

Clocha Rince NS



Whole School Plan for
English

Planning: English

■ Title – Whole School Plan for English..... a work in progress

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

This plan was drafted by the teaching staff of Clocha Rince NS during the period April 2011 – November 2013. The policy was discussed and developed in the context of current practice, the national Numeracy and Literacy Strategy Guidelines and the School Improvement Plan for Literacy. Parental submissions were considered in the context of the gathering of evidence to inform our School Improvement Plan and in the context of current procedures in policy development. The policy was further developed at a meeting of the Board of Management on 12.12.13 and subsequently ratified at that meeting.

(b) Rationale

The development of this plan will ensure that we are continuing to provide the pupils with a co-ordinated programme of learning for English which will benefit the teaching and learning environment.

■ Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

In Clocha Rince NS, we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils in order to assist them to contribute and play a fulfilling role in their own community. We see the development of their language skills as being central to this process. We believe that the ability of our pupils to communicate fluently, confidently and effectively will contribute greatly to the development of their self-esteem and their personal growth. We also believe that their academic progress depends to a large extent on their ability to communicate orally and thence through the written word. In our school, we attach a high priority to giving pupils a command of the English language.

(b) Aims

We endorse the aims and objectives as stated on pages 10 – 12 of the ‘English Curriculum Statement’. They are to;

- Promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language-spoken, read and written.
- Create, foster and maintain the child’s interest in expression and communication
- Develop the child’s ability to engage appropriately in listener-speaker relationships
- Develop the confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through oral language, writing and reading
- Enable the child to write and read independently
- Enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experience.

Short Term Aims

- **Introduction of the Oxford Reading Tree throughout the school.**
- **Whole School Paired Reading Scheme.**
- **Introduction of cursive handwriting throughout the school.**
- **Introduction of Jolly Phonics throughout the school.**

■ Curriculum Planning

1. Strands and Strand Units

In Clocha Rince NS we view language as an integrated process incorporating Oral Language, Reading and Writing. We will plan through the three strands - Oral Language, Reading and Writing and through the strand units – Receptiveness to Language, Confidence & Competence in using Language, Developing Cognitive abilities through Language and Emotional and Imaginative Development through Language.

The teaching staff in Clocha Rince NS will ensure familiarity with the strands, strand units and content objectives for the particular class they are teaching. Teachers should consult this school plan and the curriculum documents when formulating their classroom plan.

In the event of multi classes being in the school, teachers should assign differentiated activities and identify differentiated outcomes appropriate to the varying abilities in the classroom.

2. An Integrated Language Process

Oral Language, reading and writing are not discrete language activities in the language learning process. It is important therefore that this is taken into account when planning for our school.

Teachers will take account of the integrated nature of English when formulating plans. This entails planning its implementation through the three strands and four strand units.

2. Language Programme as developed through the strands and strand units.

Oral Language

The use of Oral Language permeates every facet of the curriculum. Much of the Oral Language objectives are achieved through integration in the work of the strand units in Reading and Writing and in other curricular areas. Much oral language development can be accomplished informally. It is important, therefore, to create and maintain classroom atmosphere where talk is valued. It must also be remembered that there are some objectives which will require discrete oral language lessons. It is also important that time is allocated for discrete oral language activities.

Discrete Oral Language

Each class will allocate a minimum of one half hour timetabled each week for Oral Language. See discrete oral language policy (page 16).

Discrete Oral Language Resources

- Reading Zone Oral Language Programme
- Wonderland Oral Language Programme
- SPHE – Circle Time/Self-esteem games
- Drama Teacher Resource Books
- Teacher Designed Resources – pictures/ video clips/ music clips/ unusual items of interest

Approaches to Oral Language

We will approach oral language activities through the five principal contexts as outlined in the curriculum statement;

- Talk and discussion
- Play and games
- Story
- Improvisational Drama

- Poetry and rhyme

Reading

In Clocha Rince NS we believe firmly that the early stages of reading should be based firmly on the child's general language experience. This presupposes that oral language activities will form the basis for the child's preparation for reading. Phonological and phonemic awareness will be fostered from Junior Infants to 6th class with an obvious need for discrete programmes in the earlier stages.

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness Programme

- Jolly Phonics
- School Phonics Programme (page 32)

The pupils will be taught a range of **word identification strategies**

- Sound-letter relationships a là 'Jolly Phonics Programme'
- Syllabication Method – Breaking words into syllables
- Use of onset and rime – the 37 rimes from which 500 primary words can be derived will be learnt by the end of first term in 2nd class. See appendix pg. 15
- Prefix/Suffix Method – identifying common prefixes and suffixes
- Identifying common word endings, word families and word roots.
- Semantic Cues – attempting to identify unfamiliar words by use of meaning cues e.g. Predicting the last word in a sentence.
- Syntactic Cues – use of the child's knowledge of grammar from their oral language to help identify words.
- Predicting and checking
- Confirming and self-correcting – predict, check, confirm and self-correct by drawing attention drawn to appropriate cues.
- Cloze procedure – with semantic/syntactic/grapho/phonic cues

Sight Vocabulary

We will ensure an optimum level of opportunity to develop sight vocabulary exists.

The existence of a print rich environment is an essential part of this development. This will comprise more than just a system of labelling. Print in the environment should change at certain intervals throughout the school year e.g. job charts/ graphs/ weather charts. This will help focus the pupil's attention on the written word and he/she can be encouraged to respond appropriately. An important element of the print environment is the regular display of the pupil's own writing.

Environmental print can also be explored as part of this development. See reading appendix (page 66) for sight word lists for specific classes.

Comprehension

Pupils will be exposed to the three categories of text;

- expository
- narrative
- diagrammatic or representational

Pupils will learn to extract meaning from a text through the development of the following skills;

- Understanding
- Analysis
- Deduction
- Summarisation
- Inference
- Prediction
- Confirmation

- Synthesis
- Evaluation
- Correlation

These skills will develop as children mature and deal with text of increasing complexities. From the beginning of reading, children will be expected to recall and retell details of what they read and predict possible future outcomes.

Comprehension Strategies

Pupils will need to be taught the following reading strategies

- Scan reading – examining structure and layout
- Skim reading – quickly reading over text to gain an overall gist of content
- Search reading – reading to locate specific information
- Reflective reading – re-reading to confirm content

See reading comprehension scheme (page 77)

Classroom Books

In Clocha Rince NS we will run a **Paired Reading Programme** whereby the children from 3rd – 6th class a paired with a pupil from Junior & Senior Infants. This programme is coordinated by the classroom teachers and the Librarian.

We use the **Oxford Reading Tree** in our school. This graded reading programme allows each child read at their individual level. The children progress through the stages at a comfortable pace allowing each child to enjoy the reading experience. Parents are encouraged to engage in their child's reading each night through reading with/reading to or listening to their child read. Parents are trained in developing their child's reading skills through the question cards which accompany each book. The children in older classes respond to their reading through book reports at various stages throughout the school year. The aspect of 'enjoyment' cannot be underestimated in a child's reading development. Parents and teachers should be careful not to kill this enjoyment through unnecessary over analysis of the text.

Each classroom will have a Library corner where the children can select a book suitable to their interest and ability. The school is extremely fortunate to have a branch of Kildare Co. Co. Library based in our school. The children are members and regularly visit the library. Each class will ensure a minimum of two 15 minute (minimum) sessions per week of **D.E.A.R. time – Drop Everything And Read**. The Junior classes will have a selected area of the room where they can sit and read. The pupils will be instructed in the steps of selecting a book. We will ensure a broad selection of big books exist for the Junior classes.

Formal Class Readers

A formal reading scheme will not begin until Senior Infants. We use the **Fallons 'Wonderland Scheme' in Senior Infants** and the **Folens 'Reading Zone'** from 3rd class upwards.

Teachers of pupils in 1st class upwards should ensure that at least one class novel is read every year. This ensures an adequate involvement in Collaborative/Group Reading with peers. It ensures each pupil is sharing the reading experience.

Every class should observe the teacher modelling reading on a regular basis. Teachers may model by reading with the children or reading to the children using text not available to the pupils.

Pupils should always be provided with an opportunity to respond to text. This can be done in many ways;

- A Reading record
- Book Report
- Adopt and build a character
- Write/Tell the epilogue/prologue
- Write/tell a 'meanwhile story'

- Spider webs to map a predicted outcome
- Readers Theatre – enacting a dramatic reading of a set script
- Drama experiences
- Visual Arts activities
- Poetry
- Adapt a text to another medium – play, musical, mime

The Role of the Poetry

In Clocha Rince NS we concur with the curriculum statement that a child's engagement in poetry should be governed by the 'pleasure principle' and should be a source of joy and fulfilment. Pupils should be exposed to a wide repertoire of poetry and allowed respond to it. Rote learning of poetry should be a minimal activity in the classroom. A balance should be arrived at between the skill in poetry recitation and 'killing the joy' of experiencing poetry.

Poetry should encompass

- Seasons
- Festivals
- Home and family relationships
- Nature
- Magic and Mystery
- Story
- History and Mythology
- Humour

Teachers will ensure that each topic is covered each year.

Selection of poems should be influenced by

- Time of year
- Weather
- Children's preoccupations and interests
- Other areas of the curriculum
- A concern for broadening and deepening children's tastes
- Events in the world at large

Styles of Poetry to be explored (see appendix)

- Onomatopoeic Poems
- List Poem
 - Rap (Rhythmic American Poetry)
 - Dare
 - Time and Speed poems
 - Speed poems
- Syllabic poems
- Growing and Shrinking Poems
- Diamond Poems
- Cinquain Poems
- Haiku
- Free poems
- Pyramid Poems
- Shape Poems
- Adjective & String Poems
- Character Poems
- Acrostics
- Rhyming Couplets
- Simile Poems

- Metaphor Poems
- Yarns
- Odes
- Epigrams
- Neologisms
- Epitaphs
- Nonsense Poems
- Sausage Poems
- Up & Down poems
- Riddle Poems
- Kennings

Approaching Poetry

Pupils may approach in a number of ways

- Read it silently
- Listen to another pupil reading poetry
- Teacher can read aloud
- Listen to a poet/professional reading on a recording
- Listen to the teacher read aloud and follow text

Responding

Pupils should be provided with many media of response. As a child's reading matures the pupil may respond to the thrust and deeper meaning of poetry. Older pupils should also be encouraged to appreciate the effects of words, rhythm, rhyme, repetition, simile, metaphor, alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance and imagery.

Handwriting

We use the d'nealian handwriting script. Pre-cursive writing is taught from JI - 2nd Class and cursive writing is taught from 3rd - 6th Class. See handwriting scheme (page 69).

In the early years pupils are encouraged to develop hand eye coordination through development of gross motor skills to fine motor skills.

The Jolly Phonics Programme enables each child to form letters in a fun and interesting manner. A multi-sensory approach is used in learning the formal conventions of writing.

Pre-Writing activities for Junior Infants include

- Hand-eye coordination
- Visual copying
- Writing patterns
- Visual Memory development activities

Writing

See creative writing scheme (page 70).

Early Writing and the Writing Process in the Infant Classes

In the Infant classes the definition of writing is broad enough to include any graphic presentation that the child attempts- scribbles, lines, drawings.

As the term progresses the child will begin to distinguish between scribbles and letters. Then letters and words. This will evolve through;

- Experience of the print rich environment
- The teacher acting as a scribe and modelling for the children
- The pupil's pre-reading and early reading experiences
- Copying of drawings, letters and words from the blackboard
- Learning to write his/her name

1st – 6th Class

The pupils are formally introduced to the various writing genres in 1st class. The pupils develop their writing within these genres. Each child's writing should mature as the pupil matures and graduates through each class level.

The writing genres are

- Narrative
- Persuasive
- Recount
- Procedure
- Report
- Explanation
- Writing to socialise

There are many opportunities to write within these genres. The pupils should experience writing in each of these genres each year. The pupils should be encouraged to write for a variety of audience. Children will be encouraged to choose their own topic for writing but the teacher should also provide a varied and interesting stimulus for each writing lesson. The principle of 'Roddy Doyle' regarding writing should be practised where applicable; "An hour's writing lesson should comprise 45 minutes discussion and 15 minutes writing".

In Clocha Rince, we endorse the development of **proofreading, editing and redrafting skills**. However, we believe that these skills should not be applied religiously to a child's writing as this will stifle the child's writing flow and ultimately lessen the enjoyment of the experience. Each teacher should ensure that there are discrete lessons to develop these skills. If each pupil can maintain a love and enjoyment of writing, these skills can be developed gradually.

Brainstorming & Researching

Brainstorming and researching will form an integral part of the writing process where applicable.

Grammar & Punctuation

See grammar and punctuation scheme (page 66).

A graded scheme of work exists within Jolly Phonics and Folens Reading Zone.

