



# KS2 writing assessment and moderation

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Lead moderator

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# Session Aims

To revisit knowledge and understanding of assessment criteria for writing against the 'pupil can' statements, with a particular focus on:

- The distinctions between the 'pupil can' statements for WTS and the EXS
- Understanding of how the statements for these two standards might be evidenced
- STA guidance around 'particular weakness' and 'Independent writing'

## Working towards the expected standard

The pupil can:

- write for a range of purposes
- use paragraphs to organise ideas
- in narratives, describe settings and characters
- in non-narrative writing, use simple devices to structure the writing and support the reader (e.g. headings, sub-headings, bullet points)
- use capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas for lists and apostrophes for contraction mostly correctly
- spell correctly most words from the year 3 / year 4 spelling list, and some words from the year 5 / year 6 spelling list\*
- write legibly.<sup>1</sup>

## Working at the expected standard

The pupil can:

- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader (e.g. the use of the first person in a diary; direct address in instructions and persuasive writing)
- in narratives, describe settings, characters and atmosphere
- integrate dialogue in narratives to convey character and advance the action
- select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately (e.g. using contracted forms in dialogues in narrative; using passive verbs to affect how information is presented; using modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility)
- use a range of devices to build cohesion (e.g. conjunctions, adverbials of time and place, pronouns, synonyms) within and across paragraphs
- use verb tenses consistently and correctly throughout their writing
- use the range of punctuation taught at key stage 2 mostly correctly<sup>^</sup> (e.g. inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech)
- spell correctly most words from the year 5 / year 6 spelling list, \* and use a dictionary to check the spelling of uncommon or more ambitious vocabulary
- maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.<sup>2</sup>

Working towards the expected standard	Working at the expected standard	Distinguishing between the two standards in pupil work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in narratives, describe settings and characters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in narratives, describe settings, characters and atmosphere</li> <li>integrate dialogue in narratives to convey character and advance the action</li> </ul>	<p>Writers attaining WTS must be able to include descriptive detail in their narrative writing. However, unlike writers at EXS, they may be more likely to 'tell' rather than to 'show'. For example, they may be more likely to include visual descriptions of characters and settings, often relying on simple noun phrases or similes; and less able to use what someone says and does to reveal more about that character, or to choose and use language that builds a strong sense of place and atmosphere. While dialogue may be included in narrative writing at this standard, it may not be successfully used to communicate new information to the reader and/or move the plot forward. Writers at this standard may also not be able to gauge the right amount of detail to support reader engagement and understanding, either missing out important information or overwhelming their reader with excessive information in parts. Their descriptive vocabulary may be underdeveloped, or their attempts at using more ambitious vocabulary may be inaccurate.</p>

## COMPARING STATEMENTS AT WTS TO EXS

### DESCRIPTIVE DETAIL IN NARRATIVE WRITING

THINK OF A PUPIL IN YOUR CLASS WORKING AT WTS AND A PUPIL AT EXS

# COHESION

## Working towards the expected standard

- use paragraphs to organise ideas
- in non-narrative writing, use simple devices to structure the writing and support the reader (for example, headings, subheadings, bullet points)

## Working at the expected standard

- use a range of devices to build cohesion within and across paragraphs
- use verb tenses consistently and correctly throughout their writing

## Distinguishing between the two standards in pupil work.

Writers achieving WTS need to be able to sequence their writing logically. They also need to demonstrate an understanding that writing – events, ideas, facts – can be organised into units of related information, or paragraphs, and that, in some writing contexts, paragraphs may require headings. However, cohesion across and within paragraphs may be lacking in their writing. For example, each paragraph may cover a single topic, rather than link to the preceding and subsequent paragraphs to build a coherent whole. Individual paragraphs may be made up of a series of statements which the pupil is not yet able to bring together into a meaningful whole or which may contain some information that is irrelevant. Writers may also make omissions and lack knowledge of the devices that support cohesion, or the ability to use them consistently. For example, if a writer is unable to sustain verb tenses within a paragraph and across a piece, cohesion deteriorates. Other attempts at using cohesive devices, or words which can be used to show how the different parts of a text fit together, may be evidenced. However, if they are not used appropriately and to support cohesion and reader understanding, the writer is still working towards EXS.

