

Hillcross Primary School



Parent Help Guide

The transition from speaking a sentence to writing a sentence

Communication and language is the foundations of all literacy skills

Communication and language is one of the three prime areas within the **Early Years Foundation Stage** (EYFS). Each prime area is divided into **early learning goals**, for communication and language these are:

- [Listening and attention](#) - these skills support language learning and include the ability to discriminate sounds and maintain and monitor attention in a shared context.
- [Understanding](#) - young children gradually develop the ability to understand words in context, beginning with single words and building on this with phrases and more and more complex sentences.
- [Speaking](#) - this allows children to express their feelings, needs and wants, their thoughts and ideas and be able to talk about what has happened and about creative or imaginative events.

As children develop speaking and listening skills, they're building the foundations for literacy and learning. Plus, they're learning key skills like how to express themselves and make friends.

[The Communication trust](#) offers a range of information, advice and support for practitioners and parents.

Communication & Language *and the links to writing.*

As your child moves through Reception, we begin to apply these speaking skills to their writing. Children will need to be able to speak their ideas and then apply their phonic awareness to write them down. For some children, the transition from speaking to writing ideas is a scary one. Children often have the tools and required knowledge- they just lack the skills to give it a go!

Children also need to know its okay to be wrong! It's okay for things to be tricky.

This allows them to build resilience a key skill in learning.

Practise, Practise and practise, is the key!

Children will need to start off slowly, writing one word; a label, then a couple of words and then onto a fully sentence.

One tool we use at Hillcross to support children in speaking their ideas in a sentence and then writing their ideas in a sentence is:

Colourful Semantics

Today, we are going to talk you through the process so you can help and support your child at home.

Each section will have a video to show how it is used in school

Colourful Semantics

Colourful semantics is an approach created by Alison Bryan. It is aimed at helping children to develop their grammar, by linking the structure of a sentence (syntax) and its meaning (semantics).

What is Colourful Semantics?

Colourful semantics reassembles sentences by cutting them up into their thematic roles and then colour codes them.

The approach has 4 key colour coded stages to 'show' the structure of a sentence. There are further stages for adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions and negatives.

1. WHO - Orange
2. WHAT DOING - Yellow
3. WHAT - Green
4. WHERE - Blue



Noun

We begin with looking at the noun in the sentence, who the sentence is about.

You can use objects at home, like characters, objects, animals. Use pictures or their toys.



Introducing WHO at home

Books:

Look through a book your child is familiar with – ask your child who questions about the book e.g.

Who is this? Who is crying?

- ★ Model the correct name or noun if your child responds by just pointing or saying “her / she is!” – say “yes the girl!”



The man



The lady



The girl



The boy



The baby

Verb

Next we look at the verb in the sentence, what is the noun doing, what action is being completed.

What is the character doing.

You can play lots of action games with your child to help them act out verbs.

The **boy** is **eating**.

A **girl** **jumps**.

The **dog** is **running**.



Introducing WHAT DOING at home

Simon says:

Use this game to get your child to make sentence to tell you **what to do** e.g.

Simon says...Mummy **jump**

Simon says...Mummy **eat**

Make teddy:

Using some soft toys and ask your child to tell you **what to do** with them – the instructions can be silly e.g. Make....teddy **eat** dinosaur



What is happening?

So when your child has the first 2 parts of their sentence, they can then extend this by explain what the character is doing or how they are doing it.

E.g.

The boy is eating a banana

A girl jumps on the bed

The dog is running to the shop

This may require your child to use prepositions such as 'on' 'in' 'at' 'to'



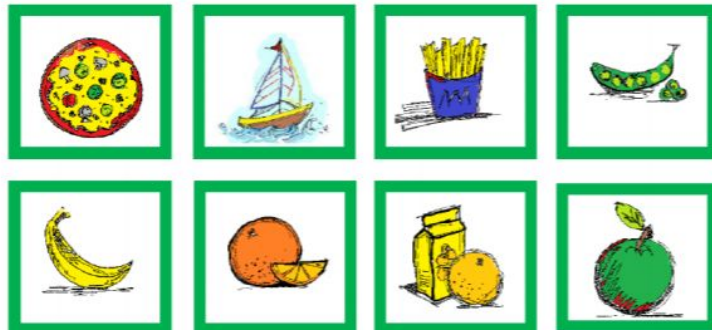
Introducing WHAT at home

Books: Look through a book your child is familiar with – ask your child what questions about the book e.g. what is the boy eating? What is the mum carrying?

- ★ Model the correct **object** word if your child does not respond, points, or says something else e.g. “she’s carrying a basket!”

Make teddy: Using some soft toys / dolls ask your child to tell you what to do with them – the instructions can be silly e.g. Make....**teddy eat a pineapple** or

Adult: What should the doll carry to school? **Child:** Her books!



