



Quality Over Quantity: Teacher Resource Pack

Practical tools to build sentence confidence, clarity and enjoyment

Designed to accompany the webinar: "Quality Over Quantity – Rethinking Writing Expectations"

Focus: Oracy-led sentence building • Inclusive practice • Curriculum alignment



1. How to use this pack

Each section offers quick routines, scaffolds and templates with notes for EYFS, KS1 and KS2. The emphasis is on sentence stability and clarity without losing creativity or pupil voice.

- Start with the Quick Start
- Choose one core routine and run it daily for two weeks before adding more.
- Adapt the inclusion strategies to your learners (SEND, EAL, disadvantaged).
- Use the assessment checklists fortnightly to note progression in sentence clarity and confidence.
- Keep writing shorter while foundations strengthen; increase length when sentences stay secure.

2. Quick Start: Do this next week

A simple five-day plan to embed talk-before-write and visible sentence building. Each task takes 10–15 minutes and can sit inside English, continuous provision, or across the day.

Day	Focus	What to do (10–15 mins)
Mon	Say it → Change it → Write it	Children build one sentence aloud about a shared image/object. As a class, try two small changes (swap an adjective; move a phrase). Write the final version together.
Tue	Visible sentence building	Use tiles/cards (or Mighty Writer pieces) to build a model sentence. Invite pupils to rearrange parts to keep meaning while changing effect. Capture two best versions.
Wed	Punctuation with purpose	Rehearse the sentence, then decide where the full stop goes and why. Ask: “Does the sentence still say one

		complete idea?" Children justify choices orally.
Thu	Detail without wobble	Add one detail (adjective or short phrase). Check aloud that meaning is clearer, not just longer. If clarity dips, revert to the previous secure version.
Fri	Independent try	Children build and write one or two strong sentences from talk. Use the pupil checklist to self-assess for clarity and completeness.

3. Core routines (say it • build it • write it)

Routine A: Say it, Change it, Write it

1. Say it: Children craft one clear spoken sentence about a shared stimulus (image, artefact, short clip still).
2. Change it: Make one improvement aloud (swap a word, add/remove a short phrase, adjust order). Recheck meaning.
3. Write it: Children write the final version. Keep length short so quality stays high.

Why it works: lowers cognitive load, keeps attention on meaning, and builds confidence through visible success.

Routine B: Build-a-Sentence (with or without Mighty Writer)

4. Model a sentence physically using tiles/cards (colour-coded by word class if available).
5. Invite pupils to manipulate parts to test meaning and fluency out loud.
6. Select the strongest version and write it together, discussing punctuation as a meaning choice.

Note: This centres oracy and playful exploration. Structure exists to support talk, not to replace it.



Routine C: Micro-dictation for meaning

7. Teacher says one high-quality sentence. Pupils rehearse it orally.
8. Pupils write it from memory, aiming for completeness and sense.
9. Immediate check: Does it still say one complete idea? Fix together if needed.

4. EYFS: Talk before print (mark making → words → sentences)

Purpose: build sentence sense through play and talk while keeping early writing short, precise and supported. Mark making and emergent writing remain essential as bridges into sentence writing.

- Adult talk frames: “I can see...”, “It is...”, “I like... because...”.
- Response in full sentences during play; build on what the child says with a full sentence
- Rehearse a sentence orally before any attempt to write or caption.
- Celebrate one accurate sentence that matches what was said (spelling can be approximate).

EYFS – Pupil mini-check (stickers or desk cards)

- I said my sentence out loud.
- My sentence says one clear idea.
- I started with a capital and ended with a full stop (with help).
- My words are in an order that makes sense.

5. KS1: Secure simple sentences before speed

- Daily oral rehearsal before writing (choral + partner).
- Simple sentence first; add one detail only if clarity remains.
- Use success criteria that value stability over length.

KS1 – Everyday success criteria (display)

Year 1 – today I will...	Year 2 – today I will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write clear simple sentences that match what I said. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep simple sentences secure across a short piece.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use capitals, spaces and full stops reliably. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add one improvement (adjective/coordination) without losing clarity.



6. KS2: From simple to complex — without losing clarity

Teach complexity as a set of deliberate choices made on top of secure sentences. Treat grammar as a tool for shaping meaning, not a list to apply.

