

Framework for teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9

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Foreword



Language lies at the heart of the drive to raise standards in secondary schools. It is the key to developing in young people the capacity to express themselves with confidence, to think logically, creatively and imaginatively and to developing a deep understanding of literature and the wider culture. For these reasons, it is in all our interests to work together to provide clear and ambitious goals for all pupils in their reading and writing.

The *Framework for Teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9* sets out an ambitious agenda for all abilities. It contains challenges to stretch the gifted and talented, and an imperative to act quickly to bring underachieving pupils up to the level of their peers. Most of all, it equips all pupils for the world in which they will live and work – a world which places a high premium on the written and spoken word, where reading and writing permeate every aspect of life, and where pleasures often derive from good discussion, excellent books and the power of writing.

The Framework is the starting point for a fresh approach to teaching and learning which is key to the whole Key Stage 3 strategy. To learn well, pupils must be inspired, challenged and engaged. The Framework and the training that goes with it will offer teachers a new chance to hone and develop their teaching skills and to share with others how best the ambitions of the Framework can be realised.

We have much to celebrate and build on. We have already seen from primary colleagues that pupils can be brought on quickly and in significant numbers, and we have a responsibility to carry this momentum forward into Key Stage 3, particularly for boys, and especially in writing.

I commend this Framework to you as a resource for improving teaching and learning in Key Stage 3. Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and commitment, which remain central to the success of the strategy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David Blunkett".

The Rt Hon David Blunkett MP
Secretary of State for Education and Employment
March 2001

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Section 1 Rationale

Introduction

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 purposes of this document are:

- to set out teaching objectives for pupils in Key Stage 3 which will ensure that they build on their achievements in primary school;
- to provide a basis for target-setting;
- to ensure that pupils entering Key Stage 3 below Level 4 are supported to catch up;
- to provide guidance on how teachers can use these objectives to plan appropriately challenging work for their pupils;
- to enable headteachers and curriculum managers to set high and consistent expectations for achievement;
- to promote continuity and progression between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

The *Framework for teaching English* is based closely on the Programmes of Study for English in the revised National Curriculum of 2000. Framework objectives for Years 7, 8, and 9 provide a framework for progression and full coverage of the English Order.

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. The Framework also encompasses speaking and listening to

support English teachers in planning to meet the full demands of the National Curriculum, and to tie in the development of oral skills with parallel demands in written text.

English teachers have a leading role in providing pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively, but this document also addresses other subject staff. 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 overall aim of the Framework is to enable all pupils to develop sophisticated literacy skills. By the end of Year 9, we expect each pupil to be:

a shrewd and fluent independent reader:

- orchestrating a range of strategies to get at meaning in text, including inferential and evaluative skills;
- sensitive to the way meanings are made;
- reading in different ways for different purposes, including skimming to pick up quickly the gist of a text, scanning to locate specific information, close reading to follow complex passages and re-reading to uncover layers of meaning;
- reflective, critical and discriminating in response to a wide range of printed and visual texts.

a confident writer:

- able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, knowing the conventions and beginning to adapt and develop them;
- able to write imaginatively, effectively and correctly;
- able to shape, express, experiment with and manipulate sentences;
- able to organise, develop, spell and punctuate writing accurately.

an effective speaker and listener:

- with the clarity and confidence to convey a point of view or information;
- using talk to explore, create, question and revise ideas, recognising language as a tool for learning;
- able to work effectively with others in a range of roles;
- having a varied repertoire of styles, which are used appropriately.

The Structure of the Framework

Organisation

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 secure 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.

Reading and writing objectives have been laid alongside each other in the Text level column to reflect the growing demands of this section of the curriculum, but this does not diminish the importance of the Word and Sentence level. A further column contains objectives for speaking and listening. These objectives build on the specific expectations for primary pupils in the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) document 'Teaching Speaking and Listening at Key Stages 1 and 2'.

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

The list of objectives does not imply that teachers should approach them in isolation or teach them in a reductive way. Objectives benefit from being taught explicitly and from being identified and deployed in context. Planning should draw together objectives from Word, Sentence and Text level. For example, work about expressing a point of view could draw on objectives in every column: class discussion might inform the writing which follows, drama enhance empathy with the views of others, and reading an exemplar passage provide a model for the organisation and style of writing. Teachers are encouraged to find ways of clustering together complementary objectives.

Progression

The Framework supports effective transition between Key Stages 2 and 3 by building on the work done through the National Literacy Strategy in primary schools. 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.

Progression in English has different dimensions. It involves increasing the level of conceptual challenge, the depth of understanding and the breadth of application of skills. This means a developing ability to make connections between points that are not apparently related and to apply skills and sensitivities in a widening range of contexts. This means that skills are not merely covered once, but are often revisited and developed as 'strands' of objectives that feature with increasing sophistication across Years 7, 8 and 9.

Key objectives

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. They have been selected to help teachers in defining targets and as a focus for assessment.

Over the three years of the Key Stage, the key objectives trace a critical path of progress for pupils. In some cases, the objectives address the same developing skills over three years, but sometimes the focus changes. This reflects the way certain strands rise in significance whilst others are secured and therefore assume less prominence.