The teacher can take note of particular conventions that need attention through teacher observation and assessment of the children's work. The class teacher should engage the children in mini lessons as such issues arise.

The Prim. Ed Grammar Workbook will be used from 3rd – 6th class to revise writing conventions and introduce more complex issues of grammar and punctuation.

Spelling

Spellings are taught and assessed from the Jolly Phonics and Reading Zone Programmes.

We will use a multi-dimensional approach to spelling. This will include

- Accepting approximate spelling
- Linking spelling with the development of phonological and phonemic awareness (pg. 58 curriculum statement)
- Linking with onset and rime (pg. 58 curriculum statement)
- Building a bank of commonly used words
- Having a rich experience of environmental print
- Compiling personal dictionaries
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses
- Using our Predict-look-say-cover-write-check
- Familiarity with common spelling rules

In Clocha Rince NS, the pupils from 1st class upwards are expected to carry a dictionary at all times, both in school and at home during homework time. The dictionary is described as ‘your 3rd arm’. The Thesaurus is introduced to pupils from 3rd class onwards.

In Clocha Rince NS approximate spelling is accepted. Pupils will be affirmed for a good effort at spelling. During tests, teachers should award a pupils marks, as appropriate, where such an effort was made.

Spellings will be taken from the pupil’s Jolly Phonics Programme & Folens ‘Reading Zone’ as applicable. The ‘**Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check**’ method is used for learning spellings.

Teachers must take account of children with learning difficulties when setting the spellings for the week. Children with a learning difficulty, who exhibit huge difficulties in learning spelling, should be set a differentiated programme.

Spelling will be assessed each Friday morning using a written test. One mark will be given for each correct spelling. A half mark will be awarded where a child has included all the letters but ‘jumbled them’.

3. Assessment and Record Keeping

As in all subject areas Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of the development of a pupil’s language skills.

We as a staff have a common understanding of its purpose and the ways in which the progress of children in first language acquisition will be assessed, documented and reported. See assessment schedule.

Assessment in English Language will fulfil the following roles :

- A diagnostic role – to identify areas of difficulty in order to respond to the needs of the child
- A summative role- to establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of work. In this way assessment can provide the basis for reporting to and communicating with parents and others.
- An evaluative role – to assist teachers in assessing their own practice, methodologies, approaches and resources.

We recognise that assessment techniques used in English must seek to assess progress in a child’s oral language, reading and writing skills.

The assessment tools we will use will range from the informal means to the more structured approaches. See assessment schedule (page 91).

Methods we will use are :

- Teacher observation of the child’s learning as the English curriculum is being implemented.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests at the end of units of work.
- Work samples e.g. the pupil’s own writing. We will display the children’s work in public areas of the school.
- BIAP’s are used in Junior Infants which assess some of the pupil’s early language skills
- MISTs are used in Senior Infants to assess for any early indicators of potential language learning difficulties.
- Pupils in 1st class will be administered the Quest Reading Screening Test every November.
- Micra-T standardised tests are used to assess development in language from 1st class – 6th class.
- All pupils will be screened in January of 2nd class using our Dyslexia Screener.

- Teachers are encouraged to use the ‘Drumcondra English Pupil Profiles’ where they feel this can be of benefit in assessing language development.

Where a teacher observes a pupil with a possible language difficulty, the principal and learning support teacher and parents will be consulted to discuss the issue. An IEP will be developed taking account of the three stages of learning support.

These records will inform the teacher of the progress of the child; the effectiveness of teaching methodologies employed and will also inform future planning. The assessment records will form the basis for reporting and discussing the child’s progress. This information will be relayed at Parent Teacher Meetings and in annual school reports.

3. Children with Different Needs

We intend to formulate a Learning Support Policy which will deal in depth, with the area of English in the context of children with different needs.

As previously stated we are cognisant of the central importance of English Language in the harmonious development of each and every child. As such we will do our best to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience a language rich environment.

In the same way as we endeavour to provide for individual difference in every curricular area, we will also strive to make the English curriculum accessible to all pupils. In order to do this we will consider:

- Using a mixture of whole class teaching and focused group work
- Use a range of questions spanning from simple recall to deeper meaning and extrapolation.
- Planning for the use of a wide range of communication skills (Drawing, ICT, written and oral accounts, photographs and models.)
- Content, methods of recording and desired learning outcomes will be differentiated for children with general learning difficulties.

All teachers are familiar with the ‘NCCA Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities’ and will consult these guidelines as appropriate.

5. Equality of Participation and Access

- Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to experience all strands and to participate in all class activities.
- Provision for children with physical difficulties will be made so that they can access all elements of the English curriculum.
- Children whose first language is not English will receive all the resources at the school’s disposal to ensure their educational experience is a valuable one.
- We will ensure that lesson content/ choice and reading selection is balanced towards the interests of both boys and girls. Content should also include reference to different culture/religions/races.
- We will consult the Intercultural Guidelines (NCCA) for guidance here.

■ Organisational Planning

6. Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (page 70) a minimum of three hours per week is devoted to English in infant classes and a minimum of four hours per week for classes 1st to 6th.

A minimum one half hour of this time will be spent discretely on the Oral Language Programme.

The elements of the language programme will be developed through integrated activities. A thematic/cross curricular approach will be adopted where applicable and appropriate to do so. Teachers will use discretionary curriculum time, which is 2 hours, for English when appropriate and to increase the time devoted to the teaching of literacy as recommended in The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

7. Homework

English Language activities may be prescribed as part of homework in the context of the school's Homework Policy. English homework should reflect a balance between the three strands. English reading will be given every night and the Paired Reading Programme will be encouraged and supported as a homework activity between the child and parent/guardian.

Children attending learning support will be assigned classroom homework around their Learning Support Homework where LS homework is prescribed. Both the classroom teacher and LS/RT will liaise in this respect. Please see our Special Education Needs Policy (under development)

8. Library

Mobile Library

In Clocha Rince NS we encourage the pupils to visit the library on a regular basis. Pupils will be released from class for this purpose.

Classroom Library

Each class will have a designated classroom Library. The pupils will be permitted visit this Library during D.E.A.R. time and on other appropriate occasions.

Books chosen for the classroom Library should have

- A coherent story structure
- Clear characterisation
- Richness and variety of language
- Repetitive sentence structures, sequences and refrains
- Illustrations that complement and extend the text
-

Libraries in the Junior classes should include;

- Picture books
- Short books that can be read at one sitting
- Poetry anthologies
- Collections of short stories
- Wide range of information books
- Dictionaries
- Age/level appropriate periodicals

Libraries for the older classes should include;

- A wide range of fiction
- Biography
- Non-fiction books that cater for a wide variety of interests
- Poetry
- Anthologies
- Plays
- Reference books
- Newspapers, magazines and periodicals.

Children should be encouraged to write one book per year which may be placed in the class library.

Teachers will be mindful of selecting books which are suitable for pupils with specific learning needs. Books chosen should also be mindful of our school ethos of equality. All pupils will record all reading in their homework journals.

9. Resources and ICT

In Clocha Rince NS, we are committed to continually review and update our resources in English. When funds are available, resources will be purchased as the need arises. The Principal will take responsibility for the purchase of resources. We are committed to build a wider range of ICT resources.

The English resources currently in use and/or available in the school are

- Reading Zone Scheme by Folens
- Wonderland Scheme by Fallons
- Jolly Phonics
- Jolly Phonics Grammar
- Oxford Reading Tree Scheme
- Selection of Big Books for Junior classes
- Reading Zone Oral Language Scheme
- Prime Ed. English teacher resources covering all three strands
- Fully stocked Library and classroom libraries.

ICT

- ICT is seen as an important tool in the development of literacy skills and as such the teachers are using appropriate digital resources to complement their teaching. These include interactive activities in Jolly Phonics, spelling, grammar etc., the digital camera, appropriate web-sites and development of computer skills using Word, Powerpoint etc.

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Teachers will consult this Whole School Plan and the curriculum documents for English when they are drawing up their long and short term plans.

Teachers will include all the strands and strand units over 1 year and will select all objectives within the strand units each year. If there is more than one teacher of the same class level, they will collaborate on their individual teaching plan to ensure continuity, consistency of teaching and learning and to further ensure the availability of applicable English resources.

Each teacher will have a long term plan for the year drawn up collaboratively with teachers of the same class level. Individual teachers will then take these yearly outlines and tailor them to the needs of their own classes in their short term planning.

Cúntais Míósúil will assist in recording work covered, in evaluating progress in English and in informing future teaching.

11. Staff Development

Teachers will have access to resource materials and websites dealing with English. Staff will be encouraged to research and try out new approaches and methodologies. A 'Methodology of the Month' programme will raise the profile of different methodologies and how they relate to the teaching of English language.

All teachers are responsible for keeping resource materials up to date. Ms. Fealy will assume overall responsibility in this area and will arrange for opportunities for resources to be assessed for purchase and for new approaches to be piloted in the school.

The culture in our school is one that encourages the sharing of experience and good practice.

Staff members are encouraged to continue personal development in this area by attending courses on English and will be provided with the opportunity to feedback new approaches/methodologies ideas to the entire teaching staff.

12. Parental Involvement

Parents have an important role to play as primary educators. Parents should keep updated on their child's development in English Language by assisting with homework and further developing their child's language skills in the home and wider environment. Parents can do this by;

- a) participating in the Paired Reading Programme
- b) Encouraging their child to read through creating an environment where reading is enjoyed.
- c) Reading for themselves at home
- d) Drawing their child's attention to print in the environment, shops, cinema, street sign etc.
- e) Engaging in quality conversation with their child.
- f) Developing writing activities at home esp. with the emergent writer (parents are advised on this at the Infant Induction meeting)

Parents with literacy problems will be provided with information on how to develop and increase their own literacy skills.

13. Community Links

- We will invite local poets/authors/debaters/journalists into our school where identified.
- The community library and librarian will be a valuable resource for the pupils.
- 'Print' in the local community will be identified.

■ Success Criteria

We shall review this whole school plan in the future under the following headings:

- How individual teacher preparation, planning and teaching reflects this plan.
- Are procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed? Selection of books for libraries etc.
- How methodologies listed in this whole school plan are working in the classroom
- Resources
- How well are the children's language skills progressing:
- School improvement plan targets

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan will include

- SSE
- Revisiting the aims of this plan as a staff
- Teacher / Parent feedback
- Children's feedback
- Children's enjoyment of reading and writing
- Inspectors reports / suggestions
- Results of class assessment

■ Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by the entire school staff, which in turn will be supported by the parent body and Board of Management.

(b) Timeframe

This reviewed policy will be implemented immediately and will become formal procedure once ratified by the Parent Body and Board of Management.

■ **Review**

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

This policy will be reviewed by the school teaching staff.

(b) Timeframe

This Policy will be reviewed in January 2016 or earlier if the need arises

■ **Ratification and Communication**

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 12th December 2013 and following ratification was placed on the school website.

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Clocha Rince NS

Discrete Oral Language Policy

The use of Oral Language permeates every facet of the curriculum. Much of the Oral Language objectives are achieved through integration in the work of the strand units in Reading and Writing and in other curricular areas. Much Oral Language work can be accomplished informally. However, some objectives will require discrete oral language lessons.

Five components of Effective Oral Language Instruction

At Clocha Rince NS, we apply the five components of effective oral language instruction. These include:

- Develop listening and speaking skills
- Teach a variety of spoken texts
- Create a language learning environment
- Teach and extend vocabulary and conceptual knowledge
- Promote auditory memory

1. Develop Listening and Speaking Skills:

There are certain elements that need to be explicitly taught before embarking on formal instruction of oral language. These are:

- Awareness of broad rules that govern social interaction. Teachers will create an awareness of the way conversation works by considering the "rules" to be observed by good speakers and listeners. These include:

Turn-taking - Turn-taking is the way in which a speaker is chosen to have their turn in a conversation. The speaker might select who will speak next, or the speaker might choose to keep on talking. Students need to recognise pauses in conversations where they can take a turn, interrupt or change the subject. Turn-taking is often fluid when students are engaged in conversation, with speech overlapping. Turn-taking is more clearly defined in more formal situations. Teachers can explicitly teach turn-taking so that all pupils are encouraged to teach.

The floor - The person who is currently speaking is said to 'hold the floor'. During conversations, speakers and listeners use gestures, eye-contact, body language and pauses in conversations to judge the moment when a speaker can occur. Teachers can provide opportunities for pupils to hold the floor for more extended periods in the classroom by introducing planned speaking events.

Adjacency pairs - Adjacency pairs are sequences of two utterances next to each other, produced by two different speakers e.g. a greeting and a response, a question and answer. Teachers may need to support pupils with words and phrases to meet the convention when they are speaking to unfamiliar people, such as visitors to the school.

