

# The Key Stage 3 National Strategy

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy is part of the government's commitment to raise standards in schools. Effective literacy is the key to raising standards across all subjects, and equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge they need for life beyond school.

The National Literacy Strategy for primary education was established in 1997 with ambitious targets for attainment at age 11. Primary pupils are already well on the way to achieving these targets. The challenge for Key Stage 3 is to secure and build on these achievements. It will require the effective teaching of literacy skills, raised expectations of all pupils, and prompt, effective catch-up support for those who need it.

A National Pilot starting in September 2000 began to address this challenge, drawing on the experience and success of the primary Literacy Strategy, and the ever-growing wealth of experience and research into what helps to raise standards in secondary education.

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning, raise standards and catch up trailing pupils. To reach these goals, the National Strategy focuses on four important principles.

- **Expectations:** establishing high expectations for all pupils and setting challenging targets for them to achieve.
- **Progression:** strengthening the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 and ensuring progression in teaching and learning across Key Stage 3.
- **Engagement:** promoting approaches to teaching and learning that engage and motivate pupils and demand their active participation.
- **Transformation:** strengthening teaching and learning through a programme of professional development and practical support.

## About the English Framework

The Framework extends the Word, Sentence and Text level organisation of the primary Framework. The purpose of the Word and Sentence level objectives is to ensure proper attention to the skills of spelling, vocabulary, sentence construction, grammar and style, which underpin excellence in Text level work. There are, however, links to be made between objectives in each column.

Key Stage 3 English				
Word level	Sentence level	Text level		
		Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spelling</li> <li>● Spelling strategies</li> <li>● Vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sentence construction and punctuation</li> <li>● Paragraphing and cohesion</li> <li>● Stylistic conventions</li> <li>● Standard English and language variation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research and study skills</li> <li>● Reading for meaning</li> <li>● Understanding the author's craft</li> <li>● Study of literary texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plan, draft and present</li> <li>● Imagine, explore, entertain</li> <li>● Inform, explain, describe</li> <li>● Persuade, argue, advise</li> <li>● Analyse, review, comment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Speaking</li> <li>● Listening</li> <li>● Group discussion and interaction</li> <li>● Drama</li> </ul>

Year 7 of the Framework includes the revision and consolidation of objectives in the primary Framework, but it also offers new challenges. It promotes year-by-year progression within Key Stage 3 by providing a clear set of expectations for each year, and ensuring that these expectations are challenging enough to contribute to raising standards for pupils of all abilities.

In each sub-section of the Framework, certain key objectives have been identified in boldface print. These objectives are key because they signify skills or understandings which are crucial to pupils' language development. They are challenging for the age group, and selected because they are important markers of progress. They are not the only signs of progress, but they are critical ones.

It is hoped that teachers will use the objectives to:

- translate numerical targets into curricular objectives, defining what pupils need to do to achieve the standards expected;
- focus teaching on those things that will move pupils on;
- inform assessment tasks, so that critical indicators of progression are addressed.

## Literacy across the curriculum

The notion of literacy embedded in the objectives is much more than simply the acquisition of 'basic skills' which is sometimes implied by the word: it encompasses the ability to recognise, understand and manipulate the conventions of language, and develop pupils' ability to use language imaginatively and flexibly.

Although English teachers have a crucial role in developing pupils' language skills, the Framework also addresses other subject staff. All but a handful of the objectives have relevance across the curriculum. The Framework applies across the curriculum because pupils read and write across the curriculum. For pupils, spelling in science is pretty much the same process that they use in say, art or geography. The pupil writing an essay in history could well be drawing on skills learnt in English, and practised in other subjects such as R.E. Language is the prime medium through which pupils learn and express themselves across the curriculum, and all teachers have a stake in effective literacy. The challenge is to ensure the transfer of skills from one lesson to another by making literacy skills part of the explicit teaching agenda in all lessons, and to maintain high and consistent expectations across the curriculum.

The Framework objectives should be seen as an entitlement, and it is for the school to determine:

- how far the English department is expected to teach and lead on certain skills, as well as teaching their own special objectives (e.g. literature);
- the responsibilities of other departments to deliver and/or consolidate certain objectives;
- the setting of targets related to language improvement;
- the plan which spells out specifically how the targets are to be met;
- what commitments departments should make in their plans and to their professional development as their contribution to the effort.



The best practice is seen in schools where all departments plan systematically to address language issues related to the subject, for example in reading textbooks, writing essays and learning key words. Moreover, expectations in these schools are consistently high, and the senior management ensure that school policies such as target-setting and the marking policy are implemented, monitored, reviewed and improved.