- Lower KS2: routine practice with adding phrases/clauses; explain punctuation as a meaning choice.
- Upper KS2: manipulate sentence length and structure intentionally; combine/revise sentences to improve cohesion and impact.
- Use sentence combining as a refining tool once foundations are secure.

KS2 routine: Mentor sentence – imitate → innovate → elevate

10. Imitate: study a precise model sentence (read it aloud, map its parts).

11. Innovate: swap elements while protecting meaning and clarity.

12. Elevate: combine two secure sentences or add a well-chosen phrase/clausal detail; reread for sense.

7. Inclusion: Make it accessible for every pupil

Adjust the input, interaction and output so all pupils can succeed. Keep the sentence small enough to manage and the talk rich enough to inspire.

Learner need	Adjustments to try	How success looks
SLCN / DLD	Pre-teach vocabulary with images; sentence stems; extra rehearsal time; allow pointing + spoken answer before writing.	A clear spoken sentence produced with support; one accurate written sentence that matches speech.
Dyslexia	Reduce copying; use sound mats; speech-to-text for rehearsal; coloured overlays/clean page; focus on sentence sense over spelling.	Readable sentence with approximate spelling accepted; punctuation placed with meaning.
ADHD / attention	Short, timed bursts; tangible pieces to move; clear start–finish; reduce distractions; frequent celebration of success.	One or two high-quality sentences completed within the window.
EAL	Allow home language talk; provide translated/visual stems; partner rehearsal;	Sentence communicates meaning clearly; vocabulary choices grow over time.

	accept translanguaging during planning.	
Physical/ fine-motor	Mark-making alternatives; partnered scribe; chunky tools; vertical surfaces/whiteboards before books.	Sentence formed without fatigue; confidence and participation maintained.

8. Using Mighty Writer to centre oracy and meaning

- Start with talk: invite pupils to build and say sentences before any writing.
- Make it playful: encourage multiple versions and choose the clearest.
- Think aloud about punctuation as a meaning choice.
- Keep evidence simple: snap a photo of the built sentence + final written version.

Visible progression with the same resource

- EYFS: captions and one-sentence retellings from oral rehearsal.
- KS1: short sequences of secure sentences; add a single detail when stable.
- KS2: manipulate structure and combine sentences to refine meaning.

9. Assessment & evidence (light-touch)

Use these quick checklists fortnightly. Look for stability, clarity and enjoyment, not page length.

Teacher observation checklist

- Pupils rehearse sentences aloud before writing.
- Written sentences usually match what was said.
- Punctuation helps the reader (not added for show).
- When a detail is added, meaning improves or remains clear.
- Most pupils can explain why a sentence is clear.

Pupil self-check (stick in books)

- I said it clearly.
- It says one complete idea.
- It starts with a capital and ends with a full stop.
- I read it back to check it still makes sense.



10. Six-week implementation planner

Week	Focus	What we will do	How we will know it's working
1	Agree routines	Choose one routine; brief staff; model in two classes.	Pupils can describe the routine; first sentences feel manageable.
2	EYFS/KS1 embedding	Daily oral rehearsal; one secure sentence; capture photos.	More pupils finishing one strong sentence independently.
3	KS2 refining	Add mentor-sentence routine twice a week.	Pupils can justify punctuation with reference to meaning.
4	Inclusion focus	Adjust scaffolds for identified pupils; monitor anxiety/engagement.	Target pupils show improved participation and completeness.
5	Evidence & feedback	Introduce pupil self-checks; share exemplars.	Books show fewer run-ons; clearer sentences across subjects.
6	Review & extend	Decide next step (add detail; sentence combining as refine).	Sentences remain clear as complexity increases.

11. FAQs & common misconceptions

Q: Won't focusing on sentences reduce creativity?

A: No. Stable sentences free pupils to play with language without losing meaning. Creativity grows when ideas are secure and stress is lower.

Q: Is this just more grammar?

A: Grammar here serves meaning. We teach a small number of purposeful choices, not worksheets for coverage.

Q: How will inspectors view shorter writing?

A: Inspectors look for a well-planned curriculum and steady progress. Focused, well-crafted writing that makes pupils' reasoning visible is powerful evidence.

What Ofsted want to see in writing outcomes is;

- Secure sentences before complexity
- Accuracy before length
- Visible reasoning and clarity
- Progress that matches curriculum ambition
- Fluency developing over time
- Writing that works across the curriculum
- Success for all pupils, especially the most vulnerable