Now hear how the child uses the cards to speak a sentence.

The overview




These are the first four stages that we focus on.

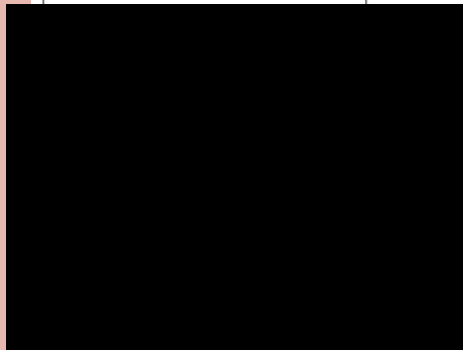
Initially it is in speaking, as you see from the videos the children do not write to begin with.

These speaking skills are learnt alongside the phonics and reading skills in school.

Once the children are confident in speaking a sentence we can then start to write this.

Once they have written the sentence we then ask the children to underline the **noun**, **verb** and the **what?** In their colours.

Who?	Orange	who? 
What doing?	Yellow	what doing? 
What?	Green	what? 



Moving from Speaking to Writing

The move from speaking a sentence will happen slowly. The children will need to be secure in their phonics knowledge before writing is possible.

In autumn term of Reception, we will write words- segmenting and blending these using the phonemes and graphemes we know.

What can we write?

shopping lists, labelling pictures, writing our names and our family names.

In spring term, we will begin to write captions and phrases- applying our growing phonics awareness to writing words phonetically.

This then moves into writing short sentences, using now key words spelt correctly, all other words will still be spelt phonetically

What can we write?

caption to our pictures, a question, a letter, factual writing

In summer term, we will write sentences and short stories- applying our awareness of alternative phonics codes to help our spelling develop. We will begin to use finger spaces, punctuation and correctly spelt key words in our writing.

What can we write?

more detailed sentences, letters, recounts of an event, stories.

How can we help?

When your child wants to or is asked to write their ideas, ensure they speak them outloud first. You may need to re-say the sentence in a much simpler way. Children will often extend what they want to write

'One day there was a little boy and he went to a park and he played on the slide.'

As adults we can recast this as **'There was a boy'** or **'On day we met a boy'**.

Once we have a sentence, we then say the sentence again and count the words.

It is important to ensure that we only use cursive writing from the beginning of their journey.

-In the beginning, you may help to write the first part of the sentence for your child and they write only the last word.

-Then build up to them writing half the sentence.

-Finally they will be confident to write the whole sentence.

Only when your child is confidently writing would be then focus on finger spaces, punctuation, and then spelling. In the beginning, the children will write without leaving spaces but this is okay, we would only address this once they are happily writing and confident in 'having a go'.

Supportive aids

- As your child writes, they may find a sound mat useful. The Phonics International alphabet code with pictures is a great resource and can be downloaded for free [here](#).
- Holding a sentence in their head and recalling it over and over is a skill in itself. Children often write the first word and then forget the rest of their sentence! Sound buttons can also be used to record your child speaking their sentence. They can then press it to replay the sentence again and again as they write.
- Handwriting is also an important skill to learn alongside writing. You can access all the information needed on our [Hillcross cursive script here](#).

The English language has a fascinating history – but this has resulted in a complex **alphabetic code** for the writing system whereby the 26 letters of the alphabet represent the 44 or so smallest sounds identifiable in English speech in three complicated ways:

- one sound (**phoneme**) can be represented by one, two, three or four letters e.g. /a/ a, /ff/ ph, /tigh/ tgh, /seal/ seah
- one sound can be represented by multiple spelling alternatives (**graphemes**): e.g. /e/ e, ea, oe, ox, o-e, ea, ough
- one grapheme (letter or letter group) can represent multiple sounds e.g. 'ough': /ough/ though, /oi/ through, /oi/ plough, /ai/ thorough

On this **Alphabetic Code Chart**, the units of sound (phonemes or combined phonemes) are shown in slash marks. Vowel sounds are shown in red and consonant sounds are shown in blue. The vowel sounds provide the main volume and depth in spoken words whereas the consonant sounds are generally much quieter and sometimes very high-pitched such as /a/ and /i/. Teachers need to teach the separate units of sounds carefully, avoiding the added 'schwa' or 'uh' sound e.g. 'ass' not 'assh', 't' not 'tuh'.

units of sound	simple code key words	complex code + key words	graphemes or spelling alternatives which are code for the sounds				information
/a/	a apple						The Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles Teach the KNOWLEDGE of the alphabetic code that is, the letter-sound correspondences. Teach the THREE CORE SKILLS : 1. DECODING: Sound out and blend all through the printed word for reading unknown words. 2. ENCODING: Orally segment (identify) the sounds all through the spoken word for spelling, then select the correct graphemes AS CODE . PICK the identified sounds in this particular word. 3. HANDWRITING: Hold the pencil with the tripod grip and form correctly the 26 upper case and 26 lower case letters on writing lines.
/e/	e egg	ea head	ai said again				
/i/	i insect	y cymbals					
/o/	o octopus	wa watch	qu quartz		ai sail		
/u/	u umbrella	o son	ou touch	ough no thoroughfare			
/ai/	ai first aid	ay tray	a table	ae sunder	a-e cake		
		ey grey	ea break	eigh eight		a-igh straight	

Challenge as well as supporting moving the learning on...

