

The aims of the national curriculum for writing in Key Stage 2 Languages are ambitious. By the end of Year 6, children should be able to

- write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences, using the variety of grammatical structures that they have learnt
- write phrases from memory, and adapt these to create new sentences, to express ideas clearly
- describe people, places, things and actions in writing

Writing at varying length can mean writing single words, as they will do in Year 3, progressing through phrases and sentences to be working with short texts or paragraphs in Year 6. They can access different kinds of text, such as stories, poems, information texts, adverts and messages, and write for different purposes, such as to inform and to entertain. They will also be writing for different audiences: their partner, their own class,

another class in the same school, parents, the school community via a newsletter, website or blog, children in a neighbouring school and even children in a school in another country. They will be writing about the topics that we are used to seeing in Key Stage 2 languages, such as themselves, their family, their town and their hobbies, or indeed a topic that has captured the class's imagination.

Writing at text level in this way in Year 6 can seem out of the reach of some children and some non-specialist teachers, and indeed launching straight in to such a piece of writing would be a daunting prospect for anyone! However we can use different strategies to model and scaffold the writing so that children are more confident. Here are some examples:

- Plan or say out loud the sentence before physically writing it, making a note of ideas and key words first.
- Give children the words required to make a sentence on word cards,

which they need to put into the correct order. Clues like capital letters and punctuation will help them. They can then discuss which words in the sentence they could change to create new meaning. This links to the following idea.

- Train children to adapt a model. Show them an example of a text to which they can aspire, and show them how they can use the sentence structures to create their own similar text without having to start from scratch.
- Most children will appreciate starting to write longer sentences and texts using a writing frame or other knowledge organiser such as a word mat. This gives them confidence and added security.

If you would like some examples of Year 6 writing work using texts, or examples from any year group, have a look at Write Away! magazine <https://www.lightbulblanguages.co.uk/writeaway.htm>