## Using the Framework

The Framework is for all pupils in Key Stage 3. We start from the assumption that all pupils are entitled to our highest expectations and support, and that all will be taught the objectives, although some pupils will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Effective differentiation ensures that teaching can be based on the Framework whatever the ability range of the class. Teachers already have a repertoire of strategies to differentiate work for different levels of ability, for example through questioning, adjusting the demand of the task, and the use of additional support. They interpret objectives for the less able without resorting to a separate curriculum. There are many demanding objectives to extend able pupils, and the choice of text or context will sometimes add challenge to a familiar task.



## Raising standards in English

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy underlines the importance of teaching to clear, challenging and progressive objectives in ways which engage pupils in active learning. It also foregrounds the need to secure these in everyday use. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy promotes teaching that is varied in style and distinguished by a fast pace and strong focus, as well as being highly interactive and motivating. The emphasis is on supporting pupils to become independent.

The implications of this for lesson organisation are few, but very significant:

- more explicit teaching, with attention to Word and Sentence level skills;
- an emphasis on learning rather than just completing coursework or getting through set texts;
- use of the whole lesson for planned teaching, and less time spent on unplanned circulation around the groups, thus making optimum use of the teacher's expertise and time;
- increased opportunities for whole-class interaction;
- frequent, fast-paced revision of insecure skills at Word and Sentence level;
- the use of shared time as well as independent time to ensure the transfer of skills into everyday use.

The teaching of sound literacy is one of the most important investments made by schools, especially for pupils entering at level 3 or below. Were they not already doing so, schools are expected to give at least 3 hours per week to English, and possibly more to those pupils who are out of step with their peers – the exact amount of time will depend on individual pupils.

## Recommended lesson structure

Because schools must work within different time constraints, there is no single structure for lessons using the Framework. The structure of the lesson must serve the objectives and observe the principles set out above. A lively interactive opening to the session with a sharp focus on specific objectives engages pupils' attention and is fun. Frequent intensive sessions of this sort have a greater and more lasting effect than periodic 'skills' lessons. They provide an opportunity to address directly the revision objectives at Word and Sentence level. They are popular with the whole ability range, but highly recommended for classes containing pupils who have not yet secured the Word and Sentence level objectives. The starter activity may relate to the lesson that follows, but it may also relate to a series of starters developed over several lessons. A sequence of starters can be identified as a block of work in the medium-term plan.

The following lesson structure is recommended to teachers using the Framework, but it is not intended to be a straitjacket. Teachers should adapt it to suit the objectives in hand and the length of the school lesson.

1. Start with a short lesson starter activity (e.g. spelling, vocabulary) lasting 10-15 minutes.
2. Introduce the main teaching points (e.g. teacher exposition or questioning).
3. Develop the main teaching points (e.g. through group activity).
4. End with a plenary to draw out the learning (e.g. through feedback and presentation), lasting 5-10 minutes.

Very often, teachers will develop the main objective of a lesson by giving time for pupils to work in groups. This allows the teacher to work intensively with one group on the current objective, or to develop skills taught earlier in reading and writing. Guided sessions support pupils as they apply their new knowledge in context and the teacher is able to give immediate feedback. It may be used, for example, to:

- support a group of weaker readers tackling a common text (e.g. helping them to infer and deduce meanings);
- give feedback on work in progress (e.g. written homework);
- consolidate an objective that has not been well-grasped by the group (e.g. revisiting insecure punctuation);
- review personal and group reading (e.g. discussing a text with an able group).

Guided sessions make efficient use of teacher time when pupils are working independently, and pupils appreciate the access that Guided sessions give them to the teacher. Teachers are encouraged to schedule regular opportunities to visit each group in the class for focused time of this sort.

The plenary at the end of the session is an opportunity to draw out the learning that has been achieved in the lesson and refer back to the objectives. It also allows a space to celebrate what has been achieved, and prepare pupils for the next step.

## Inclusion

The National Curriculum Handbook for Key Stages 3 and 4 contains a statutory statement on inclusion and the principles essential to the development of an inclusive curriculum. *The Framework for teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9* has been written with these principles in mind. The Framework is intended to raise standards for all pupils, teaching knowledge, skills and understanding which maintain high expectations while also meeting all abilities and learning needs.

Attention is given to those needing additional support, including SEN and EAL pupils, to those whose attainment might be affected by gender or ethnicity and to the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

## Planning

Good plans are useful, manageable and worthwhile. They do not have to be written in full prose or elegantly typed, though they do need to be accessible to others. Their prime purpose is to ensure progression and chart coverage, so teaching plans should include:

- for each unit of work – which objectives are to be addressed;
- for each year – evidence that all objectives are addressed;
- for the whole of Year 7 to Year 11 – coverage of the range of texts demanded by the National Curriculum.

