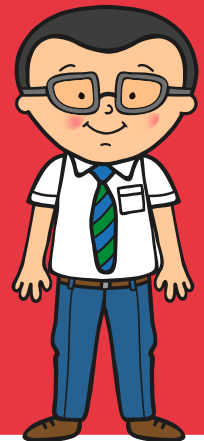




**Mighty Writer**

# Mighty Writer: What It Is and What It Does

**Transforms children's  
literacy almost overnight!**



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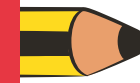
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## Introducing Mighty Writer

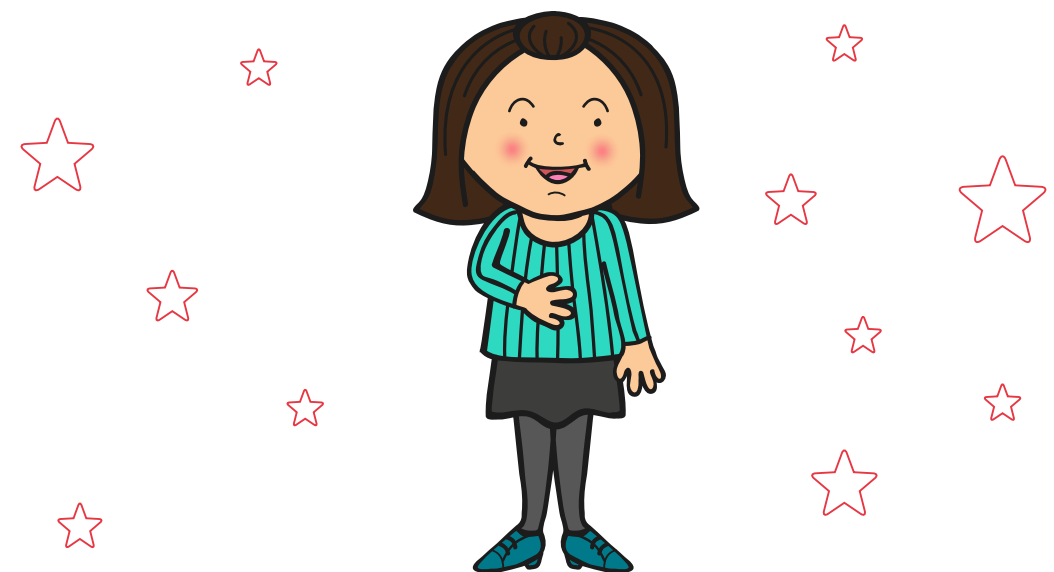


Created by primary school teacher Emma Ralph, Mighty Writer encompasses over 20 years of Emma's professional experience to address key challenges in the process of learning to write – in particular, how to reduce its complexity while still developing able and enthusiastic young writers.

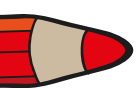
Mighty Writer helps children to retain and implement all of the elements which are required to write confidently and competently, using visual and tactile methods that are largely unique.

While teachers will be amazed at the simple and effective methodology, the children will thoroughly enjoy the entire experience, allowing both independence and confidence to soar.

Mighty Writer works effectively alongside other strategies and resources you may already use in your classroom, with its value emphasised by good quality teaching. As a result, the literacy skills of children can be transformed – almost overnight.







## How Does Mighty Writer Work?

Mighty Writer keeps the teaching and learning of writing as simple as possible, by complementing the planning, strategies and initiatives already in place in your classroom.

The aim is to combine everything in one place to promote the effective teaching and learning of writing, with the Mighty Writer resource to be used consistently throughout Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and beyond, where appropriate.



### We want children to:

- Share their own experiences.
- Generate ideas.
- Share ideas eloquently, with enthusiasm and confidence.
- Have ownership of their planning and writing.
- Be motivated to write.
- Write with increasing grasp of grammar, punctuation and a developing vocabulary.
- Make good progress and write with growing independence.

Mighty Writer is designed to introduce, consolidate and revisit concepts. It is flexible and adaptable to different groupings, abilities and topics.

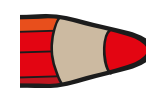
By using a distinctive range of images, symbols and colours, children will find it easier to access, remember and recall key literacy concepts, providing a strong foundation which they can draw on as they grow older.

As an extremely tactile resource, children are encouraged to take ownership of their own ideas and the creative process, while the

teacher maintains overall control of how the mat is used and which elements the children have access to.

The ways in which the mat can be used are appropriate across all year groups, but can be amended accordingly.

The explanations contained within this booklet are intended to illustrate how Mighty Writer can be used. However, you may just choose to experiment with the use of it and find what works for you.