Repair - Repair occurs when speakers have to fix something they have said. Sometimes the listener will ask for a repair. This could be expressed through a question, a facial expression or body language. It is in this way that speakers and listeners negotiate meaning. A listener might:

- Request clarification through a question e.g. what do you mean?
- Request clarification through a statement e.g. I'm not sure what you mean.
- Repeat a statement or request to confirm what was said
- Repeat phrases or ask a question to check their comprehension, e.g. do you mean....?

Pupils need to be encouraged to check that they understand what another person is saying and to check that others understand them. Some pupils often misunderstand instructions or others' intentions. Many misunderstandings can be avoided by teaching pupils to use words and phrases to check for meaning.

Politeness - Politeness refers to ways of behaving that are expected in a specific cultural context. It is important that pupils are aware of these contexts and the type of language they require. This includes appropriate times for saying 'please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me'. Pupils should also be aware of using titles when appropriate and how body language and tone of voice can convey respect.

- Non-verbal behaviours. Teachers will help pupils to become critically aware of the non-verbal behaviours that will equip them to express themselves in an effective manner. These will include:

<u>Use of voice</u> - the use of intonation and pauses that convey meaning and attitude.
<u>Volume</u> - Volume depends on the needs of a situation, purpose and audience. There are times when loud voices are required or when quiet voices are necessary. Generally a speaking voice should be loud enough that the intended audience can hear and understand the message being delivered.
<u>Intonation</u> - Intonation indicates the changes in speech, a downward intonation indicates that a message is complete while an upward intonation indicates a question.
<u>Pitch</u> - Pitch is useful to use when expressing emotion. Our pitch rises when we are excited and lowers when we are sad.
<u>Pauses</u> - Pauses are moments of silences between phrases, used to separate ideas and also used for holding attention. This is particularly useful when giving formal presentations such as an oral report or telling a story.
<u>Pronunciation</u> - Pronunciation refers to the way words are said. Some younger pupils may have difficulty in pronouncing the sounds in some words and will benefit from hearing those words modelled in meaningful contexts. Pronunciation varies across regions. It is important that pupils know the accepted pronunciation of words in Standard English.
<u>Proximity</u> - Proximity is the amount of personal space between people who are talking. The relationship between them, their personalities, and their culture or whether the situation is personal, social or public will all affect the amount of proximity needed.
<u>Eye contact</u> - Eye contact is the use of the eyes or gaze in face to face communication. The level of eye contact often depends on the relationship between the communicators and affects both the speaker and the listener.

- Rules for listening. e.g.
 1. Sit up straight
 2. Keep hands and feet still
 3. Watch with your eyes
 4. Keep mouth closed
 5. Listen with your ears
 6. Show interest
- Rules for speaking. e.g.
 1. Make eye contact
 2. Speak clearly
 3. Think before you speak
 4. Take turns
 5. Stay still

2. Teach a variety of spoken texts:

The primary purpose of language is to communicate needs, wants, ideas, information and feelings. Teachers use a variety of oral language texts to address the functions of oral language that are required in social and academic contexts.

Term 1 September-December	Term 2 January - March	Term 3 April - June
Oral reports	Giving instructions/ procedures	Questioning and interviews
Storytelling and anecdotes	Conversations	Arguments and formal/ informal debates
Partner and small group work		

While each text type will be taught each year, the following will be emphasised in each class:

	Term 1 September- December	Term 2 January - March	Term 3 April - June
JI	Oral reports	Giving instructions/ procedures	Questioning and interviews

SI	Storytelling and anecdotes	Conversations	Arguments and formal/informal debates
1 st	Partner and small group work	Giving instructions/procedures	Questioning and interviews
2 nd	Oral reports	Conversations	Arguments and formal/informal debates
3 rd	Storytelling and anecdotes	Giving instructions/procedures	Questioning and interviews
4 th	Partner and small group work	Conversations	Arguments and formal/informal debates
5 th	Oral reports	Giving instructions/procedures	Questioning and interviews
6 th	Storytelling and anecdotes	Conversations	Arguments and formal/informal debates

3. Create a Language Learning Environment

Teachers will provide a classroom environment that is supportive and nurturing where a variety of communication styles are valued, accepted and accommodated. A language learning environment will be created by focussing on three key elements:

The physical environment	Classroom culture	Opportunities for communication
<p>This may include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table/display board to display objects of personal interest/topic related resources • Dress-up boxes • Collection of puppets • Creative area • Rug area for instruction and whole group activities • Library for children's books (including books that children have created) • Listening corner with c.d. player, c.d's and headphones • Telephones and message pads • Hand-held Dictaphones • Display of songs, poems and chants 	<p>This may include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a classroom culture of "have a go" • Be sensitive to cultural differences • Emphasise enjoyment for all • Value social talk and the use of language used in the home • Seize the moment if something unusual happens or if a child brings something to school • Encourage all attempts by the children of speaking and listening • Teach pupils to share classroom responsibilities • Provide opportunities for the children to reflect and review their speaking and listening • Explicitly teach pupils to take turns in groups • Communicate high expectations • Motivate pupils to speak with all members of the class 	<p>This may include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model good listening • Model using specific language • Provide role play opportunities • Teach/display nursery rhymes, poems, songs, chants and raps • Read aloud to the children • Provide puppets, felt boards, toys to re-tell favourite stories • Read a variety of text types • Invite guests to the classroom • Model and allow children to purposefully practise the language associated with group work and social interaction • Teach pupils to resolve conflicts through language • Read or recite poetry to the class

4. Teach and Extend Vocabulary and Conceptual Knowledge

Vocabulary for academic learning is linked to the teaching of concepts. When a concept is completely unfamiliar to the children, teachers will help them develop an understanding of the concept first and then new vocabulary can be introduced. If the concept is familiar to the children, new vocabulary is introduced in order to connect new words to an already familiar or understood concept. Teachers are mindful of the three tiers of vocabulary.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Description	Basic words most children know before they enter school	Words that appear frequently in texts and for which children already have some conceptual understanding	Uncommon words that are typically associated with a specific domain.

When teaching vocabulary, teachers will plan for:

- Teaching individual words as those listed in the three tiers above.
- Teaching word-learning strategies such as words in context, definitions, word-maps.
- Fostering an awareness and love of words and language such as multiple meanings, word games, word of the week.
- Providing varied experiences for using words through reading, writing and oral language.

Teachers will explicitly teach vocabulary relating to listening and speaking, specific text types as well as themes within those text types.

5. Promote Auditory Memory:

Auditory memory involves the ability to assimilate information presented orally, to process that information, store it and recall what has been heard. Teachers will help develop auditory memory skills in children by allowing them to:

- Repeat and use information
- Recite poems, songs, tales, rhymes etc.
- Memorise and sequence songs
- Re-tell stories
- Re-tell stories using puppets or illustrating a map
- Recall verbal messages or phone numbers
- Play memory games
- Recount news events
- Use visual cues and mnemonics

Planning

Infant classes will allocate a minimum of three fifteen minute lessons timetabled for Oral Language. First to Sixth class will allocate two thirty minute lessons timetabled for Oral Language. One of these lessons will be discrete oral language while the remaining time may be integrated with reading and writing.

Teachers will plan a unit of work for Oral Language in 5/6 week blocks. Each unit will focus on a specific text type. Discrete lessons for developing speaking and listening skills, auditory memory and vocabulary development will also be included.

Approaches

We will approach oral language activities through the five principal contexts as outlined in the curriculum statement:

- Talk and discussion
- Play and games
- Story
- Improvisational drama
- Poetry and rhyme

Gradual Release of Responsibility

In applying these five components of effective oral language instruction, teachers will use the gradual release of responsibility model. This involves modelling, sharing, guiding and applying.

Role of the Teacher	Modelling	Sharing	Guiding	Applying
Degree of control	<p>The teacher demonstrates and explains the strategy being introduced. This is achieved by thinking aloud the mental processes used when using the strategy</p>	<p>The teacher continues to demonstrate the use of the strategy inviting pupils to contribute ideas</p>	<p>The teacher provides scaffolds for pupils to use the strategy. Teacher provides feedback</p>	<p>The teacher offers support and encouragement as necessary</p>
Role of the student	<p>The pupils participate by actively attending to the demonstrations</p>	<p>Pupils contribute ideas and begin to practise the use of the strategy in whole-class situations</p>	<p>Pupils work with help from the teacher and peers to practise the use of the strategy</p>	<p>The pupils work independently to apply the strategy in context across the curriculum</p>

1. **Abstract Picture**
2. **Adjective and Noun Phrases** e.g. a black cat
3. **Adverb adjective combinations** e.g.
Desperately miserable / Reasonably fair
4. What can you **describe using all 3 adjectives** e.g.
Important dangerous heavy
5. **My Neighbour's Cat / The Minister's Cat** e.g. Draw cat "My neighbour's cat is an awful cat." Write all letters of alphabet underneath and describe cat (as many adjectives as possible)
6. **Lists** e.g. Meals – Sausages & Mash, fish& chips (Categories – Fruit, Vegetables, Cities, Countries, Meals, Girls' Names, Boys' Names, Clothes, Parts of the Body, Cars)
7. **Word Tennis Pairs** (Name category in turns) Also, e.g. England, Denmark, Kenya etc.
8. **Kim's Game** (Memory Test) –Remove one- Remove all
9. **Soap Box** (30 seconds please or one minute please)
10. **Who am I?** Yes/No responses
11. **Speakeasy** e.g. If I had £100 I would/ My Family / My Funniest Moment/ What makes me mad/ The film I liked and why etc.
12. **Three props in a box** – Make up a story
13. **One Minute Stories** e.g. The Body – Stories(The Arm / The Leg / The Heart)
14. **What does the music mean to you?**
15. **Carry on story** (cooperative groups)
16. **One word story/ one sentence story**
17. **Finish the story** (3 children leave room)
18. **Improvise letters, telegrams, cards**
19. **Interviews**
20. **Find a partner:** Argue, make friends, find a new partner. Repeat.

21. **Yes / No Game** (You must answer immediately and not answer yes / no or shake head)
22. **Fortunately / Unfortunately**
23. **Characters and Emotions** (Adjectives on slips of paper, Pairs choose a slip of paper and prepare a duologue)
24. **Pick a bag**
25. **The Telephone** – Answering (good news, bad news, a surprise etc.
26. **The Telephone Game** – Think of a word each. Bring that word into your telephone conversation
27. **Interrupting the Story** (Children interrupt by asking questions based on story) e.g. The other day ...Which day was it?
28. **Questions about a statement** e.g The moon is made of green cheese.
29. **Associations**
30. **Brainstorm around a word**
31. **Imaginative descriptions** e.g. (2 pictures chosen at random – Make connections)
32. **We both / We neither**
33. **Comparing things**
34. **Vocabulary Steps** (any concept which can be graded e.g. cold, cool, warm, hot)
35. **Categories**
36. **Feel the object, describe and identify**
37. **How many things can you think of that eg. are bigger than you are?**
38. **Mime** e.g. jobs, feelings, objects, qualities of objects
39. **Odd one out**
40. **Newspaper Hunt**
41. **Words beginning with / ending with**
42. **Reveal the picture in stages**
43. **Three Picture Story**

44. **Expanding Texts**
45. **Deleting Texts**
46. **Find someone who**
47. **Word Cards** e.g. – Children take it in turns to position themselves so that the sentence makes sense.
48. **I would like to be a** e.g. giraffe, lake, waterfall, river, ocean etc.
Follow-up questions
49. **Jumbled sentences**
50. **Wrangling** e.g. Pairwork: “I’m sure it’s going to rain.” “Of course it isn’t.” Stick to dialogue. Vary stress, gesture, tone and expression

ACTIVITIES FOR EXPANDING AND CONSOLIDATING CHILDREN’S VOCABULARY.

Word banks

I think these work best if they are constructed as living banks/lists i.e. where the children actually find synonyms etc. from their reading books/library books etc.

Suggested themes for word banks would include Said, nice/good, then, fine weather, bad weather, food descriptions, smells, personalities, physical appearance etc. There are numerous possibilities.

Class scrapbook

Keep a scrapbook or notebook where children can transcribe well written sentences or story starters from their readers or library books.

Chain writing

This is the name given to the gradual expansion of a sentence.

1. Select a word related to the theme you are developing e.g. spiders.
2. Ask the children to suggest words which describe spiders e.g.

Hairy

Scary

Black

Sneaky

Spiders

Horrible

Long-legged

3. Then ask what spiders do and add the words to the list e.g.

Hairy

Scary

Black

Sneaky

Horrible

Long-legged

Spiders

climb

hide

lurk

creep

bite

sleep

4. Now combine the words to make sentences such as

Hairy spiders creep.
Scary spiders lurk.

5. Next, list where spiders do things and add these to the list:

<i>Hairy</i>		<i>climb</i>	<i>in the bathroom</i>
<i>Scary</i>		<i>hide</i>	<i>in the garden</i>
<i>Black spiders</i>		<i>lurk</i>	<i>under the wood pile</i>
<i>Sneaky</i>	<i>spiders</i>	<i>creep</i>	<i>inside the light shade</i>
<i>Horrible</i>		<i>bite</i>	<i>in their webs</i>

And combine as before to make different sentences e.g.