The medium-term plan considers how a unit of work will unfold, for example how much time will be spent on certain texts and tasks, and where they will be addressed. It should give a view of the way the unit of work develops.

There is only one demand of the short-term plan: that it makes clear how the objectives will be taught. This means planning lessons around objectives which feature in that unit. It should be possible to trace an objective from the Framework through its location in the medium-term plan, through to when it will be taught in a lesson.

Planning formats and completed examples are available as an appendix to the full Framework and units of work are available on the DfEE's website. Schools are welcome to adapt them to reflect the number of lessons they have, and the lesson structure they adopt. Many schools will wish to adapt their existing format, bearing in mind the requirements listed above. Although the Framework implies new emphases, it is expected that much of the existing Schemes of Work will be easily adapted. Most important is the need to organise teaching around specific objectives in the Framework: simply touching on them is not enough. Therefore, the job of measuring up existing Schemes of Work to the Framework is more than a tick-list activity: it is a matter of re-orientating what is done, rather than adding in extra topics.



## Assessment

Priorities for each new cohort can be derived from Key Stage 2 test results and the qualitative information provided by work sampling and other monitoring. This will help the school to translate wider ambitions such as 'Improve writing' into numerical targets such as 'Increase by 5% the number of pupils writing at level 4 by the end of Year 7' into curricular targets such as 'All pupils will be able to spell the high-frequency word list' or 'All pupils will remember to paragraph their work and use an effective opening sentence'.

When teachers complete a unit of work around a text or a topic, there is an obvious opportunity to assess how well pupils have done against the objectives, and set targets for the future. This may take the form of a review of work completed in the unit, for example, or a substantial assignment based on the key objectives. The results need not be elaborate: if the unit has gone well, it may just be a matter of identifying which pupils need extra feedback or consolidation, and setting new targets for the whole group. It may, on the other hand, suggest certain targets for particular groups and individuals. Some of these targets will take pupils on to new objectives, and others will ensure that insecure learning is consolidated. The principle is to mobilise assessments quickly into the setting of relevant and realistic targets.

The key objectives will provide a useful focus for end-of-unit assessments and targets.

## Summary of the Framework

For convenience, each objective has been given a name tag. This is easier to identify than numbers and simpler to record than complete objectives. These are listed on the following pages for your convenience:

## NLS Framework for teaching English

### YEAR 7

#### WORD LEVEL

##### Spelling

- 1 Vowel choices
- 2 Pluralisation
- 3 Word endings
- 4 Prefixes
- 5 High-frequency words
- 6 Apostrophes
- 7 Key words

##### Spelling strategies

- 8 Personal spelling
- 9 Phonemes and syllables
- 10 Analogy
- 11 Strategies for learning spellings

- 12 Using a dictionary
- 13 Spellcheckers

##### Vocabulary

- 14 Word meaning in context
- 15 Dictionary and thesaurus
- 16 Unfamiliar words
- 17 Word classes
- 18 Qualification and comparison
- 19 Lexical patterns
- 20 Connectives
- 21 Subject vocabulary
- 22 Words in different languages

#### SENTENCE LEVEL

##### Sentence construction and punctuation

- 1 subordinate clauses
  - a) types
  - b) functions
  - c) positioning
- 2 Noun phrases
- 3 Boundary punctuation
- 4 Tense management
- 5 Active or passive voice
- 6 Resolve ambiguity
- 7 Speech punctuation

##### Paragraphing and cohesion

- 8 Starting paragraphs
- 9 Main point of paragraph
- 10 Paragraph structure
- 11 Sentence variety
- 12 Sequencing paragraphs

##### Stylistic conventions of non-fiction

- 13 a) information
- b) recount
- c) explanation
- d) instructions
- e) persuasion
- f) discursive writing
- 14 Subject conventions

##### Standard English and language variation

- 15 Vary formality
- 16 Speech and writing
- 17 Standard English
- 18 Sentences in older text

#### READING

##### Research and study skills

- 1 Locate information
- 2 Extract information
- 3 Compare presentation
- 4 Note-making
- 5 Evaluate sources

##### Reading for meaning

- 6 Active reading
- 7 Identify main ideas
- 8 Infer and deduce
- 9 Distinguish writer's views
- 10 Media audiences
- 11 Print, sound and image

##### Understanding the author's craft

- 12 Character, setting and mood
- 13 Non-fiction style
- 14 Language choices
- 15 Endings
- 16 Author attitudes

##### Study of literary texts

- 17 Independent reading
- 18 Response to a play
- 19 Poetic form
- 20 Literary heritage