## What Does Mighty Writer Do?

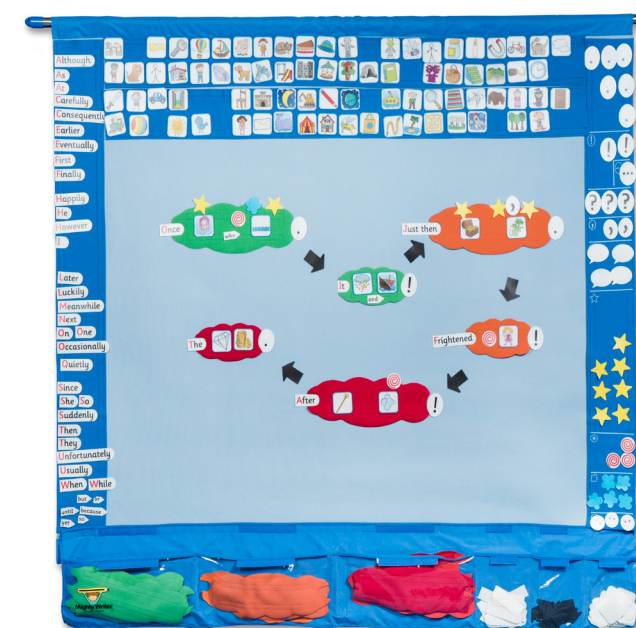
Mighty Writer develops the below key skills, supporting the aims of the National Curriculum, as well as the natural linguistic growth of children.

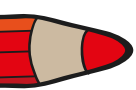
SPOKEN LANGUAGE

COMPREHENSION

COMPOSITION

VOCABULARY,  
GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

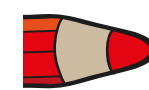




## Spoken Language

Mighty Writer will:

- Promote the asking of questions and generate thinking, to give children ownership and confidence in their own ideas.
- Develop the skill of imagination... and a sense of adventure!
- Encourage talk through group, paired and individual approaches to generate, share and develop ideas and discuss content.
- Enable collaboration between teachers and pupils to support and extend.
- Help children express their ideas and misconceptions, enabling teachers to assess their level of understanding.
- Model the thinking process of how to become a writer.
- Provide the opportunity to model interesting and advanced language within a simple framework.
- Provide a strong foundation for thinking about language.



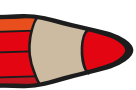
## Comprehension



Mighty Writer will:

- Allow for regular oral story making sessions
- Enable stories and recounts to be easily edited and adapted.
- Develop the skills of retelling and recalling.
- Allow children to think carefully about word choice and discuss why this is important.
- Enable children to work with stories and recounts of their own experiences, factual recounts, known stories and ones they have created using different topic toolbars.

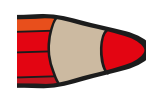




## Composition

### Mighty Writer will:

- Facilitate composition through demonstration, providing a solid foundation for all skills.
- Provide a simple, frequent and consistent approach with regular exposure to vocabulary, sentence construction, story structure and punctuation.
- Support children in finding and developing their content with the use of different image toolbars.
- Provide a basis for children to internalise and practice the writing process with others, as well as independently, therefore developing the ability to write from memory.
- Enable children to orally rehearse each sentence in advance, helping them to recognise where and how each sentence begins and ends.
- As soon as concepts are modelled, children can explore using the large Mighty Writer mat, or their own individual sheets.
- Scaffold and support children's thinking, allowing them to visualise how it all fits together, by creating, organising, drafting, revising and editing ideas.
- Allow for modelling of the 'talking about writing' process.
- Help children to master new skills whilst consolidating others, as everything is in one place and links together.
- Support, and be supported by, role play and drama.



## Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

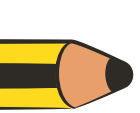


### Mighty Writer will:

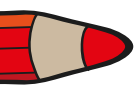
- Enable children to 'see' how each sentence is put together.
- Use symbols and pictures to help children become very familiar with nouns, noun phrases, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.
- Help children explore ways to connect and join sentences and clauses, using a wide range of vocabulary.
- Help children to explore and experiment, using differing types of punctuation to create certain effects and meanings.

The range of themes represented on the image toolbars have been chosen to support topics and themes within the classroom, to aid fictional and nonfictional writing and to develop children's familiarity with specific stories and genres.

It is possible to mix and match image toolbars, e.g. placing one of the standard toolbars alongside a real life toolbar, or the fantasy toolbar alongside the traditional tales toolbar. This will enable children to become increasingly creative and inventive in their storytelling.



## How Are Sentences Composed With Mighty Writer?



### Sentence Opener and Conjunction Toolbar

The sentence openers have been carefully chosen to provide a basis of options for you and the children to use. They include different types of sentence openers such as adverbial phrase starters. It is by no means an exhaustive list, but it is a valuable reference point and regular exposure to these words will enable children to build up a good sight vocabulary and equip them to use a variety of vocabulary in their writing.