# WRITING FOR A PURPOSE

Working towards the expected standard	Working at the expected standard	Distinguishing between the two standards in pupil work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• write for a range of purposes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader</li><li>• select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately</li></ul>	<p>A pupil judged to be working towards EXS should demonstrate an understanding that writers write for different reasons – to inform, to entertain, to explain or to persuade, for example. This understanding should be evidenced by an ability to adopt the appropriate form and its conventions for a given purpose. However, their ability to select and manipulate language will still be developing, and their sentence structures may be simple, repetitive or inaccurate. Whereas pupils whose work meets EXS are described as writing ‘effectively’ for purpose, indicating that they are not only able to sustain the form, but also to select and use language to serve that form and engage their intended audience. Writers working at EXS make mostly appropriate choices and only occasional errors.</p>

# Qualifiers

**‘most’** indicates that the statement is generally met, with only occasional errors

**‘many’** indicates that the statement is met frequently, but not yet consistently

**‘some’** indicates that the knowledge or skill is starting to be acquired and is demonstrated correctly on occasion but is not yet consistent or frequent



# Challenges

Some collections will be easier to judge than others. It is expected that some pieces will cause discussion and debate

Remain objective, systematic and thorough in your approach, gathering evidence across whole collections, to eradicate any room for ambiguity



# Exploring writing collections

## Comparing WTS and EXS in narratives

### **Working Towards the Expected Standard**

The pupil can:

Write for a range of purposes



### **Working at the Expected Standard**

The pupil can:

Write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader

What do we mean by 'effectively'

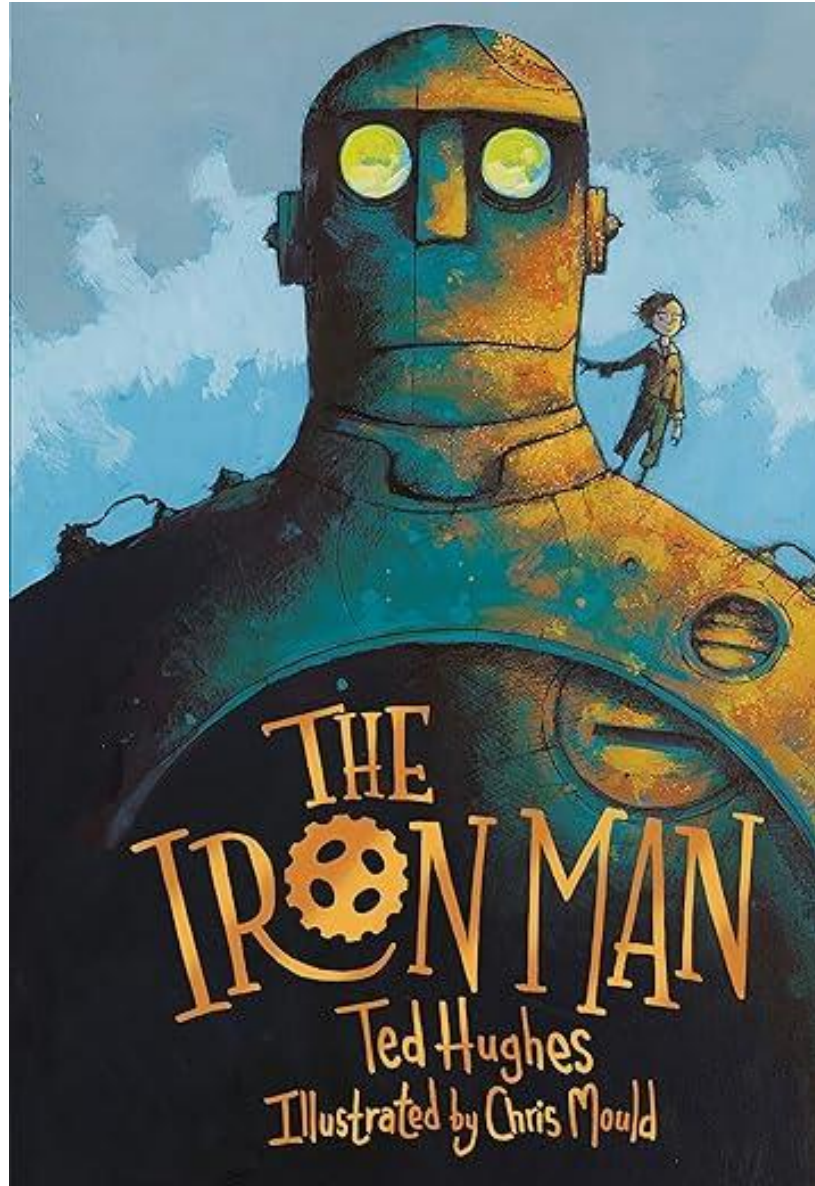
'Write **effectively** for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader

Ensure that **purposeful** tasks enable the pupil to demonstrate an **awareness of the intended audience**, so pupils are able to **adopt vocabulary and grammatical structures** that reflect what the writing requires, The explicit reference to awareness of the reader emphasises the importance of the writer's intended audience.