#### WRITING

##### Plan, draft and present

- 1 Drafting process
- 2 Planning formats
- 3 Exploratory writing
- 4 Handwriting and presentation

##### Imagine, explore, entertain

- 5 Story structure
- 6 Characterisation
- 7 Narrative devices
- 8 Visual and sound effects
- 9 Link writing and reading

##### Inform, explain, describe

- 10 Organise texts appropriately
- 11 Present information
- 12 Develop logic
- 13 Instructions and directions
- 14 Evocative description

##### Persuade, argue, advise

- 15 Express a view
- 16 Validate an argument
- 17 Informal advice

##### Analyse, review, comment

- 18 Present findings
- 19 Reflective writing

#### SPEAKING AND LISTENING

##### Speaking

- 1 Clarify through talk
- 2 Recount
- 3 Shape a presentation
- 4 Answers, instructions, explanations
- 5 Put a point of view

##### Listening

- 6 Recall main points
- 7 Pertinent questions
- 8 Presentational techniques
- 9 Oral text types

##### Group discussion and interaction

- 10 Report main points
- 11 Range of roles
- 12 Exploratory talk
- 13 Collaboration
- 14 Modify views

##### Drama

- 15 Explore in role
- 16 Collaborate on scripts
- 17 Extend spoken repertoire
- 18 Exploratory drama
- 19 Evaluate presentations

## YEAR 8

## WORD LEVEL

## Spelling

- 1 a) vowel choices
- b) pluralisation
- c) word endings
- d) prefixes and suffixes
- e) apostrophes
- f) homophones
- 2 High-frequency spellings
- 3 Lexical patterns
- 4 Complex and unfamiliar words
- 5 Key terms

## Spelling strategies

- 6 a) personal spelling
- b) spelling rules
- c) dictionaries and spellcheckers
- d) sounds and syllables
- e) critical features
- f) word formation
- g) analogy

## Vocabulary

- 7 a) word families
- b) unfamiliar words
- c) words in context
- 8 Use linguistic terms
- 9 Specialist vocabulary
- 10 Prepositions and connectives
- 11 Figurative vocabulary
- 12 Formality and word choice
- 13 Ironic use of words
- 14 Language change

## SENTENCE LEVEL

## Sentence construction and punctuation

- 1 Complex sentences
- 2 Variety of sentence structure
- 3 Colons and semi-colons
- 4 Tense shifts
- 5 Conditionals and modal verbs

## Paragraphing and cohesion

- 6 Grouping sentences
- 7 Cohesion and coherence

## Stylistic conventions of non-fiction

- 8 Subject-specific conventions
- 9 Adapting text types
- 10 Informal to formal

## Standard English and language variation

- 11 Standard English and dialect
- 12 Degrees of formality
- 13 Change over time
- 14 Compare languages

## READING

## Research and study skills

- 1 Combine information
- 2 Independent research
- 3 Notemaking formats

## Reading for meaning

- 4 Versatile reading
- 5 Trace developments
- 6 Bias and objectivity
- 7 Implied and explicit meanings
- 8 Transposition
- 9 Influence of technology

## Understanding the author's craft

- 10 Development of key ideas
- 11 Compare treatments of same theme

## Study of literary texts

- 12 Independent reading
- 13 Interpret a text
- 14 Literary conventions
- 15 Historical context
- 16 Cultural context

## WRITING

## Plan, draft and present

- 1 Effective planning
- 2 Anticipate reader reaction
- 3 Writing to reflect
- 4 Handwriting at speed

## Imagine, explore, entertain

- 5 Narrative commentary
- 6 Figurative language
- 7 Establish the tone
- 8 Experiment with conventions
- 9 Rework in different forms

## Inform, explain, describe

- 10 Effective information
- 11 Explain complex ideas
- 12 Formal description

## Persuade, argue, advise

- 13 Present a case persuasively
- 14 Develop an argument
- 15 Advice about options

## Analyse, review, comment

- 16 Balanced analysis
- 17 Integrate evidence
- 18 Critical review

## SPEAKING AND LISTENING

## Speaking

- 1 Evaluate own speaking
- 2 Develop recount
- 3 Formal presentation
- 4 Commentary
- 5 Questions to clarify or refine

## Listening

- 6 Evaluate own listening
- 7 Listen for a specific purpose
- 8 Hidden messages

## Group discussion and interaction

- 9 Evaluate own contributions
- 10 Hypothesis and speculation
- 11 Building on others
- 12 Varied roles in discussion

## Drama

- 13 Evaluate own drama skills
- 14 Dramatic techniques
- 15 Work in role
- 16 Collaborative presentation