The coordinating and subordinating conjunctions have been chosen to provide variety when creating more complex sentences. Blank word tiles enable you or the children to suggest your own ideas. You are in control of which words children have access to on the toolbar and at times you may choose to limit them to the vocabulary which has been generated as a class.

Although

because

and

but

Suddenly



## Punctuation and Symbol Toolbar

The punctuation included on this toolbar enables children to write in increasingly sophisticated ways, while still supporting their current ability level.



The speech bubble reminds children of the need for speech marks when writing. Speech marks can be drawn on to remind children when recording.



The star represents an adjective.



The 'swirl' symbol represents 'movement' and acts as a verb.



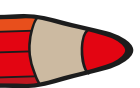
The 'moving shape' symbol represents 'change' and acts as an adverb. It modifies a verb, adjective, another adverb or a whole clause.



The face symbol enables you to draw on the correct facial expression to represent a feeling or emotion.

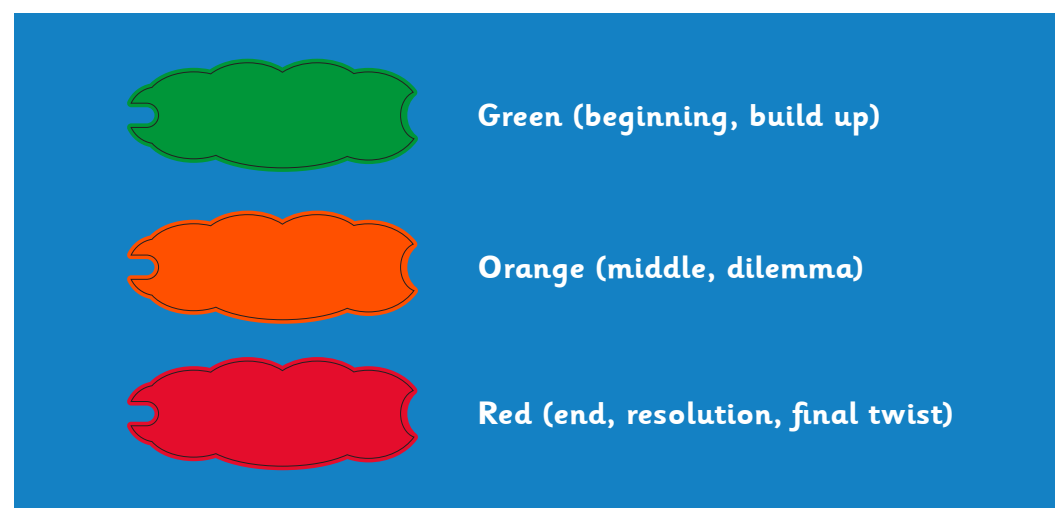


The arrows show the sequence of the story.



## Sentence Mats

These are colour coded to represent different parts to the story;



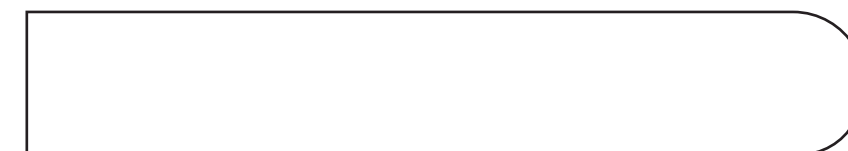
The story mats are designed to help children visualise, experiment with and learn to use different story structures with ease. They can start both fictional and non-fictional writing in a variety of different ways e.g. opening with a dilemma. This also supports the development of vocabulary by helping children to choose words which create different effects.

With more able children, you may also choose to use the colours to separate the writing into paragraphs.

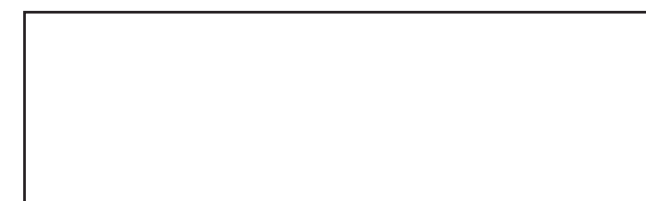
The sentence mats are also two different lengths, to enable children to use shorter and longer sentences for different purposes and to create specific effects.



## Blank Tiles



Blank tiles are available for images and sentence openers. These can be drawn on with a dry wipe pen, to keep creativity flowing and ensure that progress isn't limited.



Separate blanks are included for occasions where you may wish to remind children of a specific word in a sentence to aid retelling.



## Feely Bag

The feely bag provides an opportunity to develop creativity and twists and turns in stories. Simply select a range of images to place in the bag and encourage children to take one out at specific points during the storytelling process. By considering how the image could fit in to the tale, children will exercise their imaginations more than ever!