**Key points:**

- When setting tasks, be clear about who is the intended audience, and the purpose of the writing
- When giving feedback, ask the writer, "What **effect** do you want to have on the reader?" (e.g. to scare, intrigue, inform, persuade etc.) rather than, "Can you add in a fronted adverbial, an adjective, a noun phrase...etc.?"
- Allow opportunities for pupils to select their own intended audience
- Give plenty of opportunities to read their writing aloud
- During reading, consider how the reader is affected, and how the author elicited these responses.

# Pupil A- WTS



## **The Coming of the Iron Man**

On the very brink, on a dark night, I stood.

I came to the top of the cliff.

How far had I walked? Nobody knows. Where had I come from? Nobody knows. How was I made? Nobody knows.

I (new to this mysterious world), stood tall on the top of the cliff. I could taste what I though was sand blowing into my mouth, it was disgusting. The wind, that sang though the tree branches, crept through my rusty fingers, it pressed powerfully against my back. I could see and hear the sea, eating away at the edge of the rocky hard beach.

There I stood. Clueless creatures flying above my dustbin-shaped head – soaring and ducking in and out of the cotton candy hazy cloud. A stench. A reek. Below me there was nothingness. Just the noise of the sea. For the last time. I got punched by the wind into the deep blue sea below.



# Strengths

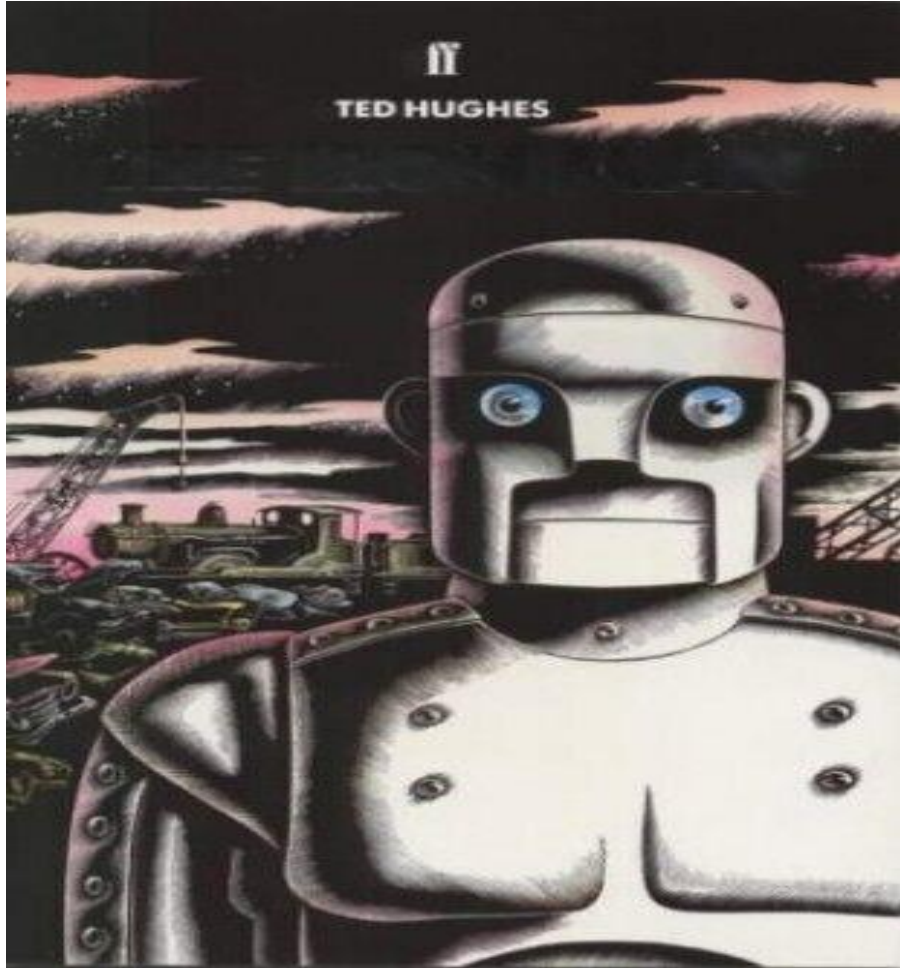
The text is written from the viewpoint of the Iron Man and maintains the stance throughout.

