

The importance of 'Talk' in Big Writing

The premise of Big Writing is that if children can't say it or talk about it, then they can't write it. The better we can talk, the better we can write. Having a wide vocabulary and using language well helps children with all of their learning. Every Friday your child will be given 'talk homework', giving them a talk topic to discuss with you.

Here are some ways in which you can help your child at home with their writing:

- Talk! Talk! Talk! – ask children to describe anything and ever thing.
- Write! Write! Write! – encourage them to write letters, a diary, email friends and family, send postcards, make lists, play vocabulary games, write stories and illustrate them.
- Take the opportunity to comment on interesting use of VCOP when reading with your child.
- Use a dictionary or a thesaurus to find interesting words to use.
- Encourage children to think about how to improve work completed at home through use of VCOP.
- Be prepared to explain new words to your child and give examples of how to use them.
- Read often and widely with your child.
- Encourage children to use phrases or words seen in a book in their own writing.
- Take it in turns to tell a story. One person starts it, the other says what happens next etc
- Look at a picture or photo and describe it; use it to tell a story.



Parent's Guide to Big Writing



*To promote a culture of educational excellence,
from within a caring and secure Islamic environ-
ment enriched with the values of discipline, mutual
care and respect which extends the school into the
wider community*

How does Big Writing work?

Big writing is a way of teaching writing, based on the research of Ros Wilson. Big Writing focuses on four main aspects of the writing process (VCOP) and gives the children the skills to improve their writing through self-assessment.

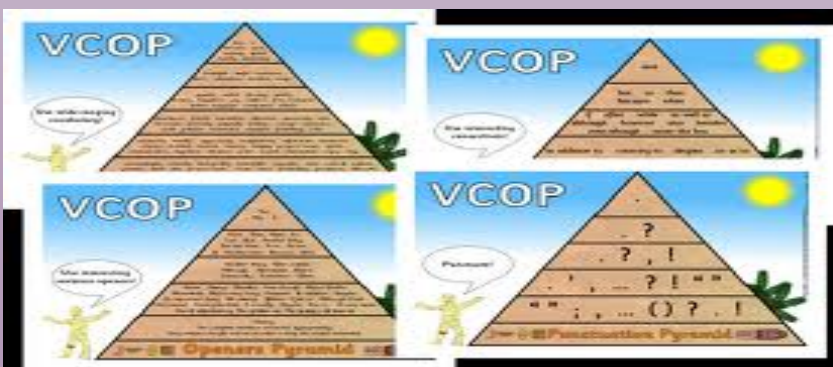
So what does VCOP stand for?

V - is for vocabulary (ambitious 'WOW' words) and children are encouraged to widen their use of language to make their writing richer. In the classroom, new and expressive words are collected and shared.

C - is for connectives (joining words) such as and, because, so, besides, although, however, but etc. This makes writing more cohesive and interesting.

O - s for openers (opening your sentences in a variety of ways). Varying the way you open sentences makes them more engaging to read. There are three main ways of opening sentences – using connectives and words ending in 'ly' and 'ing'. Another way includes starting a sentence with a word ending in 'ed'.

P - is for punctuation – correctly using punctuation appropriate for age or level. Children are taught the names of the different punctuation and they learn how to use them to 'up level' their writing.



Children are taught in class which specific vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation will be suitable for particular task or writing genre e.g. a story or an information sheet. They then go on to practise these in different ways such as through games, highlighting text, or using them in their own writing.

Ingredients that make a Big Writing lesson.

- A lively, fun lesson that focuses on the VCOP and generates ideas or writing – games, activities and active learning.
- An undisturbed writing session, special pens and books, and silence!
- Lots of experience of writing different text types chosen for Big Writing e.g. story, report, news article, diary entry.
- A chance to read through good examples of similar writing – we call this 'hooking in'.
- Talking homework – discussed in class and sent home (important discussion and planning time).
- Reading the writing with a partner and helping one another to make improvements.
- Setting targets for how to make progress next time they