## Progression In The Use of Mighty Writer

**Mighty Writer** is designed to complement and be used alongside other resources and strategies already in place to develop literacy skills. Inspiring progression across a wealth of abilities in Early Years and Key Stage One, **Mighty Writer** will extend the more advanced children in the class, as well as bolstering the confidence of the less able.

At every stage the resource actively encourages communication in its many different forms; speaking, listening, questioning, taking turns, sharing ideas, describing, explaining, modelling and demonstrating.



### Encouraging Talk

Encourage children to choose images they like from the image toolbar and place them on the mat. It is their space and they can choose where they go. Encourage children to talk about what they have chosen. Ask questions about the pictures they choose such as:

- Have you ever seen a pirate?
- Can you describe what you can see in this picture?
- Can you find a picture of something you did at the weekend?

Use the images as starting points for discussion and to find out what interests and motivates each child.

Use of the 'Real Life' toolbar will give children the opportunity to draw on, talk about and recall their own personal experiences alongside the creation of more abstract ideas.

## Encouraging Talking in Sequence

As children choose the images they will grow in confidence, talking about their choices and their interests. Begin to connect the images together by modelling story-related vocabulary out loud, both fictional and non-fictional. It doesn't matter which order the images are in because you connect them together in inventive but simple ways e.g.



**"There was once an adventurous aeroplane which flew to the magical land of dinosaurs. It was full of tall, green trees."**

You can repeat this activity several times using different images and modelling different vocabulary. Begin to encourage the children to do this for themselves and watch them grow in confidence as their vocabulary and understanding of story sequence develops. Introduce the use of arrows to follow the direction of the story, so children are reminded to follow the sequence of ideas in order, e.g.

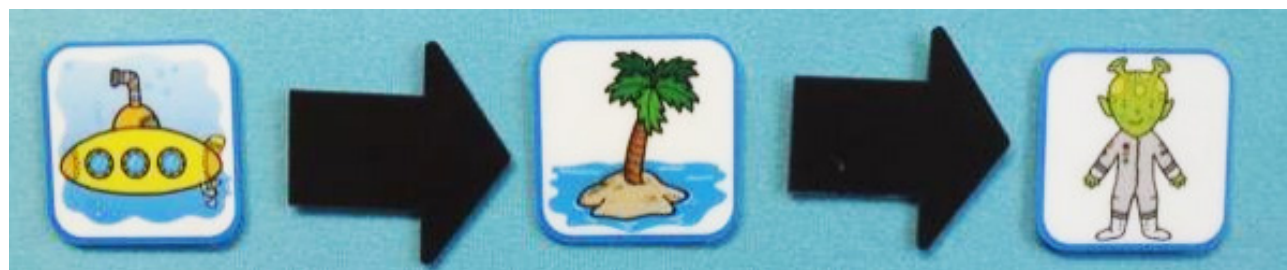


**"Once upon a time there was an alien who drove a submarine to a desert island."**





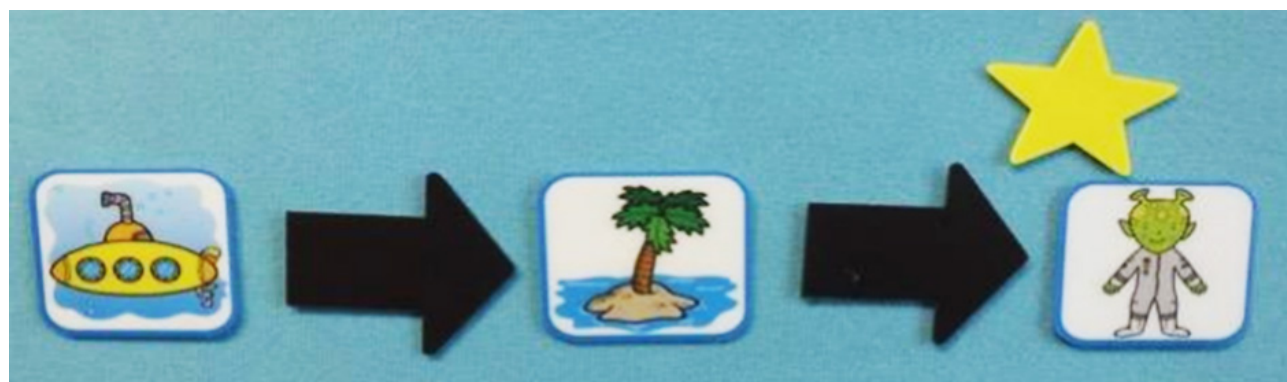
You can model to children how to experiment with changing the sequence of images, how this changes the content or meaning of the story, e.g.