The writing draws heavily on the style and content of the original text, but the pupil has also included some additional, original detail in extended sentences.

The use of personification describes the wind pressing 'powerfully' against his back, and the sea 'eating away' at the edge of the beach.

These are elements of the higher standard.



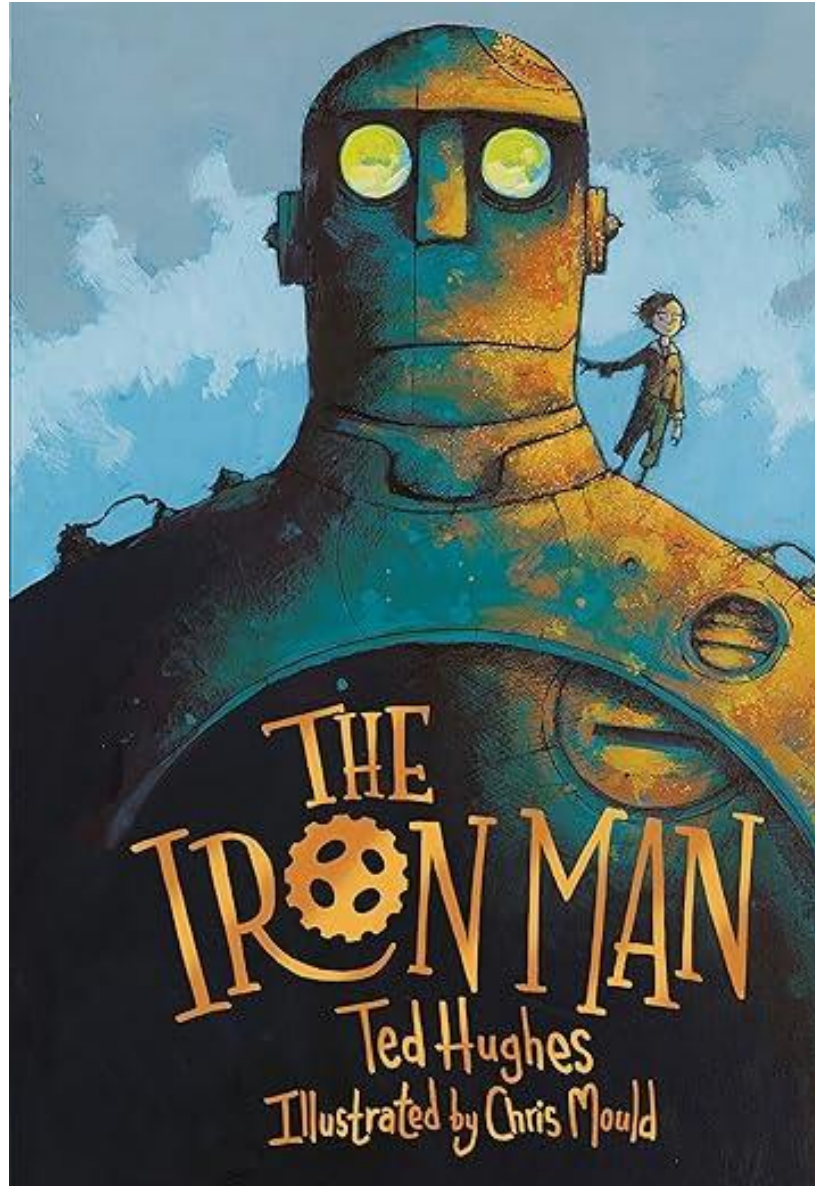


# Areas for development

Some choices are imprecise and do not serve the descriptive intent or reader comprehension

Contradictory descriptions also undermine meaning and suggest their cohesive control is still developing.