Long-legged spiders sleep in the bathroom.

Scary spiders lurk inside the lightshade.

String poems or Noun Describers

Decide on a topic e.g puppies

Ask children to think of adjectives describing puppies and then slot them into the poem format

Puppies
Puppies puppies puppies
Cute cuddly crazy puppies
Fat fluffy friendly puppies
Bounding, bounding, biting puppies
Snapping, yapping, barking puppies,
Hungry, thirsty, panting puppies
Puppies, puppies, puppies.

If you want to challenge more able children insist that they use alliterative adjectives.

For a real challenge, tell them that the first adjective in every line must have 1 syllable, the second 2, the third 3 syllables.

This exercise is great for practising dictionary skills or using a class alphabetic word bank.

Multiple meanings

Compile charts with the children using words with more than one meaning e.g. Bank
Money bank, a river bank, a bank of clouds, the aeroplane banked suddenly, a blood bank,
cars banked up at traffic lights, to bank on someone.

Key Words

If you are reading a factual text with children get them to identify the key words and compile a word bank.(Key words generally tell who, what , where, when, how, why)

E.g. Text: Spiders

There are many varieties of spiders in Europe. Spiders belong to the group called Anthropods. They have two body parts. They have eight legs which end in claws. Spiders also have fangs which are used to seize prey, Some spiders are poisonous.

Possible key words

Many varieties

Europe

Anthropods

Two body parts

Eight legs

Fangs
Some poisonous

Twenty (or Ten!) Questions

Play this game with words from a specific list (e.g. a topic list for spiders, weave, web, poisonous, harmless, egg-sac)

Children will have to be taught the kinds of questions to ask e.g

Is it a noun/verb/adjective/adverb/compound noun?

Has it a suffix/prefix?

Has it one syllable (2,3,4)?

Is it a verb in the past tense?

Is it a proper noun?

Other activities to reinforce vocabulary could include Hangman, Word searches, anagrams etc.

Cloze

The simplicity of cloze is almost as great as its value.

Try the following.

- Delete all the synonyms for *said* in a passage

or.

- Delete all the verbs.
- For able children who need a challenge – delete pronouns or punctuation.
- Delete rhyming words in a poem

Crazy Cloze

By deleting all on one particular part of speech in a piece of text and asking the children to replace the words without seeing the text, a humorous, if non-sensical text will result.

Ask the children to list 10 adjectives of any sort on a piece of paper e.g juicy, plastic, Circular, delicious, well-mannered, ugly, floral, cold, satisfying, sad, disgusting.

Once this has been done, give them a passage that has the adjectives deleted.

**The Galway United players were nothing short of _____ as they steamrolled a
Sligo side at the FIFA grounds last night. Starting the match without
their _____ star player, the Galway men took some time to become accustomed
to the _____ conditions before _____ full-forward , Niall Brown took a
_____ shot in the square and kicked a _____ goal. Later in this _____ game,
the ball became _____ and by half time the crowd was _____.**

Insert the invented adjectives and read aloud. Although the results will be predictably hilarious, the children are quick to spot any mismatch in sentence structure. This is an opportune time to redefine the term 'adjective' and clear up any misunderstandings.

Semantic grid

The semantic grid is a versatile reading comprehension activity with potential for revision of vocabulary and also of parts of speech. For example, having read a text on health the children could be asked using their own knowledge and the information provided by the text, to complete the grid below. First correct entry wins

	H	E	A	L	T	H
<i>Noun</i>	heart			Lungs		
Verb		eat			train	
Adjective			active			healthy

Be sure to discuss the fact that one word may fall into more than one category e.g no added sugar (adjective). He added sugar (verb)

Oral Language Games and Activities for Junior Classes

Pass a Smile

Aim – to establish eye contact and positive feelings

What to do – The teacher smiles at a child, who passes the smile onto the next child, and so on around the circle until all the children are smiling. This process can be repeated using a handshake or a hug.

All Change

Aim – Listening, Fun.

What to do – The children sit in an inward facing circle. The teacher or child calls out different categories and all the children who fit into that category have to change seats. Examples of categories; anyone with black hair, anyone with a birthday in June, anyone with a pet cat, anyone who had weetabix for breakfast.

Clap and Touch

Aim – to develop concentration

What to do – The children sit in an inward facing circle. They are to copy the teacher's movements. The teacher gives 2 claps and touches a part of her body with both hands (e.g. Clap, clap, touch head/Clap, clap, touch knees etc.

Clapping game 2

Aim – to develop listening and concentration

What to do – The teacher tells the children that one clap means stand, two claps mean march on the spot and three claps mean sit. She or a child stands in the centre and claps instructions. The children must listen very carefully to the clapped instructions each time so they follow them correctly.

Car, Bus, Lorry

Aim – to develop concentration and awareness of sequence

What to do – The children stand in an inward facing circle. Each child says in turn 'car', 'bus' or 'lorry'. If any child gets the sequence wrong, she is out and sits down

Oranges and Lemons

Aim – concentration, to mix children up in a circle so they sit next to someone different

What to do – All the children sit in a circle facing inwards. They are alternately labelled 'orange' or 'lemon'. The teacher or a chosen child calls out 'oranges', 'lemons' or 'fruit basket'. Children in the named category change seats; 'fruit basket' means all change.

My father went to the shop

Aim – to enhance listening and encourage concentration

What to do – Children sit in an inward facing circle. One child begins by saying 'my father went to the shop and bought...' and names an item such as bread. The next child repeats the sentence, including

bread and adding another item. Each child in turn repeats the sentence, all the previous items and adds a new item, until someone makes a mistake. The sentence then begins again.

Word Game

Aim – Fun, vocabulary use

What to do – The children play word association around the circle with 2 claps in between – e.g tree clap clap/ leaf clap clap/ flower etc. If anyone is stuck and the rhythm is broken she begins with a new word

Well done, Good Try

Aim – to help children to praise one another

What to do – The children sit in an inward circle. The teacher introduces an object and asks a child to move into the centre to mime an action using the object as something different. For example, a ruler could be an umbrella, and a toothbrush could be a hurley. The other children try in turn to guess what the object is being used as. If one answers correctly, the child in the centre says ‘well done’. The 2 children then change over, the child in the centre now uses the object in a different way. If the answer is incorrect, the child in the centre responds with ‘Good Try’. After several turns, a different object may be introduced.

Story Roundabout

Aim – to enhance listening skills and concentration

What to do – the children sit in an inward facing circle. A child or teacher begins a story which each child in turn continues by adding a sentence. A variation is to add only one word each.

Guess the Sound game

Aim – Listening concentration, auditory discrimination

What to do - The children sit in an inward facing circle and close their eyes. The teacher either plays a recorded selection of different sounds, or uses some familiar objects or instruments which produce a noise. The children guess what they are. Examples are a box of matches, keys, cereals in a packet, a rattle and a mouth organ.

HUNT THE OBJECT

Language Function: *Positional Skills.*

Materials Required: Any object to hide.

Activity: The aim of this game is to give children practice in using prepositions (e.g. in, on, before, at, beside, between, under, over, on top etc.). Before playing the game it may be necessary for the teacher to demonstrate the use of the prepositions using toys or objects. One of the children hides an object (e.g. rubber) while the class close their eyes. They then have to ask him/her where it is, e.g. Is the rubber ***under*** the chair? Is the rubber beside the blackboard? VVhichever gets the right answer then hides the rubber.

MUSICAL SENTENCES

Language Function: *Sequencing Skills.*

Materials Required: Tape recorder and music (optional).

Activity: Make up simple sentences, e.g. "The black cat chased the mouse". Select six children, one to represent each word. Ensure that the children remember their word and that they are standing in the correct order. The children then take it in turn to say their word. Teacher turns on music or claps hands and the children move about until music stops **or** a signal is given. They remain in a muddled position and call out their words. The rest of the class has to be put them back into the right sequence. To make the game more difficult you can make the sentences longer.

Telling a Story

What to do

You read a story on to one side of a cassette. The other side is left blank for children to record their version of the story, retold in their own words.

Another variation is for you to start reading a story to the class but break off at an exciting point. A child, or group of children, then takes the book, reads the ending and retells it in his/her own words on cassette, which can then be played back to the rest of the class.

A cassette can also be used to replace the traditional news session on Monday morning. During the day, the children can take it in turns to talk about what they have done at the weekend. At the end of the day the resulting tape can be played back to the whole class. Individual children can be asked to expand on any items, which catch the other children's interest.

Story Starters

What to do

There are several different ways to give children a starter for imaginary stories. Try using illustrations, reading from an exciting story and stopping at a particularly gripping moment 'displaying other children's artwork, asking children to think up endings for current television serials, or offering an opener like: 'I hate it when I have to. . .'; 'What makes me really angry is when. . .'; 'One day my dog did something really strange, he. . .'.

The children may prefer to tape their stories, or particularly successful ones could be written down later. They may prefer to work in groups or individually, with each child contributing just a few sentences.

Circle Time

Promotes self-discipline and responsibility towards others.

Relationships are built when individuals feel valued and respected. Being listened to helps each child feel unique and worthwhile.

It needs to be timetabled ½ hour to ¾ per week.

Any disapproval by the teacher needs to be directed towards the act and not on the personality or character of the child.

The language that we use is important e.g. “I feel angry with you when you leave your seat during work time.”

The teacher puts his or her hand up when s/he wants silence in the classroom. The children then put up theirs. This is a positive system rather than shouting, “Silence please”.

Equal time should be focussed on positive behaviour.

The teacher should set Tiny Achievable, Tickable, Targets or TATTs. E.G. I will find time to make every child in my class feel good about themselves this week.

Bubble Time is used to tell anything of a serious nature, as this is a time for one to one with the teacher at the child’s request.

Benefits of Circle Time:

- Sitting in a circle promotes the notion of equal responsibility.
- It creates a sense of belonging to a group.
- It motivates child to share thoughts and feelings.
- It initiates collective responsibility.
- It is a forum for children to help one another
- It encourages self-discipline.

Ground rules for teachers:

- Be calm. You need to be able to notice the various skills of thinking, looking, listening, and speaking in order to reinforce them. In Circle Time you, the teacher, must try not to say anything negative. If you wish to change a child’s behaviour that is irritating you, you must try to praise another child in the circle who is showing the desired behaviour.
- You need to lower your voice and speak more slowly to create a sense of calm.
- You must accept any contribution, however ‘offbeat’, with great respect. Give thanks when possible.
- You must value all opinions equally without betraying irritable body language.
- You must not interrupt if a child is using the speaking object to talk. If you do need to say something, you will have to move across the circle, touch the object, apologise for interrupting and then say whatever it is that you need to say.
- You must not automatically think that you have the best answers. If for example, a child requests help during Open Forum, you must raise your hand and wait to be chosen just like other team members.

Teachers and Children Need to Agree:

- To signal if they wish to speak.
- Not to use any put downs towards each other.
- Not to interrupt when someone else is talking.
- That a child has a right to say ‘Pass’ in a round if s/he does not wish to speak.
- Children who pass in the initial round will, at the end of the round, be allowed to signal if they’d like a second chance.
- Not to name anyone in the circle in a negative way. Instead they must say, for example, ‘Someone hit me’ or ‘Some people are ganging up on me.’ Equally we must respect the privacy of their families, so a child should be encouraged to say, ‘Someone at home is shouting at me,’ rather than naming the family member. Remind them that if they wish to tell you something of a serious nature they should use ‘Bubble Timer’ as this is a private one-to-one time.

Skills needed by teachers for Circle Time:

- The ability to listen well.
- The ability to be honest sometimes about your own feelings and thoughts.
- The ability to use good eye contact and show emotional warmth and empathy.

- The ability to recap what children have said and reflect it back to them to show that you have understood.
- The ability to notice and thank children for the skills that you should focus on in circle time: i.e. thinking, looking, listening, speaking and concentrating.

Golden Rules for Moral Values:

Do be gentle, **don't** hurt anybody.

Do be kind and helpful, **don't** hurt people's feelings.

Do be honest, **don't** cover up the truth.

Do work hard, **don't** waste time.

Do look after property, **don't** waste or damage things.

Do listen to people, **don't** interrupt.

'Do's' are printed in **gold** and the 'Don'ts' in a **different colour**.

Encouragers are small daily rewards that we should use to notice and reinforce all aspects of the golden rules. Items used, stickers, badges, stamps on the hand etc. Also can have 'Specials' certificates, letters to parents, mention in an assembly, perhaps a golden book that their name is added to. Also can have golden time if the children keep the golden rules they are rewarded with extra time at some activity that they particularly like. All the class help one another to gain this time and you can brainstorm them for the type of things they would like to spend more time on.