**“A submarine went to a desert island where an alien lived.”**

Children can use an increasing number of images as their ability to think of ideas and recall the sequence of events develops.

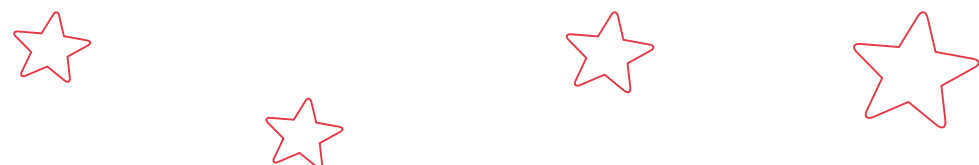
Introduce the use of stars to represent adjectives to encourage and recall increasing amounts of detail.



**“A submarine went to a desert island where a happy alien lived.”**

You may choose to place a sentence opener in front of the images to model related vocabulary.

For some groups of children you may leave the mat out for them to use in their free time, to practice moving the images around, sequencing retelling and making up simple stories.



## Using the Sentence Mats

When you have reached the stage where you are introducing sentence mats you will naturally, alongside this, be introducing the sentence opener/conjunction toolbar and the punctuation/symbol toolbar.

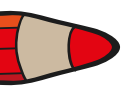
The introduction of the sentence mats enables stories and retelling to be planned and edited.

The first green sentence mat can be placed anywhere on the mat to start the story/recount and the placement of the following sentence mats will be determined by the direction of the arrows. You decide the level of child participation and how much they interact with the mat and the moving of the tiles.



**The focus of your teaching to develop sentence work and story structure is decided by you, but you may use the following strategies to support your objectives and develop children's proficiency in using Mighty Writer to support their learning:**

- Recall previous learning and apply it when using Mighty Writer to work on a recount/retelling or creation of a new story.
- Discuss images to use in the story and within individual sentences.
- Discuss characters/settings/actions/sequence of events.
- Recall different sentence openers and choose appropriate ones.
- Demonstrate how sentence openers fit into the sentence mat, how images/symbols are placed alongside it and how the punctuation needs to be fitted in at the end.
- Explain to children that not every word is represented by an image or symbol but the ones they do use remind them of the whole sentence.
- Use talking partners and discussion to think of various ways to organise a sentence.
- Model/work together on just one sentence to develop an understanding of how it can be organised, according to the ability of the children.



## Using the Sentence Mats

The number of sentence mats used will increase as children are able to create, retain and recall larger amounts of detail. Initially, you may just use one green, one orange and one red sentence mat, to enable children to grasp the concept of beginning, middle and end.

Sentences can grow in complexity, using an increasing range of images and symbols, as understanding and skill grows. How a sentence is laid out is personal choice. You decide which words you represent with an image or symbol and which words will be recalled from memory (children may contribute to this process and will do it on their own when working independently). This is important as an excessive number of tiles will serve to confuse children and be counterproductive to recalling sentences easily and accurately. The positioning and order of the images and symbols affect how the sentence reads.

Here are some examples of Mighty Writer in action:



“Once upon a time there was a pirate.”

A sentence opener, a noun and a full stop have been used to create a sentence.



“Once upon a time there was a scary pirate.”

Here, an adjective has been introduced, using an expanded noun phrase.



“Once upon a time there was scary, ferocious pirate.”

This introduces a simple clause sentence with the spiral illustrating the verb.





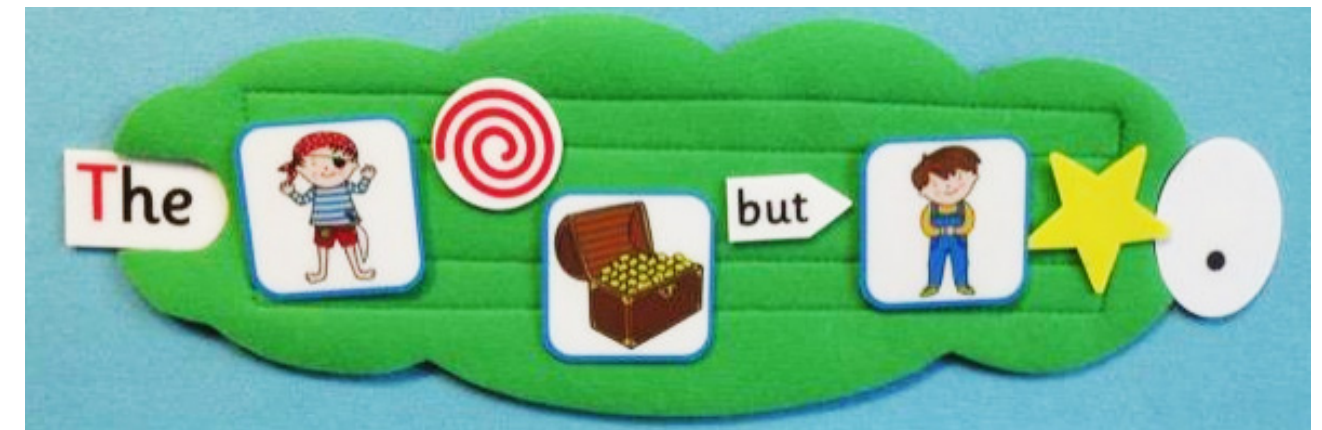
“Once upon a time there was scary and ferocious pirate.”