Where?

Once the children are secure in a simple sentence, we can begin to add more detail to the sentence to give the listener more information and to build a picture of the event,

E.g.
The **boy** is **eating** a **banana** at **school**.

A **girl** **jumps** on the **bed** in her **bedroom**.

The **dog** is **running** on the **road** to get to the **shop**.

Introducing WHERE at home

Books: Look through a book your child is familiar with – ask your child where questions about the book, e.g. where is the boy going? Where is the cat sitting?

- ★ Model the correct location word if your child does not respond, points, or says something else e.g. “yes the cat is sitting in the kitchen!”

Take teddy: Using some soft toys or a doll's house, ask your child to tell you where to put things – the instructions can be silly e.g.

Adult: Where shall I put teddy? **Child:** on the toilet!



Challenge as well as supporting moving the learning on...

Colourful Semantics can also help to challenge and develop a child's writing skills. Once they are secure in the initial 4 sentence focus questions, we can then move onto include more detail.

This focuses on time, when the actions are happening...e.g.

The boy is eating a banana at school in the morning.

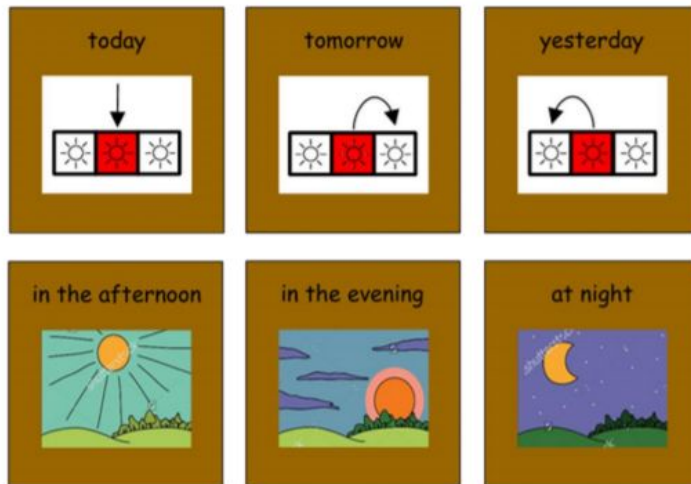
In the evening, the girl jumps on the bed in her bedroom.

The dog is running on the road to get to the shop before breakfast.

Introducing WHEN at home

Books: Look through a book your child is familiar with – ask your child when questions about the book, e.g. when did the boy wake up? When did the girl go to bed?

- ★ Model the correct time word if your child does not respond, points, or says something else e.g. "yes, the boy woke up in the morning!"



Only when the children are secure in this format of sentence structure, we then progress to introducing ...

Adjectives- describing words

The little boy is eating a yellow banana at school in the morning.

In the evening, the girl jumps on the bed in her bedroom.

The spotty dog is running on the bumpy road to get to the shop before breakfast.

Introducing WHAT LIKE at home

Around the house: Look at things around your house with your child – ask them what like questions about different items, e.g. what is this toy like?

- ★ Model the correct what like word if your child does not respond, points, or says something else e.g. "yes, it's shiny!"

My family: Look at pictures of your family with your child – ask them what like questions about different people, e.g. what is mummy's hair like?

- ★ Model the correct what like word if your child does not respond, points, or says something else e.g. "yes, it's brown!"



Help at home.

More Activities for Home

Hide and seek:

Play hide and seek to practice who, what doing where. Ask your child to make a sentence to tell you where to hide. For example –

- ★ Mummy hiding in the kitchen
- ★ Daddy sitting in the bedroom

Building sentences using pictures:

Use the attached symbols and photographs to build the correct sentences to describe what is happening in the picture.

Written language expanding and repairing:

If the child tends to jumble up words in their written language try providing them with structure by drawing with coloured pens in their book. For example –

- ★ If your child writes: *mummy daddy car work*, use colours to show them how to make their sentence complete: *mummy and daddy drive to work*

Encourage your child to make their sentences more complex with colourful semantics prompts. For example –

- ★ If your child writes: *I went swimming*, use colours to show them how to add more details: *I went swimming at the beach*

Supporting reading comprehension:

Photocopy pages from a book and ask the child to underline the 'who' words and the 'what doing' words etc. Try colour coding the questions to help the child to understand them.

Use the coloured cue cards to help your child to construct the sentences