



KS2 Writing assessment and moderation

Briefing session 2

Thursday 5th February 2026

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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 EXS and the GDS



- Understanding of how the statements for these two standards might be evidenced

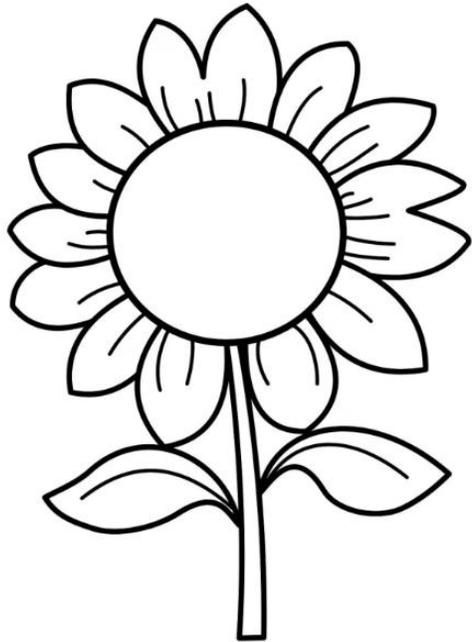


- STA guidance around 'Independent writing' - evaluating examples of next steps marking

EXS

GDS

WTS



Pupil Can statement 1 is the most important and needs to be explored first

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[^] (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.²

Working at greater depth

The pupil can:

- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting the appropriate form and drawing independently on what they have read as models for their own writing (e.g. literary language, characterisation, structure)
- distinguish between the language of speech and writing³ and choose the appropriate register
- exercise an assured and conscious control over levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary to achieve this
- use the range of punctuation taught at key stage 2 correctly (e.g. semi-colons, dashes, colons, hyphens) and, when necessary, use such punctuation precisely to enhance meaning and avoid ambiguity.[^]

[There are no additional statements for spelling or handwriting]

Reflecting on 'register and formality'- GDS and 'grammar and vocabulary'- EXS

Register describes varieties of spoken or written language tied to particular audiences, purposes and contexts. Variation between registers can usually be recognised through **specific vocabulary** and **uses of grammar**.

When writing for different audiences, the relationship between writer and reader determines the level of formality used, which is reflected in vocabulary choices.

Text type	Audience and purpose	Features relating to register and formality (vocabulary and grammar)
Narrative Description Diary	Narrative, description and diary writing tend to have a general reader as the target audience and features that contribute to register usually relate to the specific text type (for example, science fiction, fantasy, traditional tale). Diary writing that is personal (rather than in role) will also reflect a relationship with an implied reader or the self, which again will influence the level of formality.	Writing in a particular character's voice will determine how the reader is addressed, and the kinds of language used. For example, an adult narrator or dialogue involving a variety of characters will affect vocabulary and grammatical features. Here, distinguishing between the language of speech and the language of writing is especially important. Pupils might also occasionally write for a younger age group, with a focus on ensuring that interest level, vocabulary and grammar are appropriate for this audience.
Recount	Recount writing is often aimed at a non-specific reader and can be written in a personal or an impersonal voice.	Levels of formality vary but specific vocabulary related to the context is used. Recounts can be in the voice of a character or persona and thus share some features of narrative writing. They might include quotations (for example, in a news report), reflecting speech.
Letter	Letters vary in register, depending on audience and purpose. They may combine first person voice with second person, to address the recipient, and third-person recount and explanation.	A letter to a friend is likely to reflect a more informal style of address, with non-technical and more expressive vocabulary (such as 'okay'). Speech-like forms might be included (such as contractions). Letters to an unknown recipient and which have a specific purpose will include vocabulary related to the context, be formal and use explanatory features, such as conjunctions and adverbials ('consequently', 'as soon as possible').

Consider writing opportunities at the planning stage to ensure variety for the children.

Non-chronological report	Non-chronological reports tend to be written for a general audience, and the informative purpose gives rise to relatively formal, impersonal writing in the third person.	Specialised vocabulary reflects the focus (for example, the environment, the natural world, a historical period) and grammatical forms may incorporate subordination to signal cause and effect, and purpose ('as a result', 'so that', 'in order to'). Relative clauses and parenthesis may expand details and reinforce the level of formality.
Instructions	Instructions tend to target a general audience, though they can vary in their degree of formality. A recipe might aim to provide additional tips and to enthuse the reader, and be written with a personal perspective, including the second person ('you'), while a complex set of instructions for constructing a model might be highly impersonal.	Vocabulary will be determined by the context of the instructions and may incorporate specific details to support accuracy, particularly for a complex task ('carefully', 'measure') and more flexibility to suit preference ('handful', 'plenty'). While grammatical features will reflect the manner of addressing the reader, with imperative verbs supporting the instructional focus and conditionals and modals emphasising choice, in more informal approaches ('if you like', 'you could try').
Balanced argument	A balanced argument presents and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of two opposing views on an issue. The informative and analytical approach is often conveyed through a formal register, foregrounding objectivity, though this is not always the case. A more informal approach might be adopted, for example, in an argument being presented to fellow pupils about an aspect of school life.	Specific vocabulary relating to the issue is included (for example, scientific terminology) and conjunctions and adverbials support the presentation of opposing points or supporting material ('even though', 'nevertheless', 'in addition'), particularly where a more formal register is adopted.
Advert	Adverts and other persuasive texts tend to adopt a direct address to the reader in the second person, satisfying the purpose of engaging and persuading.	Register tends to be less formal and feature positive or heightened description. Modals can also support this ('you should try', 'who could refuse') and the active or passive voice might be adopted as needed, along with imperatives ('you will be thrilled by', 'try it now').