# Pupil B- EXS



## The Coming of the Iron Man

I (a foreigner in this world) was slowly, rock by rock climbing up a steep hill until I had finally reached the peak. Where had I come from? Nobody knows. How far had I walked? Nobody knows. How was I made? Nobody knows... except me. As I looked over the edge I saw it: the sea. I had only ever heard rumours about it, but there it was, the enchanting blue wave engoloving the rocky yet dusty ground below. I sat staring into the blue abyss as the wind whistled though my dangling feet. Suddenly I saw strange creature flying above me, they were only there for a few seconds before flying back into a tree nearby.

As I stood up, a huge gust of wind forcefully pushed against my colossal iron back and sung through my finger; this happened a few times as I stood listening to the sea. "Hush hush hush," it whispered. One last time, the wind – that was forcing itself against my immense back – pushed me into the deep gorge below. "Oh no," I muttered. As I was recklessly tumbling through the dusty air, toward the rocky ground below, I thought to myself, I could never trust the wind again!

CRRRAAAASSSHHH!



# Strengths

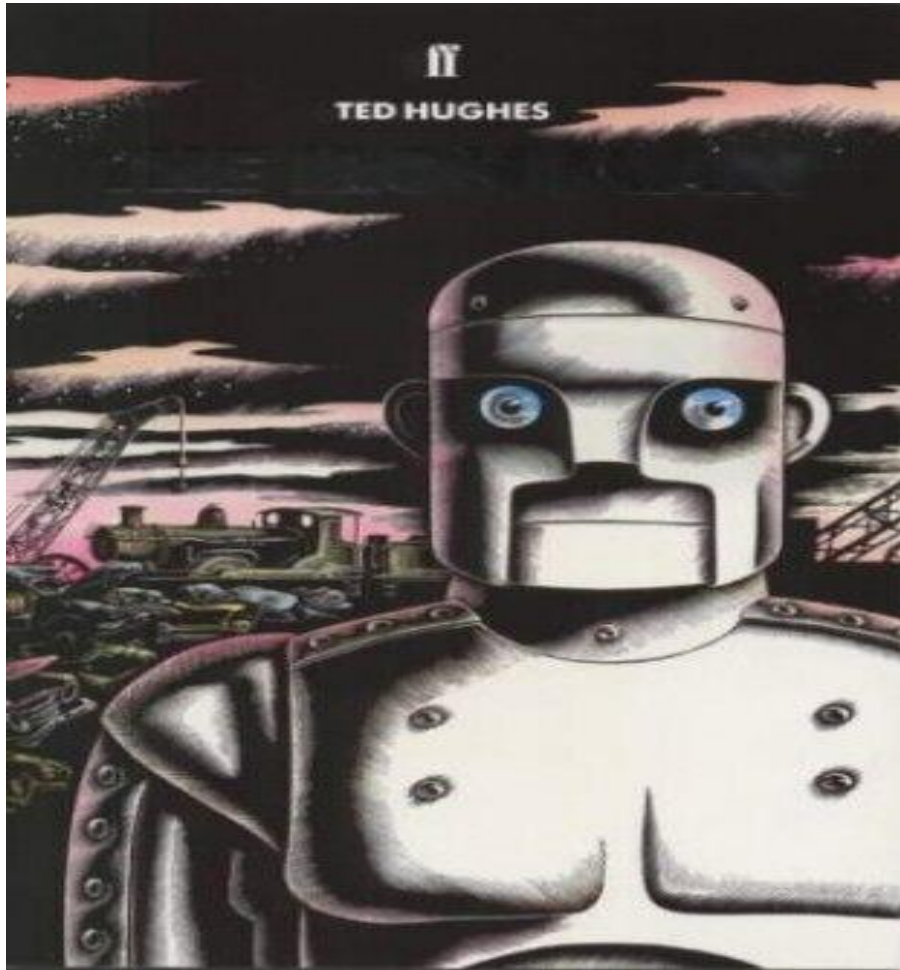
The writer demonstrates a growing awareness of audience and purpose and makes some effective choices in language and sentence structures to show the Iron Man's wonder at his new surroundings.

They make use of features of Ted Hughes's writing style, such as borrowing the repetitive question and response from the original opening, making sense of this by adding that the Iron Man alone knows the answers.

Repetition is used effectively

The writer uses literary language, particularly in the first paragraph





# Areas for development

The poetic style is not always maintained.

Some of the repetition is less thoughtful and fails to engage the reader

# Identifying the differences between standards by examining pupils' work at different standards

Read the two letters from Bristol City council regarding evacuees.