Sanctions:

If golden rules are broken you need to have sanctions.

- Sanctions offer clear boundaries. Many children do not have any clear boundaries at home so they need to experience boundaries at school.
- They create safer teachers. The teacher is not inconsistent and the children know what to expect.
- A clear sanction allows the children to work off a 'debt'. It is then forgotten- a loud telling off is often not forgotten.

If golden rules are broken:

Steely eye.

Written warning. Warning for older children / A picture of a sad face for infants.

This is a visual reminder that backs up your verbal reminder; this is quietly placed beside them and is removed at break time.

A 5 minute sand timer is useful. This is kept in a special place. For certain children who have difficulty keeping the rules also have difficulty understanding the concept of time out. They can watch the sand going through the timer and can then rejoin the activities.

The sand timer can also be used for children to try and model certain behaviour while the sand is going through the timer. Small target can be set for those children. When achieved the child is praised and it is noted on a card for them.

Child who misbehaves:

Out of circle for 3-5 minutes, not allowed to speak.

Turns their chair around.

Out of circle

Goes to another teacher. (This is agreed with another teacher).

Children who won't talk:

Get them working in pairs with a 'talkative child'. Get them to tell one another something about themselves that the other child does not know. Each then tells the group the other person's story. The quiet child is now talking about someone else and it usually works. Puppets are also helpful for these children.

Structure of Lesson

Opening activity: Pass the rain, the sunshine, a clap-if a person claps twice it can go back-has to go to five, six before it can go back etc.

Opening round: perhaps a story e.g. no matter what, Andy etc. If I were an animal I would like to be ... because.

Open Forum: Use of conch or hands up, all hands have to be down when someone else is talking. The person who speaks last picks the next speaker who has not already spoken.

Closing round: Animals are ... Bullying is....

The Language used is important e.g.

Would it help if you ...

No I tried that but thank you.

Someone told me a lie...

Today I am looking forward to...

Tell a good tale is another nice positive activity.

Classroom organisation:

It might be a good idea to arrange the chairs in a circle before going out to little break. You can do circle time when you come in and afterwards religion. The chairs can then be put back before the main break.

Adapted from Quality Circle Time by Jenny Mosley ISBN 1-85503-229-5

SENTENCE STRUCTURE ACTIVITIES

- Make up a funny sentence, given three words eg sugar, cat, stairs
- Sentence completion eg When I knocked on the door.....
- Given the answers , make up the questions
eg A: It is under the mat.Q:
Where did you leave the key?
If the pupils are making up the answers it may be useful to give them a context like a story or a setting in improvisational drama eg for above example the setting could be “arriving home”
- Describing past, present and future events. Eg Give the pupils an image for example “broken glass”. The pupils have to make up three sentences adhering to the past, present and future framework.

Sally kicked the ball through the window and the glass is broken. Mr. Brown will be very angry.

- Associating two words in a single sentence. (sick, home)
- Generating sentences using words with more than one meaning. (blue, blew)
- Recognising silly and sensible sentences
- Telling why a sentence is silly and making it sensible
- Making sentences about opposites. “Mr. Brown is a *young* man, Mr Brown is an *old* man”
- Making up riddles
- Given three pictures- colour, animal, place-make up a sentence. (vary the order)
- Elaborating on simple sentences by adding words and phrases in answer to the questions. How? Where? When? Why? Who? “I went to the shop”
- Adding descriptive words to a basic sentence.(The dog searched the bin for scraps of food, The *ragged old* dog searched the *dirty* bin for scraps of food.)
- Adding a variety of descriptors to a basic sentence that names an object
- Making up sentences given three descriptors
- Completing sentences with phrases that answer the questions “where”, “when”
-The rain fell....Where?
-We are going swimming...When?
- Brainstorming beginnings for sentences, given a sentence ending (.....in the dark.)
- Associating an action card with an object card and developing a sentence.
(bought, banana)
- Identifying and correcting mistakes in sentences
- Shortening sentences by deleting unnecessary words
- Making up sentences using conjunctions- and , but , because
- Adding rhyming sentences to a given sentence
- Completing similies – rain sounds like.....
- Unjumble sentences
- What would you do if.....(you won the lotto)....?

Clocha Rince NS Phonics Scheme

<div>Junior Infants</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Jolly Phonics</u> <u>42 sounds:</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">- s,a,t,i,p,n,- c,k,e,h,r,m,d,- g,o,u,l,f,b,- ai,j,oa,ie,ee,or- z,w,ng,v,oo,oo- y,x,ch,sh,th,th- qu,ou,oi,ue,er,ar● word families/rimes<table><tr><td>- at</td><td>- et</td><td>- it</td><td>- ot</td><td>- ut</td></tr><tr><td>- an</td><td>- en</td><td>- in</td><td>- on</td><td>- un</td></tr><tr><td>- ap</td><td>- ed</td><td>- ip</td><td>- op</td><td>- up</td></tr><tr><td>- ad</td><td>- em</td><td>- id</td><td>- od</td><td>- ud</td></tr><tr><td>- am</td><td>- et</td><td>- im</td><td>- om</td><td>- um</td></tr><tr><td>- ack</td><td>- eck</td><td>- ick</td><td>- ock</td><td>- uck</td></tr><tr><td>- as</td><td></td><td>- is</td><td></td><td>- us</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>- ug</td></tr></table>● blending of cvc words</div>	- at	- et	- it	- ot	- ut	- an	- en	- in	- on	- un	- ap	- ed	- ip	- op	- up	- ad	- em	- id	- od	- ud	- am	- et	- im	- om	- um	- ack	- eck	- ick	- ock	- uck	- as		- is		- us					- ug	<div>Senior Infants</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Jolly Phonics</u> <u>42 sounds:</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">- s,a,t,i,p,n,- c,k,e,h,r,m,d,- g,o,u,l,f,b,- ai,j,oa,ie,ee,or- z,w,ng,v,oo,oo- y,x,ch,sh,th,th- qu,ou,oi,ue,er,ar● Introduction of upper case letters● revision of word families/rimes● remaining rimes<table><tr><td>- all</td><td>- eat</td><td>- ice</td><td>-</td><td>- ump</td></tr><tr><td>- ain</td><td>- ell</td><td>- ide</td><td>oke</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>-</td><td>- est</td><td>-</td><td>- ore</td><td>- unk</td></tr><tr><td>ake</td><td></td><td>ight</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>- ale</td><td></td><td>- ill</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>-</td><td></td><td>- ine</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>ame</td><td></td><td>- ing</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>-</td><td></td><td>- ink</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>ank</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>-</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>ash</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>- ate</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>- aw</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>- ay</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>● blending (reading and writing)</div>	- all	- eat	- ice	-	- ump	- ain	- ell	- ide	oke		-	- est	-	- ore	- unk	ake		ight			- ale		- ill			-		- ine			ame		- ing			-		- ink			ank					-					ash					- ate					- aw					- ay					<div>First class</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Jolly Grammar 1</u>● vowel diagraphs<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ai, ee, ie, oa, ue, oi, ou,● alternative spellings of vowels<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ay, ea, igh, y, ow, ew, oy, ow, au, aw, al● medial vowel sounds (short vowel)● magic 'e'● consonant diagraphs (initial, medial and final sounds)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ch, th, sh, wh, ng, qu, ar, er, ir, ur, or● double letters:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ff, ll, ss, xx, ck● consonant blends:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- cl, bl, fl, gl, pl, sl, br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr, sc, sm, sn, sw, tw, sk, sp, dw● endings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- nt, st, lb, ld, lf, lk, lm, lp, lt, ct, ft, pt, xt, mp, nd, nk</div>
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<div>Second class</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Jolly Grammar 2</u>● revise vowel diagraphs<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ai, ee, ie, oa, ue, oi, ou,● revise alternative spellings of vowels<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ay, ea, igh, y, ow, ew, oy, ow, au, aw, al● revise consonant diagraphs (initial, medial and final sounds)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ch, th, sh, wh, ng, qu, ar, er, ir, ur, or● revise double letters:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ff, ll, ss, xx, ck● silent letters<ul style="list-style-type: none">- b, c, h, k, w● the 'k' sound<ul style="list-style-type: none">- c, k, ck, ch● alternative sounds:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- soft 'g'- soft 'c'- wh- ph- wa (for the /wo/ sound)- ou (for the /u/ sound)- air, are, ear- y, ey- tion, sion- eigh- o (for the /u/ sound)- ture- ie (for the /ee/ sound)- ore- le</div>	<div>Third class</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Jolly Grammar 3</u>● revise vowel diagraphs and alternative spellings of vowels<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ai, ay, a_e- ee, ea, e_e- ie, y, igh, i_e- oa, ow, o_e- ue, ew, u_e● 'n' for /ng/● soft 'c'● soft 'g'● ending 'tch'● ending 'dge'● le● qu● alternative sounds<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 's' for /z/- 'se' and 'ze' for /z/- suffix 'less'- suffix 'able'- 'a' for /ai/- 'e' for/ee/- 'i' for /ie/- 'o' for /oa/- 'u' for /ue/- 'a' for 'ar- 'ie' for /ee/- 'y' for /i/- 'a' for /o/● aw● au● al● ear/eer/ere● ure● 'gn' for /n/● 'ph' and 'gh' for /f/● air/are/ear/ere● ex</div>	<div>Fourth class</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Jolly Grammar 4</u>● ch, sh, th● homophones● nch● 'se' for /s/● 've' for /v/● ves● schwa 'a', 'o', 'u', 'ar', 'or', 'er', 'al', 'el', 'il'● 'or' for/er/● 'ear' for /er/● 'u' for long /oo/● gh, ough, augh● 'ive' for /iv/● ic and suffix 'ic'● 'st' for /s/● silent letters● ically● suffixes - ery, ary, ory, ant, ent, ,ist● prefixes - pre, sub, anti, trans, inter, tele</div>																																																																																																														

Fifth Class	Sixth Class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Jolly Grammar 5</u> • age, ege • nge • suffix –ance • suffix – ancy • suffix –ence • suffix –ency • prefix – multi • prefix –auto • mega, micro • prefix –super • ssion • cian • suffix –ation • ‘ch’ and ‘che’ for ‘sh’ • sure • ture • suffix –ible • suffix –ate • suffixes – ise, ize • suffix –ify • suffix –ous • suffix –ious • tious • cial • tial • words ending in ‘i’ • graph • suffix –ology • suffix –ment • suffix –ship • suffix –ward • sch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spellings taken from literacy and SESE reading material

Clocha Rince NS Programme for Phonological Awareness Development

The 37 rimes from which 500 primary words can be derived

- ack -all -ain -ake -ale -ame -an
- ank -ap -ash -at -ate -aw -ay
- eat -ell -est -ice -ick -ide -ight
- ill -in -ine -ing -ink -ip -it
- ock -oke -op -ore -ot -uck -ug
- ump -unk
Senior Infants
1st Class
2nd Class

In the Infant classes, children will be enabled to:

- Blend syllables e.g. post/man, black/bird, win/dow, doc/tor, vid/e/o et.....
- Clap, stamp, tap out the syllables in 2 and 3 syllable words
- Recite rhymes, songs, tongue twisters and alliteration sentences
- Understand the meaning of terms such as word, letter, letter names, letter sound,
- Identify words that rhyme
- Supply a rhyming word for another
- Supply a word that has the same initial sound as another
- Recognise and name the letters of the alphabet
- Associate initial sounds in words with letters
- Tap a rhythm in response to the syllables in a word
- Divide spoken cvc, ccvc words into onset and rime
- Identify first and last sound in a spoken word
- Identify the medial vowel in spoken cvc words
- Blend 2 or 3 phonemes e.g. a-t, i-f, c-a-l.
- Delete initial sound/phoneme from words e.g. gold/old, bus/us,

In First and Second Classes, children should be enabled to

- Use analogy to spell unfamiliar words (take, rake bake...)
- Identify and blend onset and rhyme in phonetically regular words (t-ill, b-un, s-old etc....)
- Blend 2,3 or 4 phonemes to make real words and nonsense words
- Identify constituent syllables in multi-syllabic words
- Recognise common endings (-ed, -ly, -ing, -er, -est)

In Third to Sixth Classes, children should be enabled to

- Continue to refine their ability to encode and decode words phonemically
- Identify common prefixes and suffixes and how they affect meaning
- Become proficient in learning to recognise and pronounce words by using root words, prefixes, suffixes and syllabication

- Use the pronunciation key in the dictionary.

Activities to develop Phonological Awareness

1. Syllabic Awareness

- ❖ *Beating out syllables:* Children can clap, tap or stamp rhythmically as they say nursery rhymes.
- ❖ *Blending syllables:* Imaginary Robbie the Robot says words in a funny way. (Breaks words into syllables, pauses for 1 sec. Between syllables) Children figure out the word. E.g. Mar-y, dus-ter, black-board.
- ❖ *Segmenting syllables:* As above, except that children pretend that they are Robbie Robot, and segment the words themselves. Present words for segmentation by supplying real objects or by showing pictures.
- ❖ *Kinaesthetic reinforcement:* Get children to touch their heads for the first syllable, shoulders for the second, hips for the third, knees for the fourth and toes for the fifth.