Identifying register and levels of formality in pupils' writing

Pupils learn about the features of Standard English as part of their work in understanding audience, purpose and register. It is especially important to understand how Standard English relates to formal and informal speech and writing, and to recognise where non-Standard equivalents might be in use.

The writing examples demonstrate a range of audiences and purposes, which determine the level of formality used. This in turn is reflected in the vocabulary and grammatical features, and whether Standard English is used. Some of the relevant features are summarised in the table.

Extract	Formality: High, Medium, Low	Standard English (Yes / No)
<p>1. a persuasive report to parents and school governors</p> <p>Examples of independence are plentiful on camp: packing and unpacking, collecting the correct equipment and tidying your room for room inspections. Since this is what your parents would normally do for you at home, it could be a challenge. Afterall, you would want your own child to be indepen[den]t, would you not?</p>	<p>Medium to high level of formality: adult audience that is familiar but not personally known to the writer, official form of communication</p> <p>Vocabulary reflects context and audience: <i>'independence', 'plentiful', 'room inspections'</i></p> <p>Grammatical features reflect formality: verb form manipulated to heighten formality: <i>"would you not?"</i></p> <p>Expanded noun phrase suggests knowledge and authority: <i>'examples of independence'</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Grammatical rules of Standard English are followed</p>
<p>2. an informal letter</p> <p>You'll never guess what problems I've had. First of all, my goods was stolen and gone.</p>	<p>Low level of formality: letter to friend, communicating news and experiences</p> <p>Vocabulary reflects context and audience: short, simple words, for example, <i>'guess', 'gone'</i></p> <p>Grammatical features: direct address with contraction, reflect speech: <i>"You'll never guess"</i></p> <p>Casual, conversational phrasing: <i>"my goods was stolen and gone"</i></p>	<p>No</p> <p>Includes non-Standard subject verb use: <i>"my goods was stolen"</i></p>
<p>3. a discussion of an issue</p> <p>Many leading scientists believe that living near a volcano has it's benefits as Geothermal Energy is a cheap way to create electriscity for the community.</p>	<p>Medium to high level of formality: discussion of an issue for a general audience</p> <p>Vocabulary reflects context and audience: <i>'leading scientists', 'benefits', 'community'</i></p> <p>Grammatical features: multi-clause sentence with subordination to handle complex information and to suggest authority, and generalised noun phrase as subject: <i>"Many leading scientists believe that..."</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Grammatical rules of Standard English are followed</p>

<p>4. a dramatic chase scene</p> <p>"You guys are comin' with me!" boomed the green soilder.</p> <p>"C'mon, run!" screeched Anton</p>	<p>Low level of formality: speech within narrative reflects relationship between characters (narration itself is more formal)</p> <p>Vocabulary reflects context and purpose: colloquial phrase: <i>"You guys"</i></p> <p>Spelling reflects speech and pronunciation: <i>'comin', 'C'mon'</i></p> <p>Grammatical features reflect context: short phrases, active voice and imperative: <i>"C'mon, run!"</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Grammatical rules of Standard English are followed</p>
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Register and levels of formality in the assessment framework- **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)' PCS 1

'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)' PCS 4

Bryce – piece A: a diary entry

Context: The class had been reading 'Skellig' by David Almond and explored the creation of setting and atmosphere. They discussed possible locations and ideas for narratives with mysterious or 'spooky' settings and pupils then planned and wrote their own narrative. Bryce wrote in the form of a diary entry.

Dear Diary, THE Gnarled Finger
Let me tell you about the night which changed my life...

It all started with me going to bed, I was watching youtube shorts on my phone when my friend texted me, asking to explore the abandoned graveyard, which I knew was out of bounds, but agreed to go anyway. I tiptoed out of my house that night making sure not to wake my parents.