Note down the pupils' strengths in relation to Pupil can statement 1:

'Write for a range of purposes' WTS

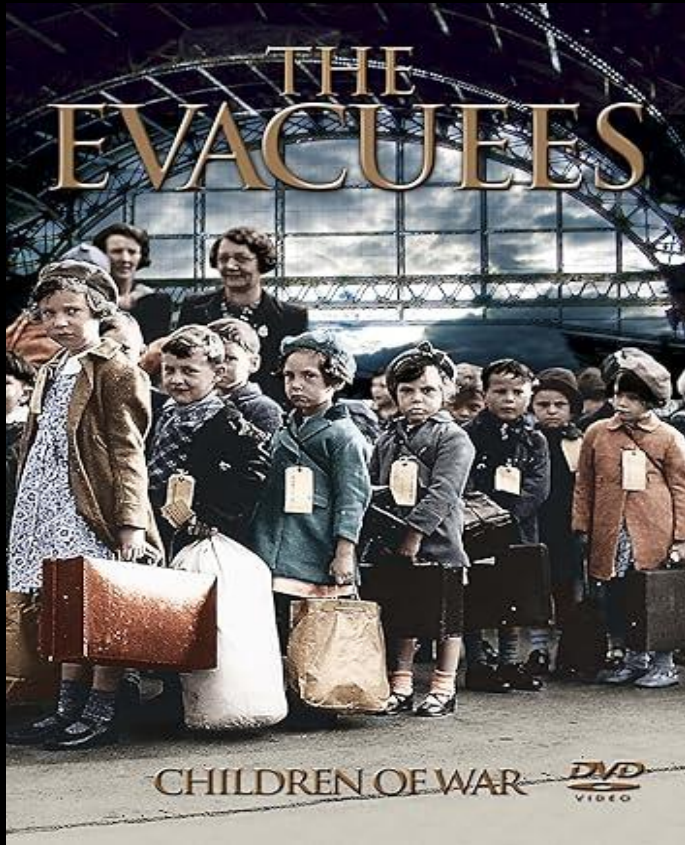
'Write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader' EXS

# Pupil B- Letter WTS

Strengths	Areas for development
The writer understands the purpose of the letter, following letter writing conventions.	The order of the information in the first paragraph confuses the reader as to the main purpose of the letter.
The pupil is beginning to consider the needs of the audience in their writing through some apt 'official' vocabulary.	A loss of cohesion is also evident in the second paragraph which ends rather than opens with the topic sentence.
The appropriately formal tone is generally maintained throughout.	The information about the train is underdeveloped,.



## Pupil C- Letter EXS



Stengths	Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The writing demonstrates good awareness of the reader and of the purpose of the evacuation letter.</li><li>• The letter has an appropriate structure, with a paragraph outlining the purpose and importance of evacuation and subsequent paragraphs providing further information and instruction with clarity.</li><li>• Advice and information are conveyed through formal authoritative vocabulary and impersonal sentence constructions.</li><li>• Modals are used to help highlight some of the more important aspects and contribute to a persuasive tone along with conditional clauses and purposeful repetition that support this.</li><li>• Parenthesis is used where information needs to be clarified</li><li>• Instructions in the letter are more often single clause sentences written in the future tense, which is appropriate to the purpose.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The letter ends a little abruptly and would benefit from a closing paragraph, perhaps to reassure the recipients.</li><li>• Some longer sentences used to explain are less clear</li></ul>

# Identifying the differences between standards by examining pupils' work at different standards

Read the two newspaper articles based on Malorie Blackman's Pig Boy

**PIG BOY**

In Yorkshire the greatest heart transplant has happened. A 13 year old boy, Cameron Kelsey, has just had a successful heart transplant. But it wasn't a human heart, it was a pig heart! Being Cameron has had this transplant from a pig called Trudy. The brilliant Dr Bryce had performed this transplant, but what really happened?

It was only a couple of human doctors, he couldn't get one so he had to get a pig heart. He needed the transplant as he caught a viral heart disease 7 years ago.

If it wasn't for Trudy, Cameron wouldn't have had the operation. Trudy had been genetically modified so that her heart was closer to humans. As Dr Bryce said Trudy was the most suitable for the transplant. She was especially bred for this.

Dr Bryce, who performed this operation, said the operation went well and Cameron will have to rest for a few days.

Pig boy!

A 13 year old boy from the UK has become the first ever person in the world to receive a heart transplant from a genetically modified pig.

