

Uffculme Primary School



Writing With Your Child



Learning to write

Learning about writing starts long before your child starts going to school. Children learn by pretending, trying to behave like a real writer.

Children are often eager to write. Writing often follows on from drawing and from the child's reading. Children like to be able to write their names, to label drawings or to write a story to go with a picture.

By the age of five your child will probably:

- understand that writing has a message.
- use some letters, words or pictures in their 'writing'.
- write their name.

You can help your child by pointing out letters from your child's name when you're sharing books together. Often children write capital letters first. Capital letters are all around us, on shop signs, notices and newspaper headlines. Children notice them because they stand out clearly. Please start to show them what the lower case letters look like. It is important to show them how to write their name with a capital letter at the beginning and then the lower case letters. Encourage your child to use a comfortable and appropriate pencil grip.

Learning to Write - How to help

You can help them by doing the following:

- Get your child used to making shapes of lower case letters by joining dots or using a pencil to go over shapes you've drawn in a light colour pen.
- At the beginning, don't worry too much about untidy writing. You don't want to put them off having fun when they're learning.
- Don't worry if your child crosses out when they're writing. Lots of children try out different spellings until they feel a word looks right. Whiteboards are great for allowing children to try and try again.
- Encourage your child to 'have a go'. It is not good for them to be too dependent on copying the correct spelling of a word from an adult all the time.
- Write a story that your child has told you. They can learn from watching you write and can help suggesting letters and spellings.
- Help them to make their own labels, notices, cards and books.
- If they want to write a story, help them to think of what it's about, what happens and how it ends. Ask questions about the characters in the story.
- Explain that they need different words to write about the past (we walked to the shops yesterday), present (today I am here) and future (tomorrow I will go swimming).

Useful resources and games

Pencils and paper, letter tiles, fridge magnets, alphabet games e.g. I spy, letter and picture matching games, white board with pens and cloth to wipe clean, magazines and newspapers to cut letters/words out of.

Spelling

Lots of children find spelling hard. If it gets in the way of your child's enjoyment of reading and writing, there are ways you can help using everyday things.

You can help them by doing the following:

- Spell out words with fridge magnets or letter tiles from word games. Take some letters out and get your child to put the right ones back in the right places.
- Play games with lists of words. Can they put them in alphabetical order using the first letter of a word e.g. cat, fat, hat, mat & sat? Or can they do this by the second letter e.g. bag, beg, big, bog & bug? NB. Most children find it easiest to hear the sound for the first letters in a word, followed by the last letters and then finally the middle sound.
- Draw or cut out pictures of things that have only one letter different e.g. 'pen' & 'pin' to help them get used to how different vowels (a,e,i,o,u) work.
- Use a mirror so your child can see how their mouth moves when saying letters that can easily get mixed up when they write them down, like 'm' and 'w' or 'd' and 'b'.
- Make up phrases that will help your child remember how to spell tricky spellings e.g. because - big elephants can always understand small elephants.
- Get them to play at rearranging letters to make other words (anagrams) out of their name, or other words they know.

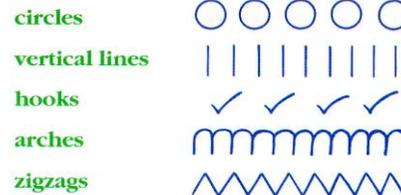
Useful resources and games

Alphabet games such as 'I went to the market and I bought...an apple & a banana', quizzes, miming games, snap, lotto and spot the difference will encourage children to 'look with intent'. Play word hunts e.g. words within words. Enjoy rhymes together. Look at picture dictionaries.

Handwriting

As your child learns to write they will slowly learn how to form each letter correctly. It is important not to put them off by correcting them all the time!

The shapes which most letters are based on:



You could practise these at home but try and make it part of something real, not just an exercise. Maybe it could be patterns round a card for someone. Drawing games will help your child to control their pencil.

Joined handwriting is a vital ingredient for fostering good spelling. At Uffculme Primary School we encourage children to write from the start with a 'flick' which will enable natural joins. We aim for children to have a writing movement that flows smoothly and to encourage them to take care and pay attention to detail.

We aim for all children in our school to have a good self image of themselves as a writer and to be confident to experiment when composing pieces of writing.

If you have any concerns with how to support your child with their writing development then please do ask your child's teacher for advice and ideas.

Letter formation used at Uffculme Primary School. We follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