When we arrived at the graveyard, we faced a tall mossy gate, I pushed it but it wouldn't work so we both tried because there were overgrown branches pushing on the other side of the gate (well that's what we and Ralph thought it was) We both felt a chill come over us. We both shivered. Suddenly the twisted branches turned into honey gnarled fingers. We froze. The honey fingers retreated into the darkness. The gates suddenly swung open! Standing there, our mouths hanging open in shock. We couldn't move and we thought our feet were stuck. As we entered, we heard an urgent crying of a cow. It started circling us, catching our attention. It looked to be leading us for something but it was dark so it was impossible to see where it was leading us. So we decided to see our phones out, which is when we had realised they had died!

The structure was big and mossy, it must be a crypt I thought to myself. Tentatively we dove into the crypt which was pitch black although our eyes just adjusted. We saw a narrow hallway. On the right of us so we decided to head down it. There was a door just at the end of the hallway. Suddenly, we heard a scream coming behind the door. Sneaking down the hallway, we took a



Read Bryce's diary entry (Piece A)

- What is the purpose and audience of the piece?
- Note down examples of vocabulary that help to establish register, including levels of formality.
- Note down grammatical forms that help to establish register e.g. Contracted forms in dialogue, passive verbs to affect how information is presented and modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility.

Key points

Purpose and audience

Vocabulary

Grammatical forms

Choosing the appropriate register



Bryce – piece B: a persuasive biography

Context: Using 'Cogheart' by Peter Bunzl as inspiration, pupils chose a famous Victorian figure to research. They explored features of persuasive writing and then each wrote a biography with the aim of persuading others that their chosen person was the most important Victorian.



ISAMBARD - KINGDOM - BRUNEL

The Victorian era was a period of time when people made inspiring inventions which still remain today. Amongst the many inventors, by far the most significant and have transformed our lives the most, is Sir Isambard-Kingdom-Brunel.

Brunel was born 9th April, 1806 and died 15th September 1859. This inventor built the Great Western Railway (G.W.R) which was a British Railway Company that linked London and the Southwest and West. Two steam locomotives on the G.W.R appeared in the hit tv show, Thomas the tank engine called Duck and Oliver.

In his early years he worked as an assistant engineer on the project to create a tunnel under London's River Thames under the most difficult and dangerous conditions.

The industrial pioneer went to Caen - Normandy University located in France and studied fluent French and the basic principles of engineering. As he grew up he built dockyards then he moved on to build the G.W.R in 1852 and finished two years later in 1854.

Thanks to Brunel I can travel from London to Liverpool ~~or~~ instead of the common transport car, it's not just me he's helped its millions across England so he definitely deserves to be in the hall of fame and is truly the Victorian inventor of all time. Railways encouraged people ^{to} ~~could~~ ^{to} move to different areas to find.

ISAMBARD KINGDOM
BRUNEL
A LIFE FROM BEGINNING TO END



Key points

Purpose and audience

Vocabulary

Grammatical forms

Choosing the appropriate register

Register

At the expected standard	At greater depth
<p>The pupil can: <i>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’)</i></p>	<p>The pupil can: <i>distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register</i> <i>exercise an assured and conscious control over levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary to achieve this.</i></p>
<p>The qualifier 'mostly appropriately' is important in helping to establish if writing collections are meeting the standard.</p>	<p>Pupils should recognise that certain features of spoken language (e.g. contracted verb forms, other grammatical informality, colloquial expressions, long coordinated sentences) are less likely in writing and be able to select alternative vocabulary and grammar.</p>

Read pieces A and B from Ash

What is the register of each piece?

Has an appropriate register been used?

How well is the appropriate register controlled and maintained within each piece?



Piece A

Choice of register

- Informal register shaped by audience
- Specific relationship to grandmother shapes the extent of the informality

How well is register controlled and maintained?

- Adopts a tone suited to the young character, Bruno
- Vocabulary reflects his preoccupations, level of observation and mode of expression
- Contradictions reflect the familiar and relaxed context
- Direct, conversational interjections also support the relaxed register
- Relative wealth and social status of Bruno's family is reflected through more formal language

Piece B

Choice of register

- A mix of registers is intentionally included to match different voices and purposes: formal recounting by Lieutenant Kotler in an official role, deferential recounting by Pavel, who is being held in the camp, and informal, enthusiastic recounting of events from Bruno's child perspective
- Register in each case matches each character's position and perspective on events

How well is register controlled and maintained?

Lieutenant Kotler

- vocabulary evokes the officer's world and the official language expected in such an incident report • the specific hostility and biases of Kotler are revealed through subjective language which conflicts with the supposed objectivity of the context but matches the reality of the plot
- passive construction fits the formal reporting and past tense is used to recount events, with infinitive forms capturing activities and movement to a current perspective on events handled through the present perfect

Piece B continued

Pavel

- his prisoner situation is reflected in serious and formal vocabulary
- active voice highlights the actions of others, in contrast with Pavel's innocence and adverbs emphasise context and apologetic framing of events

Bruno

- words and phrases are chosen to reflect enthusiasm and age, including contractions reflecting Bruno's less formal approach to the written context
- present tense comment is incorporated in recounting , along with modal verbs to express viewpoint freely and adverbs which specifically convey Bruno's exaggeration of his plight

Overall, piece B displays ample evidence of Ash's capacity to consciously control levels of formality with some assurance. As the discussion brings out, the different voices in the piece reflect different social positions, and relations in the world of the story, realised through the choice of vocabulary and grammatical forms.