**YEAR 9  
WORD LEVEL**

- Spelling**
- 1 Revise spelling conventions
  - 2 High-frequency words
- Spelling strategies**
- 3 Evaluate own spelling
  - 4 a) learning strategies  
b) apply knowledge  
c) identify patterns
  - 5 Ways of checking
- Vocabulary**
- 6 Terminology for analysis
  - 7 Layers of meaning
  - 8 Connectives for developing thought

**SENTENCE LEVEL**

- Sentence construction and punctuation**
- 1 Complex sentences
  - 2 Punctuation for clarity and effect
  - 3 Degrees of formality
  - 4 Integrate speech, reference and quotation
- Paragraphing and cohesion**
- 5 Shape paragraphs rapidly
  - 6 Paragraph organisation
- Stylistic conventions of non-fiction**
- 7 Exploit conventions
  - 8 Conventions of ICT texts
- Standard English and language variation**
- 9 Sustained standard English
  - 10 Attitudes to standard English
  - 11 Trends over time

**READING**

- Research and study skills**
- 1 Information retrieval
  - 2 Synthesise information
  - 3 Note-making at speed
  - 4 Evaluate information
- Reading for meaning**
- 5 Evaluate own critical writing
  - 6 Authorial perspective
  - 7 Compare texts
  - 8 Readers and texts
- Understanding the author's craft**
- 9 Compare writers from different times
  - 10 Interpretations of text
  - 11 Author's standpoint
  - 12 Rhetorical devices
- Study of literary texts**
- 13 Evaluate own reading
  - 14 Analyse scenes
  - 15 Major writers
  - 16 Different cultural contexts
  - 17 Compare poets
  - 18 Prose text

**WRITING**

- Plan, draft and present**
- 1 Review own writing
  - 2 Exploratory writing
  - 3 Formal essay
  - 4 Presentational devices
- Imagine, explore, entertain**
- 5 Narrative techniques
  - 6 Creativity in non-literary texts
  - 7 'Infotainment'
  - 8 Poetic form and meaning
- Inform, explain, describe**
- 9 Integrate information
  - 10 Explain connections
  - 11 Descriptive detail
  - 12 Effective presentation of information
- Persuade, argue, advise**
- 13 Influence audience
  - 14 Counter-argument
  - 15 Impartial guidance
- Analyse, review, comment**
- 16 Balanced analysis
  - 17 Cite textual evidence

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

- Speaking**
- 1 Evaluate own talk
  - 2 Standard English
  - 3 Interview techniques
- Listening**
- 4 Evaluate own listening skills
  - 5 Compare points of view
  - 6 Analyse bias
  - 7 Identify underlying issues
- Group discussion and interaction**
- 8 Evaluate own contributions
  - 9 Considered viewpoint
  - 10 Group organisation
- Drama**
- 11 Evaluate own drama skills
  - 12 Drama techniques
  - 13 Compare interpretations
  - 14 Convey character and atmosphere
  - 15 Critical evaluation

## Leadership and management

**Headteachers** can get the literacy strand off to a flying start by:

- giving a high profile to literacy development;
- ensuring responsibility is allocated for cross-curricular work and catch-up provision;
- considering in advance the timetabling of Progress units;
- finding time to talk to the Head of English about the task facing the department;
- deciding how to allocate lead responsibilities for objectives which apply beyond English, e.g. drama, cross-curricular spellings, etc.
- establishing a strong expectation that literacy will be planned and monitored across the curriculum;
- giving a lead on the best way to deploy resources made available by the strategy, e.g. supply cover.

**Heads of English** have a crucial role in:

- inspiring and enthusing English staff and supporting them in a period of change;
- auditing English, setting annual targets and developing a plan for achieving them;
- drawing up a realistic plan for introducing changes and making use of the resources, opportunities and training that will be offered over the year;
- reviewing and updating the Scheme of Work;
- working closely with senior managers and subject colleagues to ensure that all literacy objectives are taught and consolidated across the curriculum;
- monitoring and evaluating the teaching of English;
- identifying how particular groups of pupils are to be supported;
- keeping abreast of local and national developments in literacy, and ensuring that ideas, best practice, training and key messages are shared within the department.

## Where to begin

This term you could:

- make an early start on the literacy audit (or update last year's audit);
- define numerical and curricular targets;
- identify priorities and actions;
- identify staff to attend and cascade training;
- encourage key staff to familiarise themselves with the objectives;
- review teaching plans for English next term;
- encourage English teachers to try out the lesson starter;
- negotiate the use of consultancy support;
- identify staff to deliver the cross-curricular training day in October.