Cameron Kelsey is doing well three days after the seven-hour procedure in Yorkshire. His parents said he has begun to walk again but is still being monitored by doctors.

It was a life or death situation so I took the opportunity while I could," Cameron explained a couple hours before the transplant.

The surgeon, Dr Bryce (a highly qualified doctor) said what will happen next?

There has been negative reactions from PETA-one activist was quoted as saying "How dare they use an innocent pig for this. They are just like us so we should respect them."

On the other hand, Julie Robinson, a girl from Cameron's school was quoted to have said, "I am very proud of Cameron for taking up this challenge. It shows he is filled with determination and bravery."

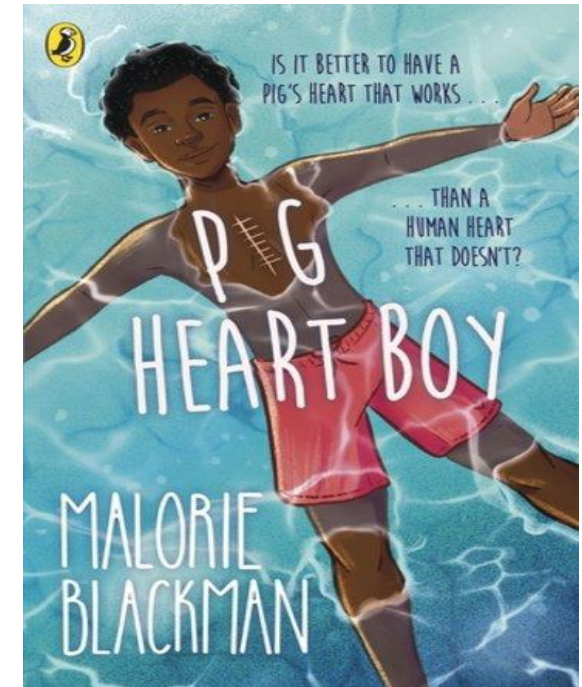
Cameron, however is hoping his transplant will allow him to continue with his life and do activities he could never do before like swimming, football and dancing. Now he can finally live a 13 year old boy's life.

Note down the pupils' strengths in relation to the pupil can statements at WTS and EXS