Supply a set of real objects; A child picks one, keeps it while saying the first syllable and passes it on to the next child for the next syllable.

- ❖ *Counting Syllables:* Have children put up one finger for each syllable (starting with the thumb for the first syllable) and let the fingers displayed until counting is completed.
- ❖ *Isolating syllables:* Start with two-syllable words which also happen to be compound words e.g. postman. Present word orally and ask pupils to say first part on its own. Proceed to two-syllable words which are not compound words. Similarly the second syllable can be isolated. Later, syllables can be isolated in longer words.

Onset-Rime Awareness

- Learning and saying rhymes
- Listening to stories with strong
- *Supplying rhyming words orally* rhyming patterns – e.g. Dr. Seuss books, Each Peach Pear Plum
- *Rhyme Discrimination exercises* – looking at pictures, listening to words and testing them for rhyme
- Matching rhyming pictures
- Discrimination of orally presented rhyming pairs (e.g. hair/pair, Hot/big)
- Rhyme completion e.g. “I have a shoe, Its colour is
- Rhyme Box – children pick out an object, name it and supply three rhyming words
- Rhyme-time game
 - a. Show picture (e.g. cat). Ask for rhyming words
 - b. List correct responses on the b.b.

- c. Then show each flashcard. If children have guessed that word, they keep the flashcard. If not, the teacher keeps it. If the teacher manages to keep 4 or more cards, she/he wins,
- d. Elicit from children what sounds the words have in common. Then establish what letters they have in common. (This is the beginning of training in analogy)

Phonemic Awareness

- Same or different exercises: Present pairs of words. Let some pairs differ by one phoneme. Let children say if they are the same or different.
- Identifying words which begin with the same initial sounds
- end sounds
- middle sounds
- Song for sound-matching activities: To the tune of “Old Macdonald”
 What’s the sound that starts these words?
 Turtle, time and teeth (wait for children to respond!)
 /t/ is the sound that starts these words:
 Turtle, time and teeth.
 With a /t/, /t/ here and a /t/, /t/ there,
 Here a /t/, there a /t/, everywhere a /t/, /t/.
 /t/ is the sound that starts these words:
 Turtle, time and teeth.
- Producing sounds with given initial sounds – I spy games, I went shopping and I bought...
- Phoneme blending - Start with two-phoneme words and pause between phonemes. Initially incorporate the words into sentences, e.g. “My favourite food is apple p-ie.
- Song Games: To the tune of ‘ If you’re happy and you know it’
 If you think you know this word, shout it out!
 If you think you know this word, shout it out!
 If you think you know this word,
 Then tell me what you’ve heard,
 If you think you know this word , shout it out!
 The teacher says a segmented word such as /k/-/a/-/t/ and the children respond by saying the blended word.
- Phoneme Segmentation and counting : Using idea of an imaginary sound-stretcher, show children how to stretch words. Good idea to use cardboard squares or counters to represent sounds. (Later, letters could be pencilled onto the card squares)
- Sound dominoes: Child says a word. Next child says a word beginning with the final sound of the previous word, etc. etc. e.g sun, neck, cup, page, joy, oil..

- Phoneme deletion: *Puppet character, Ms. Sound Snatcher snatches initial sounds, children must identify missing sounds.... (f)ox. (h)at, (p)late, (s)mile, (p)each etc.*

Children's names. When Ms. Sound Snatcher took away the first sounds from these words, she was left with children's names. What are they?

Pan(Ann), Teddy(Eddie), Gemma(Emma), Skim (Kim) etc.

Parts of the body: Snail(nail), Stow (toe), Farm (arm), Pie (eye)etc.

- Deleting end sounds: *Ms. Sound Snatcher can delete end sounds, e.g. pain (pay), train(tray) tent(ten), bone(bow)*

Children's names: Joke (Joe), Soon (Sue), Cake (Kay), Face(Faye), Rain (Ray), Dance (Dan)

- Phoneme substitution: *Children can have fun changing the initial phonemes of their own names, eg. Nicola, Ticola, Bicola, etc.*
- Identification of sound positions, initial, final and medial: *Display a picture of a train composed of an engine, a passenger car and a caboose. Three connecting boxes can be drawn under each component. Explain that like the train, each word has a beginning, middle and end part. Demonstrate by slowly articulating a CVC word and pointing to the box corresponding to each sound in the word. Repeat the word and ask the children to identify where they hear the different sounds.(e..g.Where do you hear the /g/in pig?) Have them mark the box under the train that indicates the position of the sound you specify.*

Phonological Awareness Training through the Primary School. *Developing Phonological Awareness in the Infant Classes*

Introduction

Three levels of Phonological Awareness are attended to below: syllabic awareness; onset-rime awareness; phonemic awareness. Within each section, activities are presented more or less in sequential order for teaching. While it is possible to commence work on all levels at the same time it is probably more sensible to start work on syllables and onsets-rimes and then introduce phonemic awareness exercises as children seem to be able for them.

A. Activities to develop Syllabic Awareness

1. Emphasising stressed syllables through clapping or other physical movement.

Children can clap out the stressed syllables of any rhyme. The rhymes of traditional games which involve clapping or movement of some sort are a good starting place for phonological awareness training in children.

‘Phonemic Awareness in young Children: A Classroom Curriculum’ (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg and Beeler, p32) has an activity with the rhyme

*“One potato, two potato, three potato, four
Five potato, six potato, seven potato, more”.*

Children sit in a circle with both fists before them. They chant the rhyme and the child who is ‘on’ moves around inside the circle and gently pounds out the stressed syllables on each fist. The fist that gets pounded on for the last syllable in each line must be withdrawn and so on until only one fist is left! The same game can be played with lots of rhymes, e.g. ‘Eeny, Meeny, Miney, Mo’; ‘Please Porridge Hot’.

2. Syllable Segmentation with Kinaesthetic Reinforcement

Kinaesthetic reinforcement helps children segment syllables.

(i) A body place for each syllable!

One way of providing kinaesthetic reinforcement is to get the children to use their two hands and to touch their heads for the first syllable, their shoulders for the second syllable, their hips for the third, knees for the fourth, toes for the fifth and heels if there is a sixth syllable! Children love this and they naturally experiment with any new words they hear. Such exercises also give children an awareness of word length. All words which interest the children can be used for segmentation in this way. It’s always a good idea to start with children’s names.

(ii) ‘If You’re Happy And You Know It...’

The *‘Sounds Abound Programme’* (Lenchner & Podhajski, see p.53 of Manual) uses the well-known song *‘If you’re happy and you know it’* to practise syllable segmentation. Show a picture of a multisyllable word, e.g. ‘television’. Now sing the song:

*“If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands
(all now clap out the syllables of ‘tel-e-vi-sion’)
If you’re happy and you now it, clap your hands
(repeat actions).
If you’re happy and you know it then you really ought to show it,
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands
(repeat clapping of ‘tel-e-vi-sion’ as above)”.*

Continue with other verses using different action directions, e.g. ‘stamp your feet’ (stamping alternate feet for each syllable of ‘tel-e-vi-sion’); ‘tap your knees’ (tapping alternate knees for each syllable); raise your hands (raising alternate hands for each syllable), etc.

(iii) 'Duck, Duck, Goose' (adapted)

This game is taken from *'The Sounds Abound Program'* (Lenchner & Podhajski, see p. 56 of Manual) and it is an adaptation of the traditional children's game 'Duck, Duck, Goose'. Children sit in a circle. A picture card of a multisyllabic word can be shown to the group (e.g. 'butterfly') but a picture isn't absolutely necessary. One child is selected (we say this child is 'on') and (s)he goes around the outside of the circle of children, saying the word 'but-ter-fly' and tapping each child lightly on the back (once), one tap for each syllable of the word. Having repeated the segmentation and tapping in this way a number of times, the child says the full word 'butterfly' (at normal pace) as (s)he taps a child of his/her own choosing. This chosen child then stands up quickly and tries to catch the child who is 'on' before the latter runs a complete circle etc. The game continues with other multisyllabic words. It will take children at Junior Infant level some time to get the one-to-one correspondence right i.e. one child, one tap, one syllable.

3. Syllable Counting with Fingers

A very effective way of counting syllables in words is to have children put up one finger for each syllable (starting with the thumb for the first syllable) and let the fingers displayed until counting is completed. An activity children like to do is to group themselves according to the number of syllables in their first name and to discover which group is the biggest, etc.

Syllable counting exercises can be based on whatever topic is being done. For example, animals - see who can think of an animal with lots of syllables in its name! (They all love the 'hipp- o-pot-a-mus'!) Limit their choice by asking them to supply two-syllable words or three-syllable words only, etc. *'Sound Wizard Strategy Building Games for Phonological Awareness'* (Lenchner) has several small picture cards for playing syllable games e.g. each child chooses a picture card, counts the syllables and whoever has the picture card with the most syllables wins the round etc.

4. Syllable Isolation

A good place to start syllable isolation is to use two-syllable words that also happen to be compound words, e.g. postman, playground, blutack, blackbird. Segment into its syllables and then ask the child to say the first part on its own, then the second part on its own. It helps to put two paper 'post-its' side by side to represent the two syllables and to remove one as you want the children to omit the corresponding syllable.

A way of dealing with multisyllable words which are not compound words is to present, for example, a real carrot and cut it into two parts. Have the child touch each part as (s)he says the corresponding syllable. Point to one part of the cut carrot and ask them to say this part on its own. Other possibilities are 'spa-ghe-tti', 'ba-na-na', 'po-ta-to'. Pictures of words can be cut up if you can't have the real object. Eventually, you should be able to present a multisyllable word and ask for its first, second, third, syllable etc.

5. Syllable Blending

This involves the teacher saying words, leaving a one-second gap between each syllable. Children tell what word the teacher is saying. There are many possibilities for making a game out of this e.g. Helping Robbie Robot (who can only say words with an interval between syllables) to say words properly. You can confine possibilities to a particular theme especially at the beginning e.g. children's names, months of the year, foods etc.

Notes

(i) Oral work on syllable segmentation anticipates the breaking up of words that children will have to do later when they are learning to read words. Too often teachers expect children to be able to visually break up words into syllables for decoding without having had any aural or oral experience of doing this with spoken words.

(ii) Furthermore, such exercises help children to see how frequently some syllables occur. For example, suffixes such as ‘ing’ and ‘er’ can be well known to children at an aural and oral level before they encounter them in print.

(iii) You may wish to use the term ‘part’ of a word instead of ‘syllable’ at the beginning but once children have the concept, the word ‘syllable’ can be introduced and used from then on.

B. Onset-Rime Awareness (Rhyming)

There has been a renewed emphasis on nursery rhymes, rhyming stories, rhyming jingles etc serving not only language enrichment but also helping children to come to terms with the phonological features of the language. This emphasis has been reflected in the literacy materials available for children and such materials will play an important part in phonological awareness training.

1. Rhyme Recognition Exercises

(i) *‘I’m thinking of a name that rhymes with...’* is a circle game from *‘The Sounds Abound Program’* (Lenchner and Podhajski, see p.23 of Manual) that aims to develop rhyme recognition. Children are in a circle and an empty chair is in the middle. The teacher sings (to the tune of ‘Here we go around the Mulberry Bush’)

*“I’m thinking of a name that rhymes with e.g. ‘plate’ (a word that rhymes with a child’s name rhymes with ‘plate’, rhymes with ‘plate’
I’m thinking of a name that rhymes with ‘plate’
And _____ ‘Kate’ is the name!”*

Kate sits on the chair in the middle and the teacher proceeds with the next verse, saying, as before, a rhyming word for a name in the class. The children should be able to join in in the last line of the verse.

Several adaptations of this game are possible depending on the topic you wish to explore. For example, if studying the topic ‘food’, various food items can be given out to children and the verse can be adapted as follow:

“I’m thinking of a food that rhymes with ‘head’..... (bread)”

(ii) Activities with pictures that ‘rhyme’

A set of pictures of rhyming words is an invaluable resource for developing phonological awareness. Children can be given the following kinds of activities:

- Matching ‘rhyming’ pictures from a set of picture cards (begin with a small number of cards and increase the number according to ability).
- Picking out the odd-one-out (picture that doesn’t ‘rhyme’) from a set of pictures.
Pictures provide a concrete focus for rhyme discrimination work and having the picture in front of them while they think about the sounds reduces the auditory memory load for children compared to the task of discriminating between orally presented words.