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 progress are addressed.

Differentiation and support

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.

Provision has been made within the Framework for those pupils entering Year 7 who have not yet secured the very important skills that enable them to be independent readers and writers. The Word and Sentence level columns include revision and consolidation objectives for those pupils who need them. Teachers should consider each class and decide who, if anyone, needs the opportunity to consolidate earlier learning. Sometimes whole classes need this work, and sometimes it is a substantial minority of pupils in a class. It is unlikely that pupils who are out of step with their peers will pick up unlearnt skills incidentally.

An important element of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is using targeted intervention to help pupils to catch up with their peers as quickly and effectively as possible. The Standards and Effectiveness Unit (SEU) has developed a suite of half-termly Literacy Progress Units for pupils who enter Year 7 at level 3 experiencing difficulties with any, or all, of the following:

- writing organisation: organising writing into sentences and paragraphs;
- information retrieval: locating, extracting and evaluating information;
- spelling: learning rules and developing strategies;
- reading between the lines: using inference and deduction;
- phonics: understanding and using phonics to improve accuracy;
- sentences: developing a wider repertoire of sentence structures.

The aim is to provide focused and practical methods of catching up for pupils who are out of step with their peers, and to achieve this as early as possible. The emphasis is on applying what has been learnt so that pupils transfer skills into their everyday work in English and in other subjects.

Further guidance on inclusion, i.e. pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), pupils with disabilities, pupils who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) and supporting gifted and talented pupils, is given in Section 4 of this document.

Covering the National Curriculum

Balancing range and progression

The Framework embraces the requirements of the National Curriculum for English, and lays out a clear line of progression to be charted in teaching plans. In planning to deliver the range of texts required by the National Curriculum, teachers will choose and use texts to deliver the objectives. In this way, pupils in one school studying, for example, *Treasure Island* and *Animal Farm*, will, one way or another, have covered the same objectives by the end of the key stage as pupils in another school who have studied quite different texts.

Studying a range of texts remains an important principle: range contributes to progression in the secondary years because it enables pupils to generalise about their reading experiences, compare and evaluate texts against each other, and to become more discriminating readers. The real challenge lies in building progression into these reading experiences. Progression is defined by the Framework as a planned increase or refinement of skills, understanding and knowledge, and not simply progressing through the pages of set texts. In practice, this means that the teaching of texts is informed by objectives, and the challenge is to match texts and objectives at the planning stage, so that justice can be done to both.

Meeting the literature requirements of the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum for English prescribes the range of literature to be studied over Key Stages 3 and 4:

- two Shakespeare plays;
- drama by major playwrights;
- two pre-1914 fiction texts;
- two post-1914 fiction texts;
- four pre-1914 poets;
- four post-1914 poets;
- recent and contemporary works;
- writers from different cultures and traditions;
- literary non-fiction;
- information and reference texts;
- media and moving image texts.

Departments should map out when and where they will teach whole texts, and occasional opportunities to revisit different types of text over the five years. For example, pupils may encounter scenes by Shakespeare in primary school, or in Year 7, before studying a whole play in Year 8 or 9.

There is clearly a balance to be achieved between providing classroom time to support the reading of longer texts, and the imperative to secure progression. Having clear objectives lends pace and focus to the study of longer texts; there is less need to teach all possible angles on the text and more reason to focus on those aspects which cluster around the objectives. The aim is to provide enjoyable encounters, which serve the objectives well but do not demand a disproportionate commitment of time. Teachers already use a repertoire of techniques (such as the use of priority passages, support tapes, abridgement, televised extracts and recapitulation) to move quickly through longer texts without denying attention to the details and quality of the text.

Literacy across the curriculum

Language is the principal medium of learning in school, and every teacher needs to cultivate it as the tool for learning in their subject. Other subjects do more than simply police English across the curriculum, or nurse pupils with poor skills. Teachers have a genuine stake in strong language skills because language enables thought. Language goes beyond just 'writing up' what is learnt and 'looking up' information in a text; it is in acts of reading and writing that meanings are forged, refined and fixed. Finding the right words, giving shape to an idea, articulating what is meant: this is where language is synonymous with learning.

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. 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.

All but a handful of the objectives have relevance across the curriculum. 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.

The training for Literacy across the Curriculum shows how schools can organise their action plans around a few key objectives. For schools that already have well-developed cross-curricular priorities, QCA's *Language for Learning* objectives offer a more general model for language development in the subjects.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy underlined the importance of teaching to clear, unambiguous objectives in ways which engage pupils in active learning, and securing these in everyday use.

Schools are diverse, but the principles of teaching and learning on which the current pilot is founded are universal and well established in research and practice.

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy promotes **teaching** that is:

- informed by clear, challenging and progressive objectives;
- direct and explicit;
- highly interactive;
- inspiring and motivating;
- varied in style and distinguished by a fast pace and strong focus;
- well-pitched to pupils' needs;
- inclusive and ambitious.

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy promotes **learning** that is:

- active and highly-motivated;
- purposeful;
- creative and imaginative;
- reflective;
- secured in use and meaningful in context;
- increasingly independent;
- harnessed to personal or group targets.