‘And’ has been used to separate two adjectives.



“The pirate hid a treasure chest.”

This introduces a simple clause sentence with the spiral illustrating the verb.



“The pirate hid a treasure chest but the boy found it.”

A compound sentence has been introduced, using ‘but’ as the co-ordinating conjunction.



“While the pirate hid the treasure chest,  
the boy watched silently.”

Here, a complex sentence is introduced, with the dependent clause first, using a comma to separate the two clauses and a ‘changing shape’ to represent the adverb.





“The boy watched silently while the pirate hid the treasure chest.”

Here, a co-ordinating conjunction is used to join the two clauses, with the independent clause first.



“The scared boy watched silently while the pirate hid the treasure chest.”

A face has now been introduced to represent the feeling – scared.

You can also experiment with creating more descriptive sentences and changing sentences around.



“The gold, sparkly treasure chest was hidden by the pirate while the scared boy silently watched.”



“Silently, the scared boy watched while the pirate hid the gold, sparkly treasure chest.”





"In silence, the scared boy watched while the pirate hid the gold treasure chest."

An adverbial phrase has now been introduced as a sentence starter.



"Although exhausted, the scared boy watched while the pirate hid the gold treasure chest."

This introduces a non-finite clause as a sentence starter.



The following sentences illustrate how you can model different types of punctuation.



"One windy day a witch cast a magic spell."



"Have you ever wondered why you need a space rocket to travel to a planet?"







“What a very hot day!”

Here, the speech bubble is placed above the whole sentence to represent spoken language and the need for speech marks in this instance.



“The ground opened up... she was gone.”

The use of questioning alongside the visual building up of the sentence supports the development of increasingly complex sentences.

Tip: Every time a new sentence is added, encourage children to go back and retell it, so they become increasingly familiar with the story/recount.

You can use the green mats to build up character, setting and plot description at the beginning of a story or recount. As children's storytelling becomes more sophisticated they can be increasingly flexible with how they do this within the structure of their writing.

As the children grow in confidence you can introduce the different length sentence mats to model creating different effects.

For example:



“The boy sat down and cried.”

By using a shorter sentence mat, there is less content and it creates a more dramatic effect. Here, a face is used to represent sadness.

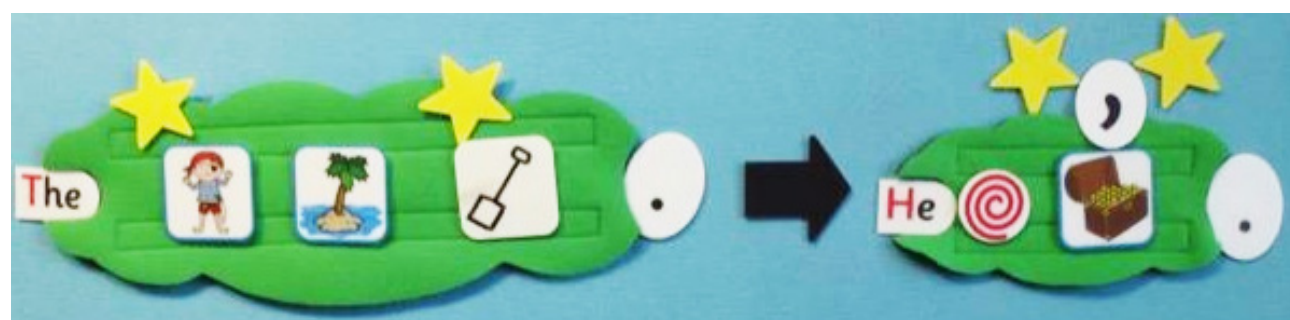


Alternatively, when a sentence is put together like the following example, one longer sentence is separated into two sentences to make it more concise. For example, instead of:

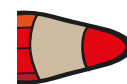


“The crafty pirate visited a desert island where he spent all day looking for a place to dig a big hole because he wanted to hide his gold, sparkly treasure chest.”

You could have:



“The crafty pirate visited a deserted desert island where he spent all day looking for a place to dig a big hole. He wanted to hide his gold, sparkly treasure chest.”