The Oxford Reading Tree *‘Rhyme and Analogy’* Card Games have 64 rhyme picture cards (4 in each of 16 rhyming families) and a whole series of games to develop rhyming, e.g. Snap, Pelmanism, Odd-one-out, etc. These are particularly useful for working with small groups. There are also 64 word cards to match each picture. Some children will be able to read these. For example, when matching rhyming pictures, on being shown the word ‘cat’, some children will use their analogy skills to find the other three rhyming words in the set (rat, hat, bat). Those who do so are very phonologically aware and are already seeking out similar spelling patterns for similar sounds. *‘Sounds Abound’* (Catts and Vartiainen) has plenty photocopiable rhyme discrimination (picture) exercises.

2. Rhyme Completion Exercises

(i) 'A Hunting We Will Go'

This is from *'The Sounds Abound Programme'* (Lenchner & Podhajski, see p. 31 of Manual) and is based on an old English hunting song:

*"A-hunting we will go, a-hunting we will go.
We'll catch a fox and put him in a ...? (box)
And never let him go".*

The verse is repeated with other animals and in each case the children supply a suitable rhyming ending (e.g. bat, hat; bear, chair; dragon, wagon; duck, truck). Included are A4 size pictures of each creature and its rhyming word. *'Sounds Abound'* (Catts and Vartiainen) and *'Sound Linkage'* have lots of rhyme supply exercises.

(ii) 'Did You Ever See A ___ In A ___?'

'Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum' (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg and Beeler, p35) has an activity in which the tune of *'If you're happy and you know it'* is used to create rhyme-completion exercises:

*"Did you ever see a bear in a (chair)?
Did you ever see a bear in a chair?
No, I never, no, I never, no, I never, no, I never
No, I never saw a bear in a chair".*

Children can create their own examples. For example at Halloween, they can find rhyming words to complete such verses as above on such words as ghost, cat, witch, bat, broom, spider...

3. Rhyme Production Exercises

(i) Rhyme Box: Various objects can be put in the Rhyme Box and used for eliciting rhyme. Suitable objects: hat, mug, bell, strap, pop, (toy) car, (toy) gun, (chewing) gum, etc. Pupils can dip into the box, pick out an object and see if they can supply three rhyming words, etc.

Several adaptations are possible. A box of coloured counters can be passed around and each child is required to think of a word to rhyme with the colour of the counter (s)he picked out. Nonsense words can also be used as rhyming words. Similarly, numbers can be used and the child thinks of a word that rhymes with the number picked out.

(ii) 'Rhyme Time Game' (supplying rhyming words to a given picture stimulus)

This game goes further than Phonological Awareness in that it involves the teacher writing the rhyming words on the blackboard and drawing attention to the shared spelling patterns (i.e. analogy training).

Materials Required: Picture as a rhyming stimulus, cards with words that rhyme with the stimulus (see lists below).

Steps: (a) Show the picture, e.g. picture of a cat and ask for rhyming words.

(b) List pupils' (correct) responses on blackboard. List real words only but let pupils suggest nonsense words if they wish. Explain the difference between real and nonsense words. At this stage some children will be able to spell all the rhyming words (using analogy), others will have no idea ...

(c) When the pupils finish guessing, show each of your word cards. Some will be able to read them. If the group had guessed the word on the card, they 'keep' it, if the word on the card was not guessed by them, the teacher 'keeps' it.

(d) At this stage ask what sounds all these words have that are the same. **Then** ask what letters they all have in common. It is important that the above questions are considered in this order so that pupils begin to think in terms of common sound categories **first** and then see how these usually have common spellings. This is training in analogy which is the objective of onset-rhyme awareness work. At Senior Infant level it will only make sense to some, others might see similar letters but will have no idea at this stage of the link between similar symbols and similar sounds.

Sometimes rhyming words have different spelling patterns. If this happens in this game it can be a good opportunity to see that this is indeed sometimes the case and the frequency of its occurrence will become clear to them as more 'Rhyme Time' games are played. With small groups it helps if children finish such a game by using letter cards to make the stimulus word and then change the initial letter to make a different rhyming word.

The following are some rhyming lists . You can pick out words that you think are within the guessing range of your group (or expand the list if necessary).

HAT: mat, fat, cat, sat, bat, rat, pat, at, that, brat, flat, tat...
MAN: pan, tan, fan, Dan, can, ran, ban, van, an, plan, Jan, ...
TAP: map, nap, snap, lap, trap, slap, clap, gap, rap...
CAR: jar, bar, tar, far, star...
SAD: had, lad, mad, glad, Dad, bad...
BAG: flag, tag, rag, wag...
BALL: fall, tall, wall, call, hall, small, all...
BLACK: rack, back, sack, Jack, pack, track, snack...
HILL: ill, fill, will, sill, still, pill, kill, till, spill, mill, Jill, bill...
SIT: lit, knit, bit, fit, pit, hit, spit, it, kit, ...
TIN: bin, fin, chin, in, thin, grin, win, pin, skin, spin...
SWIM: dim, Tim, Jim, slim, Kim, him...
BELL: shell, smell, well, tell, sell, hell, spell, fell...
NET: yet, let, wet, get, set, pet, met, jet, vet...
DOT: spot, shot, tot, cot, not, hot, got, rot, lot, trot, pot...
POP: shop, hop, bop, mop, stop, top, drop...
FROG: bog, jog, log, dog, fog...
MUG: tug, hug, rug, jug, plug, bug, slug, dug...
SUM: drum, hum, yum, plum, Mum...

See p 59 of [Primary School Curriculum., English Language, Teacher Guidelines](#) for a list of 37 rimes that give 500 primary level words.

C. Phonemic Awareness

1. Phoneme Blending

It is better to begin with short words (2 or 3 phonemes). It is also a good idea to limit the number at the start and have the children 'win' a counter for each correct answer. For each new round you can change

to a different topic as follows:

(a) Ask children to guess which things in the classroom you are saying in a funny way (e.g. d-oo-r; b-a-g; b-oo-k; ch-a-lk; ch-ai-r).

(b) Maybe gather a collection of suitable items/toys and only reveal them as the children guess what words you are saying (e.g. m-u-g; p-e-n; b-a-g; p-e-g; d-o-ll; t-o-p; ph-o-ne).

(c) Ask them to guess the names of your friends (e.g. T-i-m; P-a-t; P-au-l; J-oh-n; R-o-b; B-e-n; T-o-m; J-i-m; B-o-b).

Other suitable categories are food and action words. If children find phoneme blending too difficult you can go back to onset-rime blending until they build up their blending skills.

2. Phoneme Comparison

(i) Initial Sounds

There's no need to wait for phonics lessons to get children listening to and thinking about initial sounds. Right from the beginning, it is helpful to highlight the initial sounds of the children's names and to draw children's attention to them e.g. "Who am I thinking about? Her name begins with the sound /n/..." (Children guess 'Nicola'). Words beginning with this sound can be explicitly associated with Nicola. Others names can be tested to see if they belong to 'Nicola's group'. In any class there will be a wide variation in children's ability to identify and categorize initial sounds in this aural/oral way. It is a good early test of how phonologically aware Junior Infants are. Attention can also be drawn to the shape of the speech organs when making various sounds. Some children will already be using the letter 'n' as a reference point for this sound. By all means use the letter to identify the sound but remember the first task is *hearing* sounds in words, linking those that are the same etc.

'I spy' games can be used here. A set of initial sound pictures and corresponding letters are of course very useful - the Oxford Reading Tree *'Rhyme and Analogy'* Card Games have sets of four pictures and four matching letters for each initial sound with several examples of games.

(ii) End Sounds

- 'A Tisket, A Tasket, A Green and Yellow Basket' (Identifying the Final Sound).

'Just for Me! Phonological Awareness' (Warner, p 93-94) has an activity in which children have to cut out twelve given pictures, then pick out the ones that end in final sound /t/ and put them into a paper basket (this can also be made with the template supplied).

*"A tisket, a tasket, I'll put a **hat** into the basket".*

Using this idea, you can supply a basket which will become a 'home' for all words encountered that end in /t/. This is a simple activity but very effective in that you find children testing words to see if they would qualify for entry into the basket (e.g. testing which children in the class will 'go' into the basket). Words ending with the sound /t/ can be written on cards and put into the basket. Children will see they end (in most cases) with the letter 't'. Even though this exercise focuses on /t/ as an end sound, children will tell you what end sounds they hear in other words.

- 'Can You Say the Last Sound?'

This is from '*Phonemic Awareness Activities*' (Wiley Blevins, p40).
This verse is sung to the tune of '*Happy Birthday to You*'.

*"Can you say the last sound?
Can you say the last sound?
It's the last sound in RABBIT.
Can you say the last sound?"*

Children isolate and say the final sound. See if they can think of another word with the same final sound. A search around the classroom for ideas or children's own names can help.

3. Phoneme Deletion

(i) Children's names without first sound

The best place to start deleting an initial sound is with children's own names. Call out the children's names without the first sound and see if they will respond to the call (e.g. *-icola* for *Nicola*; *-arry* for *Barry* etc.) Ask them to explain what you did to their name. It is helpful if the children get cards with their names on them and fold back the letter(s) of the initial sound. They can then practise saying their name with and without the initial sound, folding the name card as required.

Children love games of identifying words without initial sounds especially if you confine it to a category (e.g. foods, drinks, names, school words, etc.). Most children will be able to identify the words but a good way of seeing who has well-developed phonological awareness is to see who can actually do the deleting themselves. It will take some children a long time.

(ii) Sally Sound Snatcher (Making new words by deleting initial phonemes)

Introduce an imaginary Sally Sound Snatcher! or supply a puppet. She snatches sounds from words! Once she took the word 'fox' and snatched the first sound away to make 'ox'! What sound did she snatch? (/f/) Give other examples. Now ask what sound she took away from 'farm' to make 'arm'. (Other examples: (t)able, (h)at, (l)ate, (p)each, (c)up, (c)at, (m)eat, (s)ink, (m)eat, (s)eat, (j)am, etc.). It may help to have a blank strip of card to represent the word and to fold back the initial part each time you want the children to delete the initial phoneme.

It is better to avoid consonant blends at the initial stages of such exercises because subtle sound changes occur as a result of the co-articulation of the consonants in the blend.

Children's Names: When Sally Sound Snatcher took away the first sounds from these words she was left with the names of boys and girls! What are they?

Pan (Ann)	Teddy (Eddie)	Wellie (Ellie)	Handy (Andy)
Gemma (Emma)	Crows (Rose)	Spat (Pat)	Skate (Kate)

4. Segmenting words into phonemes and reblending

Elkonin Boxes

Children at Infant level can be helped to 'see' phonemes in words by having one box drawn for each phoneme underneath the picture (Elkonin boxes). You can demonstrate the segmenting of a VC word (e.g. at) or a CVC word (e.g. cat) into phonemes using such Elkonin pictures as follows:

- **Say the word first at normal pace.**
- **Ask them to watch you closely as you say the word very slowly and move a cube into each box as you say each phoneme**

- Finally repeat the word at a normal rate. During this repetition, while blending the sounds together, join the cubes together and run your finger (left to right) under the cubes to provide a visual representation of the blending process.

This ability to ‘say-it-and-move-it’ is crucial to phonemic awareness. Lots of work with Elkonin boxes helps. ‘[The Phonological Awareness Kit](#)’ (Robertson and Salter) has several A4 size pictures (with Elkonin boxes to represent the phonemes) for this kind of segmentation work. ‘[Road to the Code](#)’ (Blachman, Wynne Ball, Black and Tangel) has a ‘say-it-and-move-it’ component like this in every lesson and also has several photocopiable Elkonin cards.

This exercise can be taken further. You can point to the first cube and ask the children what sound it stands for, then ask about the second cube etc. As children get to know the letters corresponding to these sounds they can put out letter cards instead of cubes.

5. Adding and subtracting phonemes; swapping phonemes

(i) Adding a phoneme to the beginning of a two-phoneme word

Demonstrate how to represent the phonemes in a two-phoneme word, e.g. ‘at’ (as shown above) using two different coloured cubes. Now tell them that you are going to add a sound to ‘at’, saying ‘cat’. Show them how to add a different colour cube to the front of the two already out.

Practice can be done with the following VC words: ice-mice (or nice, rice); up-cup (or pup); it-bit (or sit, fit, hit, kit etc); in-pin (or win, chin, fin etc.); ill-pill (or Bill, chill, fill etc.); ash-dash (or mash, rash etc); am-ham (or jam, Sam, etc). Ask the children to remove the initial cube and say the original word.

Now tell them that you are going to change the word ‘cat’ to ‘fat’ and show them how to change the first cube to a cube of a different colour.

(ii) Adding a phoneme to the beginning of a two-phoneme word to create a blend

Such exercises can be done where adding a phoneme at the beginning creates a blend. Examples: no-snow; row-grow (or crow, grow); pie-spy; lie-fly (or sly etc). Again ask children to remove the added cube and give you back the original word.