To achieve this highly-engaging and fast-paced teaching, the Key Stage 3 National Strategy is committed to supporting teachers to develop a range of effective teaching styles:

- direction: to ensure pupils know what they are doing, and why;
- demonstration: to show pupils how effective readers and writers work;
- modelling: to explain the rules and conventions of language and texts;
- scaffolding: to support pupils' early efforts and build security and confidence;
- explanation: to clarify and exemplify the best ways of working;
- questioning: to probe, draw out or extend pupils' thinking;
- exploration: to encourage critical thinking and generalisation;
- investigation: to encourage enquiry and self-help;
- discussion: to shape and challenge developing ideas;
- reflection and evaluation: to help pupils to learn from experience, successes and mistakes.

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, 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 rather than independent time to ensure the transfer of skills into everyday use.

The National Literacy Strategy has already developed ways of working more effectively in these ways, through the use of:

- shared reading and writing – in which the teacher demonstrates and models the process of comprehension or composition with the whole class;
- guided reading and writing – in which the teacher dedicates substantial time in the lesson to stretch and support a particular group;
- plenaries to consolidate the learning objectives;
- investigations – in which pupils explore language and work out its rules and conventions;
- whole-class interaction – in which all pupils are expected to respond, rather than individuals;
- specific achievable targets – for groups and sometimes for individual pupils.

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. Experience in the pilot schools has confirmed that a lively interactive opening to the session with a sharp focus on specific objectives will engage 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 without distorting the teaching of ongoing work. Starter activities are popular with the whole-ability range, but highly recommended for classes containing pupils who have not yet secured the Word level objectives. Teachers have also used them to introduce different sentence structures and other learning that can be revised in concise, focused sessions.

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. 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. Plenary to draw out the learning (e.g. through feedback and presentation), lasting 5–10 minutes

The starter activity may relate to the lesson that follows, but it may also relate to a series of starters developed over several lessons. Either way, it needs to be tied in to work over time, or in the lesson; isolated starters are less likely to have an effect. The starter activity strand can be identified

as a block of work in the medium-term plan. Once introduced, starter topics can be revisited as they arise in context during the rest of the lesson. For example, spelling rules can be noticed in shared texts, or sentence structures used in shared writing. Attention can be drawn to them without the necessity of breaking the flow of Text level work to teach more basic skills.

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 in progress 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.

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 three 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 the needs of individual pupils.

The underachievement of boys in English compared with girls is already well documented, and it is also clear that standards of writing among boys are often significantly below their standards in reading. These patterns of achievement are not simply or quickly resolved, but there are several aspects of teaching promoted in these pages which can make a contribution:

- teaching to objectives that are shared with pupils;
- a sense of early gains, measurable progress, identified achievement;
- fast-paced lively lessons, rich in oral work and an interactive style;
- time given to non-fiction;
- texts and topics which will sustain the interest of boys, and cater for diverse tastes;
- balance between empathetic and analytic approaches to literature;
- role models, e.g. male writers in residence.

For more information about raising the achievement of boys and girls, see the DfEE website www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/genderandachievement.

Planning and Assessment

Using the Framework to plan the English curriculum

The *Framework for Teaching English Years 7, 8 and 9* provides objectives, or *what* to teach over the course of the year. The medium-term plan, often a half-termly document, maps out *when* and *in what context* it will be taught, e.g. through a unit of work. The short-term plan, probably a weekly document, defines *how* it will be taught.

Good planning is useful, manageable and worthwhile. The time and effort of planning is an investment for future years and will reduce the demands of paperwork in the long term. It also becomes quicker and easier with familiarity. Plans that are well constructed and meaningful 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 Y7 to Y11 – 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 of the medium-term plan. 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 in the appendix and units of work are made 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.

For convenience, each objective has been given an abbreviated name tag. This is easier to identify than either numbers or the whole objectives. These are listed in the planning section of the appendix.

Assessment

As pupils come to terms with their new school, it is essential to continue to build their language skills. Teachers need to know what their pupils can already do. Many pupils now leave Year 6 with personal targets, records and a history of intervention, and this body of information can help secondary teachers to make a quick start on work that is well matched to pupils' capabilities. The 'clean sheet' approach is too slow, and allows pupils to fall back when they need to be challenged. As a minimum, schools should survey the information about incoming pupils to help them in planning the work of the first term, and then review individual records more closely when they have had three or four weeks of experience with individual pupils. This will alert them to unexpected changes in performance that need to be resolved and enable them to adjust teaching expectations accordingly.

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 its 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'.

The best assessment has an immediate impact on teaching, because it alerts the teacher to the needs of pupils who are either out of step or exceeding expectations. Assessment in this case is pro-active: it informs target-setting and helps to maintain the pace of learning for all pupils. Teachers who use whole-class interactive teaching methods get a clear and early view of individual competencies, and they are able to offer immediate support, so that pupils can keep up with the pace of work, and do not fall behind.

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 mean, for example, a review of work completed in the unit, 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.

During 2001, further work will support schools in the use of key objectives and target-setting.