Presenting a single voice with the same degree of success would also provide evidence toward the GDS statements.

The pieces do not contain examples of dialogue through which aspects of register that relate to spoken language could be evidenced. Additionally, two pieces do not represent a full range of purposes. At times, repetition weakens piece A, and other aspects in both pieces, such as punctuation, include errors.

Therefore, a full collection of writing is needed to evidence all the Pupil Can statements

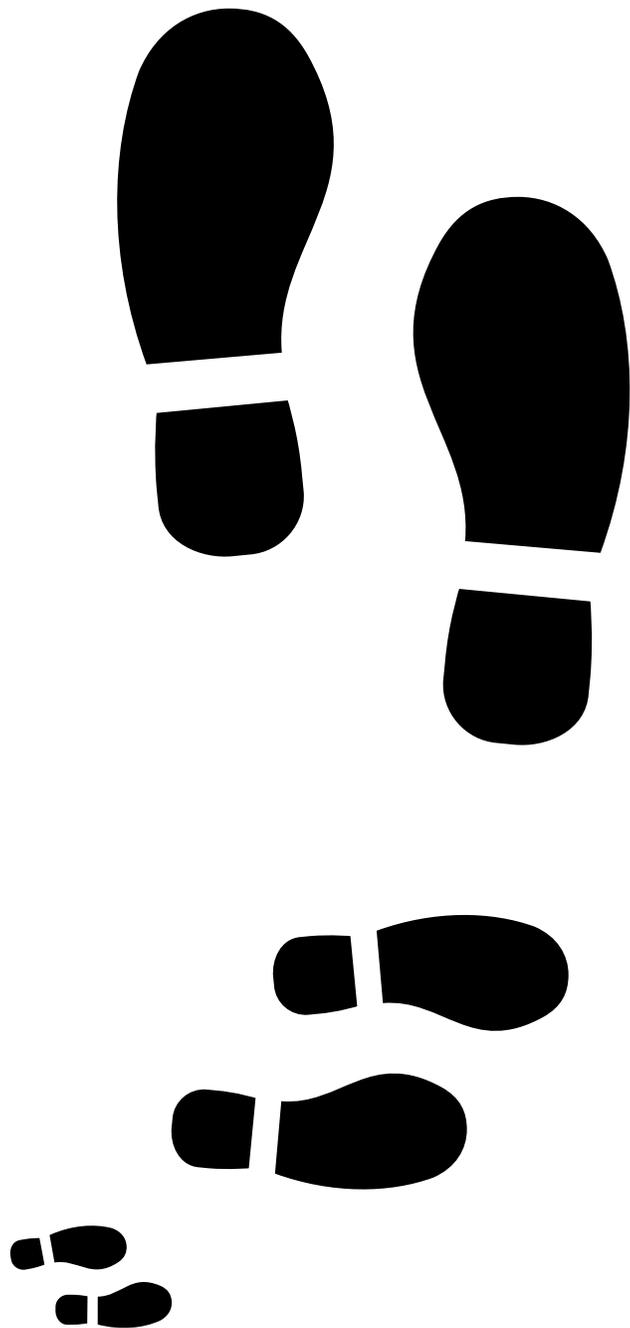


Reflecting on Greater Depth writing

‘Working at ‘greater depth’ within the expected standard is awarded to those pupils who are able to write at a standard above that expected for the end of KS2.

Achieving this higher standard is difficult, and it is typically only awarded to a small percentage of pupils. For example, in the academic year 2022 to 2023 only 13% of pupils attained GDS at the end of year 6 and it is not unusual for a cohort to have no GDS writers.’

STA 2024



Example marking comments- guiding next steps

How can you show how scared Jim was when he first set eyes on the workhouse?

Try to show the reader that the characters really dislike each other.

Check that you have written your leaflet for the parents of a young child. Think about your vocabulary choices.

Re-read the paragraph where you describe the Amazon rain forest for the first time. Can the reader vividly imagine what it is like from your description?

Does the dialogue in your newspaper report show the interviewees personalities?

The moderation process

Moderation by local authority moderators supports the broader aim of quality assuring standards at national level.

The process is designed to be supportive and developmental.

Through professional discussion, moderators will work alongside the teacher to build a picture of what the pupil can do, from the evidence presented, benchmarked against the teacher assessment framework.



Questions....