## Developing Story Structure

Introduce the different colour mats (green, orange and red) to represent the different parts of the story, retelling or recount.



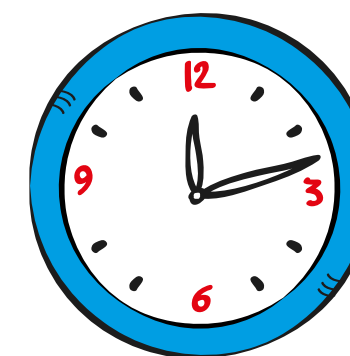
Discuss with children when it is appropriate to change the colour of the mats and how this may influence the sentence openers chosen.

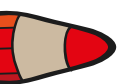
You can spend as long as you need to on each section of the story/retelling/recount.

You may choose to focus on developing a strong beginning over a couple of days, retelling and editing, then moving on to developing the middle and end.

You may have already planned out the beginning and middle of a story for children to retell so that they can then think of or predict the ending.

Once a retelling, story or recount is complete you can then model the writing of it, using the plan to help you. Of course, you can also tell your children that even as they write the story from the plan, it is possible to make changes.

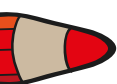




## Using The Different Themed Image Toolbars

Dependent on the image toolbars you use you can either retell a known story, reinvent a known story, create a story or plan a recount.

Mixing and matching the image toolbars by placing them alongside or underneath each other at the top of the mat gives children the opportunity to create limitless recounts and stories. It provides children with ideas to fire the imagination when reinventing known stories and enables the use of fictional and non-fictional images alongside one other.



## Retelling and Editing

Teachers and children are free to retell and edit as much as is needed when using Mighty Writer. This encourages children to think increasingly carefully about word choices, word order and story structure, whilst being able to make changes simply and quickly. It makes the process of editing fun as teachers and children can think of different ways to improve a piece of writing. Children can be creative and inventive without having to worry about getting it wrong.

Questions to ask may include:

- Does this make sense?
- How could we improve this sentence?
- How can we make the beginning more dramatic?



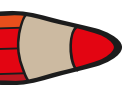
## Putting It All Together

As Mighty Writer becomes embedded in your classroom practice and children become increasingly familiar with using it to plan, share and revise ideas, it does the following;

- Links with shared writing – use Mighty Writer to plan the text together but also to model writing the recount/story from the plan.
- Leads into guided writing – use Mighty Writer to jointly construct a framework to provide structured guidance when working with particular groups or individuals on developing specific skills, e.g. working on developing a simple story or a strong beginning.
- Allows modelling of the creative thinking process involved in planning a piece of writing, leading to modelled writing.
- Leads to individual and group work – focusing on any area needing to be developed according to ability/specific needs.
- Provides an opportunity for shared reading.
- Allows teachers to create exemplar texts, based on next steps for children.
- Children are enabled to focus on experimenting with ideas until they are ready to write.
- Supports the transition to independent writing.







# Children's Own Mighty Writer Plans

The differentiated plans allow children to plan their own recounts, retellings and stories using the same format as the large Mighty Writer but allowing them to work independently and at their own level.

They allow teachers to gradually shift responsibility to pupils, helping them to plan, compose and revise.

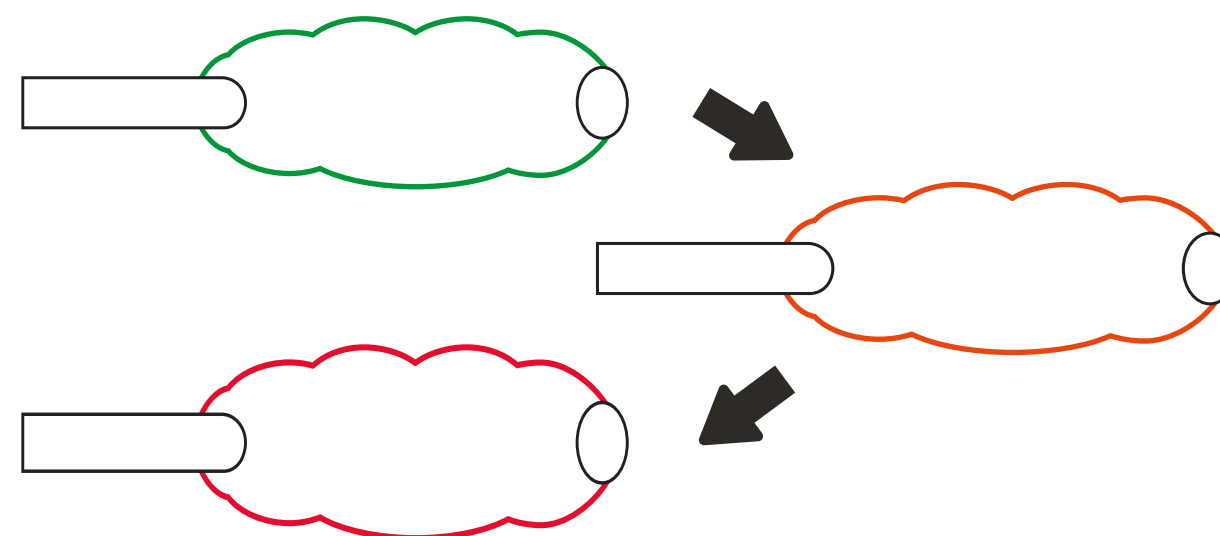
They help children to think about word choice and structure in an explicit, interactive and scaffolded way.