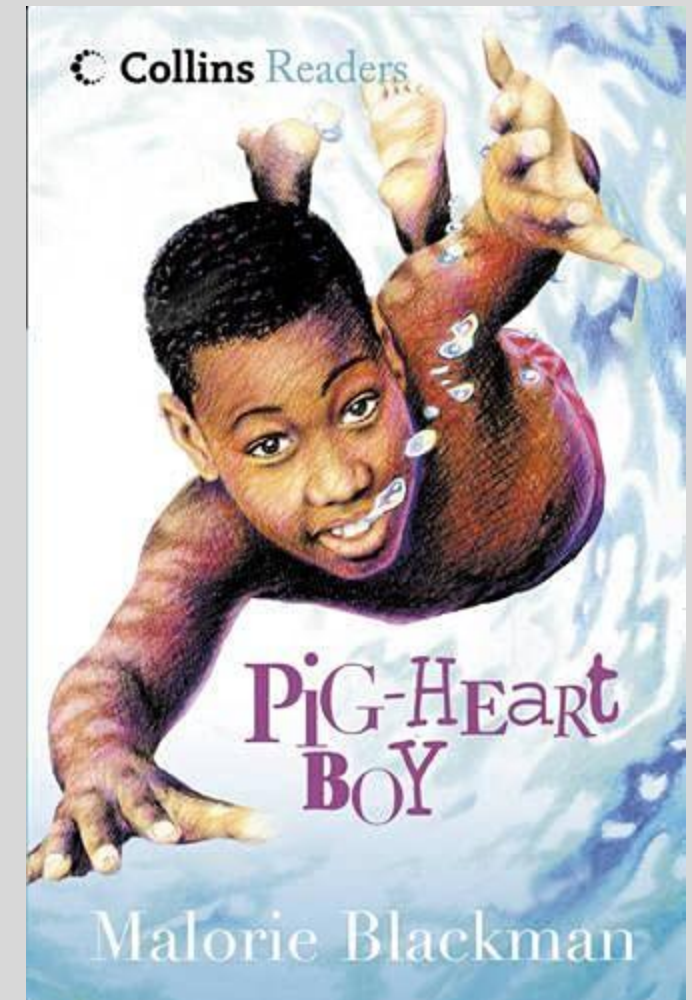
# Pupil B Newspaper report- WTS

Strengths	Areas for development
<p>Appropriate vocabulary and structures chosen to attract the reader's attention.</p> <p>The report explains the urgency of the surgery and the necessity of using a heart from a genetically modified pig.</p> <p>Features of a newspaper report are present, including a headline and indirect quotation</p> <p>The report records the basic information of the event</p> <p>appropriate use of some subject-specific language</p>	<p>The use of a rhetorical to encourage the reader to read on is not successfully followed through.</p> <p>The overall lack of cohesion between paragraphs impacts reader understanding.</p> <p>There is little development and opportunities to challenge the reader's understanding of the significance and implication of the operation are missed.</p> <p>The quotations from the surgeon add little to the report.</p>



## Pupil B Newspaper report- EXS

Strengths	Areas for development
<p>This report is well constructed, with an opening that presents the ground-breaking procedure in a concise and effective manner and employs phrases designed to arrest reader attention.</p> <p>Direct and indirect quotations from Cameron and his family elicit an empathetic response from the reader.</p> <p>The report also manages to touch upon the controversial nature of the operation with an emotional quotation from an animal-rights activist.</p> <p>The pupil uses appropriately formal and subject-specific language.</p> <p>Tenses are successfully manipulated to recount the key events of the report.</p>	<p>Opportunities for development have, been missed;</p> <p>While the objections from the activist are raised, they are dealt with briefly.</p> <p>The quotation from the surgeon (what will happen next?) is left hanging</p>





It is important to remind ourselves that there will be a wide range of writing outcomes within each standard.

There will be children who are just meeting the standard and those who are almost at the next standard. Their writing will look very different.

Don't allow your judgements to be swayed by comparing the children- simply match the evidence in front of you with the Pupil Can Statements.



VARIATION  
WITHIN  
EACH  
STANDARD

# Particular Weakness

Teachers can use their discretion



Particular weakness can refer to a part or the whole of a statement



A particular weakness may relate to a specific learning difficulty, but it is not limited to this



# Independent writing

Teachers must base their judgements on writing that has been produced independently

Schools must identify independent work and clarify the degree of support a pupil has received

The Write Stuff is a valuable resource but it is too scaffolded to be independent

Continue to plan and teach creatively

Role play, hot seating, freeze frame, conscience alley, class discussion etc. Should still be used as a stimulus for writing.

Talk for writing can be used but this must be at the innovation stage. Imitation is not independent

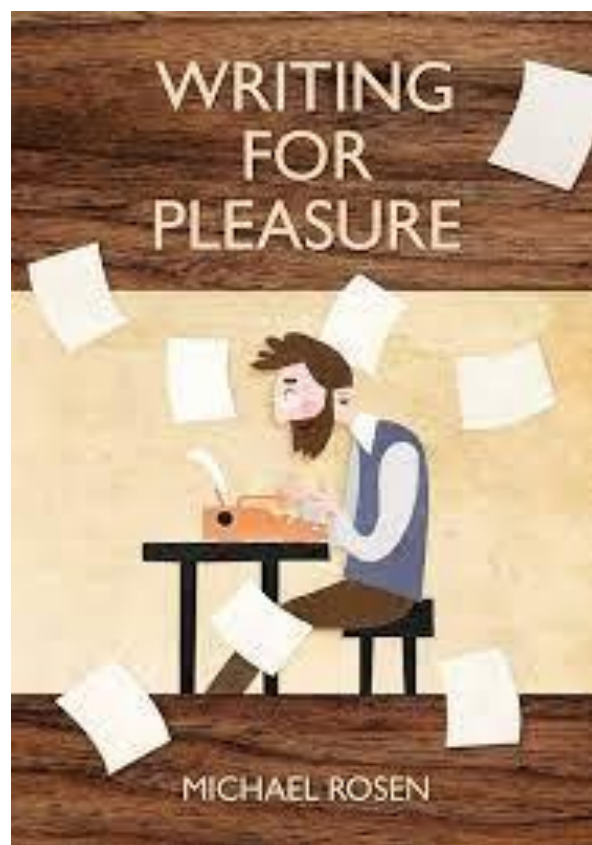
Next session:

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**10.30-12.00**



- Further exploration of writing at the expected standard
- Discussion and exploration of writing at Greater depth



# QUESTION TIME