

# Writing Challenges for EAL pupils and what to do about them

Whilst improving speaking and listening will help, what else can be done to help give these children further structures and vocabulary to improve in the classroom?

- Structure talk so as to address specific challenges/gaps. E.g. if a child had problems with sentence order, give them a chance to hear the correct order by frequent modelling.
- Limited ideas- scaffold ideas for children- model how you are writing. Think of the topic and list the vocabulary before you start so there are words available to use when they come to write.
- Writing at length- time- chunk it up so children are not having to write the whole thing in one go- work on one aspect a day rather than write the whole story now.
- Many children struggle with the idea of paragraphs: teach as the 'hamburger' idea- that writing is not one big lump but layers of different things, so each paragraph is something a bit different- sometimes this is easier for non-fiction than fiction. Again, modelling is the key. In my 'hamburger' story the top bun is the introduction, the lettuce is the setting and characters, the tomato is the problem that needs to be solved, the burger is the main event and the bun at the bottom the resolution.
- Use of complex sentences- modelling again! Taking a sentence like 'I went to the park' and improving it by asking questions. Encourage children to be brave enough to offer their own sentences for 'levelling up'.
- Inconsistent use of tenses- tenses game- turn a sentence into a different tense- I went to the shops> I am going to the shops
- Subject/ verb agreement - could play something like the tenses game only for verbs. The dog drinks his water every day. What happens when there is more than one dog? The girl goes to her school in the morning> more than one girl?
- Use of prepositions- Location- above, at, below, beside, between, by, on, over, out, under. Time -after, before, by, during, in, on, at, since, until. Direction- across, around, down, into, past, through, to, toward. Other relationships- about, as, by, for, from, of, with- understanding they have different purposes can encourage children to use them more.
- Punctuation- many children find using punctuation hard. Capital letters and full stops are the basics children often omit. The more you read and write the more idea you have about punctuation, seeing examples of how it is used is always helpful and practising focusing on just that aspect when editing writing also helps.

You can only really learn to write well by writing and editing and seeing good models of these, both through books and teacher modelling. It takes time to be a good writer and practise. Often there is not enough time in the school day given to working on writing skills and this will have an impact for children finding writing harder.



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