You choose which Mighty Writer plans you require for each group or individual, dependent on ability or the part of the story you want to focus on. Plans can be used individually or in pairs, giving time to talk, encouraging collaborative writing and time to practice the skills developed in the teacher-led sessions.

They allow children to have ownership of their writing. As children grow in confidence, they may choose to add less detail to their plans, becoming reliant on only a few images and symbols to support them in writing a coherent story.

When drawing the symbols children can make them simpler for ease and quickness, e.g. simple lines to represent a star.

Once completed, children can then follow the plan to write their story/recount, as they have seen you model, in previous sessions.



No.17

After  
Although  
As At  
Carefully  
Consequently  
Earlier  
Eventually  
Finally First  
Frightened  
Happily  
He However  
It It Later  
Just then  
Luckily  
Meanwhile  
Next  
Occasionally  
On Once  
One Quietly  
She Since  
So Suddenly  
The Then  
They  
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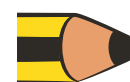
## Assessment

Assessment is ongoing and, as **Mighty Writer** is a highly visual and interactive resource, it is easy to assess children's understanding through observation, questioning and outcomes in terms of their plans and the quality of their actual writing. You may also choose to use the resource to do a focused, summative assessment.



### This assessment may include looking for the following:

- Children confidently plan and edit to create stories which flow and have sound structure (at a level appropriate for their ability).
- Children effectively transfer knowledge of punctuation, vocabulary and grammar from the planning stage to writing.
- Children write enthusiastically and with confidence.
- Children can apply the things they have been taught independently and write with increasing sophistication, recognising and talking about their achievements.



## Suggestions For Incorporating Mighty Writer Into The Day

Use it within the teaching of literacy to focus on key learning objectives.

Use it as a storytelling tool, modelling the creative process to children. This may be an adventure story, retelling a known story or anything which models the use of interesting, adventurous language and story structure.

Using it as a tool, map out a recount of a child's weekend or another factual recount to share with the children.

It is an excellent resource to use for regular weekly story inventing sessions. Create a story at the end of the day encouraging children to suggest ideas. This will consolidate skills and concepts taught whilst focusing on the enjoyment of imagining.

Encourage children to use role play to act out retellings, recounts and stories they have created.

Allow children to use it to experiment with creating stories or recounts independently.

Use it to experiment with the creation of poems, arranging images, symbols and words in creative ways on the mat.



# Additional Resources

The Teacher Zone on the Mighty Writer website is the place to go for all the resources you will need to help you and your class excel with Mighty Writer.

Emma demonstrates everything from how to put your set together to how to use the sentence mats and themed image toolbars in our instruction videos.



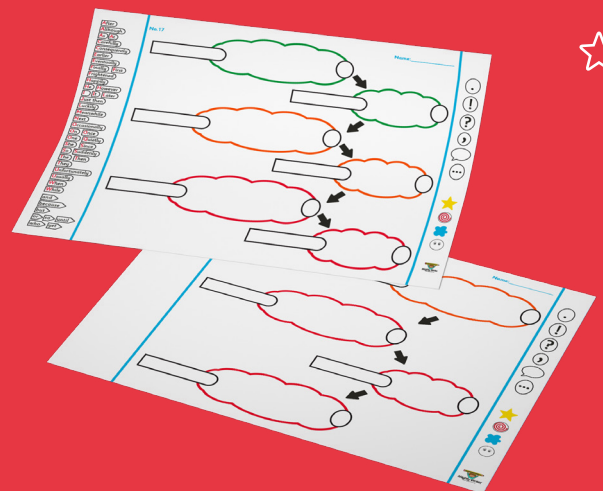
We've also created 9 lesson plans to kick start your imagination and hit the ground running.

Finally, there are 22 worksheets of varying complexity which are free to download, to help your Mighty Writers put pen to paper!

To access our range of teaching resources please visit [www.mightywriter.co.uk](http://www.mightywriter.co.uk) and explore **The Teacher Zone**



**Mighty Writer**



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Transforms children's literacy almost overnight

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