(iii) Adding an internal phoneme

Similarly, you can start with a two phoneme word like ‘so’ and ask children to add third cube to make ‘slow’ (or snow, stow). Other suitable words are go-grow (or glow); bow-blow; die-dry etc. Depending on the ability of children, you can start with a three phoneme word and add a fourth phoneme, e.g. ‘flat’ and see if they can tell you where the new cube will be added. You can add further tasks by asking them to take away a counter to make ‘fat’ again, then ‘at’ etc. ‘[Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum](#)’ (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg and Beeler, chapter 8) has probably the most comprehensive lists for such phoneme addition and subtraction exercises as well as very carefully structured activities. ‘[The Phonological Awareness Kit](#)’ (Robertson and Salter, pp50-57) has also several suggestions for these kinds of exercises first with cubes and then with letters. ‘[Sound Wizard: Strategy building games for Phonological Awareness](#)’ (Lenchner) has phoneme deletion puzzles which involve small picture cards with Elkonin boxes. One box is coloured black. The word must be said without the ‘blackened’ phoneme. For example, there is a picture of a ‘leg’ with its three boxes to represent sounds. And

the first box is coloured in. The child must work out that ‘egg’ is the answer to the deletion puzzle (deleting the first phoneme /l/). At the back of the card there is a picture of an egg for purposes of self-correcting.

Ultimately, children will do these kinds of exercises with letters. You can change from cubes to letter cards as soon as children have the phonic ability to do so. Digraphs (e.g. ‘ow’) should of course be on one card.

(iv) ‘Change your name’ (Initial Sound Substitution)

Children sit in a circle. Teacher demonstrates by skipping around the circle while all sing the following to the tune of ‘London Bridge’.

*“Change the first sound in your name, in your name, in your name,
Change the first sound in your name, what’s your new name?”*

When the verse is over, ‘swap’ the initial sound of the name of the child behind whom you are now standing and say your new name (e.g. Katie and Margaret swap initial sounds and become Kargaret and Matie).

Phonological Awareness Training through the Primary School. Part 2: First to Sixth Classes.

Note: (i) The activities in Part 1 of this two-part handout can be used as a starting point for activities to develop all levels of phonological awareness.. With older classes you may need more age-appropriate activities.

(ii) You will find a comprehensive checklist of objectives for the three levels of phonological awareness training on pages 6-7.

(ii) From First Class up, phonological awareness activities will almost always be integrated with other aspects of literacy, especially phonics, word reading and spelling. In fact every opportunity will be used to help the pupils apply their phonological awareness skills to reading/writing.

A. Activities to develop Syllabic Awareness

*First, check out Phonological Awareness for Infants (pgs 1-3) also available on this web-site.
Syllable Blending ; Syllable Segmentation; Syllable Counting; Syllable Isolation*

Children from first class up will probably have a good awareness of syllables. However, continued practice in syllable segmentation, counting and isolation is advised to keep the skill ‘near at hand’ for literacy tasks. An aural and oral ability with syllables will support pupils when visually breaking up words into syllables.

Check their **syllable blending** skills by saying multisyllable words with one-second interval between syllables. Words from any subject category can be used.

Continue to test and teach **syllable segmentation** skills by asking pupils to count out the syllables in words (using fingers). For example, they can divide the names of children in their class (or names of favourite football players, animals, months of the year etc.) into one-syllable, two-syllable, three-syllable groups etc .

Check pupils’ ability to **isolate syllables** by presenting (orally) two-syllable words and asking pupils to say either the first or second syllable on its own. It is better to start with compound words (e.g. starfish, seesaw, earring, football, playground, cowboy, blackberry, doorbell, oilskin, rainbow, outside, toothbrush etc.) and then move onto other two- syllable words that are not compound words. Three-syllable words can then be attempted asking pupils to isolate perhaps the middle syllable etc. Continued use of paper post it stickers as explained in Part 1 (Syllable Isolation) is useful at all ages to give a visual representation of the syllables and the removal of one syllable etc.

‘Working out with Phonological Awareness’ (Schreiber, Sterling-Orth, Thurs, McKinley) is a little

book with 50 short ‘workouts’ on phonological awareness. Each workout has a section on syllables.

B. Onset-Rime Awareness (Rhyming)

Rhyme Recognition

(i) You may need more age-appropriate ways of testing/teaching pupils’ rhyme recognition than described in Part 1. A suggestion is to simply ask children to supply a name of a food which rhymes with a given word.

Examples: **red (bread); parrot (carrot); please (cheese or peas!); seat (meat); gutter (butter); shingles (pringles); lisps (crisps); Pam (ham or jam); Jake (cake) etc.** It is easy to create such word lists (nonsense or real) based on words of interest to the children e.g. children’s names, drinks, school words, animals, soccer players etc.

(ii) *Activities with pictures that ‘rhyme’*

Rhyming pictures continue to be a good teaching resource for older pupils. The 64 rhyming pictures and the 64 corresponding word cards of the Oxford Reading Tree ‘[Rhyme and Analogy](#)’ Card Games (16 rhyming families, 4 in each set) can be used for :

- (a) Matching pictures that rhyme – such activities can be timed for increased motivation.
- (b) Timed odd-man-out exercises – up to 16 sets of 4 picture cards can be displayed with one odd-man-out in each one.
- (c) Snap games (pictures only).
- (d) Matching words to pictures – you can see to what extent pupils’ analogy skills are developed by giving them one word card of each set of rhyming pictures and seeing if they can deduce the others.
- (e) Reading words without pictures.
- (f) Snap games using pictures and words.

2. Rhyme Completion Exercises

‘[Sounds Abound](#)’ (Catts and Vartiainen) and ‘[Sound Linkage](#)’ (Hatcher) have lots of rhyme supply riddles/exercises. ‘[Sound Linkage](#)’ includes rhyme completion based on rhyming stories of Roald Dahl.

‘[Sounds Abound Game](#)’ (Catts and Vartiainen) has a game involving rhyming and sound blending which can be quite testing:

E.g. “What word rhymes with log and starts with the sound /f/ ?” (fog)

Other examples using the same structure as this item involve rhyming pairs as follows:

night (fight); race (face); can (fan); door (four) etc. Because this involves phoneme substitution according to specific requirements, it can be quite a good test of phonological awareness at first/second class and an activity worth practising.

3. Rhyme Production Exercises

Some pupils need lots of practice at producing rhyme e.g. daily drills in which they produce rhyming words to a given stimulus. They need to build up a ‘dictionary’ of rhyming words if they are to be able to use the rhyming skill productively in reading and writing.

‘**Rhyme Time Game**’ (supplying rhyming words to a given picture stimulus)

This game described in Part I of this handout plays a more important role in older classes. It goes beyond phonological awareness in that it involves not just rhyming but also reading and drawing attention to the shared spelling patterns (i.e. analogy training). Some children are very reluctant to look to rhyming and analogy as a first support in instances of encoding or decoding. For example, when they want to spell or read the word ‘stack’ they will not readily relate it to ‘black’ even though they may know how to read and write the word ‘black’. Research (such as that carried out by Usha Goswami) has shown that children with the best rhyming skills use analogies the most. Perhaps it is because they know they have a rich dictionary of rhyme near at hand that they can access and use. For children who are naturally weak at

phonological awareness, we must not only train them to rhyme and to build up this 'data base' of rhyming words but also show them how to apply this knowledge to help them read and spell by analogy. This game serves this purpose.

Materials required for this game: Picture as a rhyming stimulus, cards with words that rhyme with the stimulus (see lists below).

Steps: (a) Show the picture, e.g. picture of a train and ask for rhyming words.

(b) List pupils' (correct) responses on BB. List real words only but let pupils suggest nonsense words if they wish. Explain the difference between real and nonsense words.

(c) When the pupils finish guessing, show each of your word cards. If they had guessed the word on the card, they 'keep' it, if the word on the card was not guessed by them, the teacher 'keeps' it. If the teacher manages to 'win' four cards (i.e. if there are four rhyming words on cards that the pupils hadn't guessed) she wins. If the teacher ends up with less than four cards, the class wins. (Of course you can negotiate with the class how many 'unguessed' cards constitute a victory for the teacher).

(d) At this stage ask what *sounds* all these words have that are the same. Then ask what letters they all have in common. This is training in analogy which is the objective of onset-rime awareness work.

Some further points about this game:

(i) Children will quickly realize that if they go through all the initial consonant sounds of the alphabet they can make rhyming words. In switching initial sounds they are really getting practice at substituting phonemes thus phonemic awareness is also being developed here. It is also a good opportunity for them to see how a blend of two sounds, e.g. /sp/ can be used as an onset and thus give further possibilities for rhyming. This helps develop an awareness of blends.

(ii) *Sometimes rhyming words have different spelling patterns e.g. in this case the words 'crane', 'pane', 'plane', 'sane' etc. If this happens it can be a good opportunity to see that this is indeed sometimes the case and the frequency of its occurrence will become clear to them as more 'Rhyme Time' games are played.*

Part 1 of this handout has a list of CVC stimulus words and lists of rhyming words for the younger classes. The following 12 are some further possibilities but of course the list is endless.

PINK: drink, stink, wink, rink, sink, brink, link, kink, shrink, slink, think...

MATCH: catch, latch, batch, hatch, patch, thatch, scratch, hatch...

WINE: pine, mine, twine, spine, shine, dine, fine, brine, vine, Rhine, whine, shrine...

FACE: place, pace, grace, space, trace, lace, brace, race, embrace...

TRAIN: pain, plain, rain, brain, drain, Spain, grain, stain, strain, main...

ROOM: broom, gloom, groom, bloom, doom, zoom, boom...

HEAT: meat, seat, treat, wheat, bleat, beat, eat, neat...

SLIDE: ride, side, stride, wide, bride, glide, pride, tide...

PLATE: gate, hate, grate, skate, mate, slate, late, state, rate, crate, fate, Kate...

NIGHT: bright, sight, fight, fright, light, might, right, tight, slight, height...

CAKE: sake, make, bake, take, rake, drake, wake, fake, flake, shake, quake, brake...

MICE: nice, lice, spice, slice, rice, twice, dice, ice, price, thrice...

See p 59 of [Primary School Curriculum., English Language, Teacher Guidelines](#) for a list of 37 rimes that give 500 primary level words.

'The P.A.T. Phonological Awareness Training: A New Approach to Phonics' (Wilson) is a reading programme based on onset-rimes. It involves getting children to generate their own list of words for reading based on rhyme. These words are then reinforced in reading, spelling and dictation.

C. Phonemic Awareness

First check out the Phonemic Awareness activities in Part 1 of this handout (pages 6-9)

(i) Phoneme Segmentation, Counting, Identification, Addition and Subtraction

The following sequence of activities may be useful both to help find a pupil's level in phonemic awareness and to supply more practice:

(a) 'Say-it-and-move-it' using Elkonin boxes (see Part 1 of handout, p7)

This is a good place to start looking into pupils' phonemic awareness. Show a picture of e.g. a tap with three boxes drawn underneath (Elkonin picture – it can of course be homemade!). See if they can move a cube into each box as they say the phonemes /t/ /a/ /p/. This will need to be demonstrated clearly – getting the one-to-one correspondence between cube and phoneme is very important. When the cubes are in place, point to one of the cubes and ask them which phoneme it represents. Examine others similarly. Pupils can also do this with letters. CVC words in which a digraph represents a sound can also be used. (e.g. ship, peach). In such examples, when doing the say-it-and-move-it exercises with letter cards, it is important that the two letters of the digraph should be on one card to avoid confusion.

'Road to the Code' (Blachman, Ball, Black and Tangel) as referenced in Part 1 of the handout has 'say-it-and-move-it' exercises such as these as a central part of its programme. Though intended for Kindergarten level, they can be used for remedial work with older children. It has Elkonin pictures for the following words *map, leg, nut, zip, mat, lip, fan, net, sun, man, ink, sit, web, pin, bag, pot, dog*.

Having done the above encoding exercises it is a good idea to present the same words in written form afterwards for decoding. Some pupils will not be able to decode the same words they were so easily able to encode a few minutes earlier! They may need practice at every step of the transfer process.

(b) Phoneme Substitution/Sound Switch

Continuing from (a) above (the word 'tap'), tell pupils you want to change one cube to make the word 'nap'. See if they can change the first cube. Now ask them to change one cube to make the word 'rap'. You can also change the end sound e.g. change one cube to make 'rat'. Again this can be done with letters. A suitable list for such substitution exercises is *cat, cap, cop, pop, pot, pit, sit, set*.

Again, check their ability to decode the same words after they have encoded them.

(c) Phoneme addition to create a blend

Continuing from the above (from the word 'rap'), ask pupils to add a cube to make the word 'trap'. And where would they add another cube again to show the word 'strap'? Check that they can also take away the added phoneme to get back the original word. Also do with letters. A suitable list for such exercises is: lips, flips, flaps, flap, lap, clap, clasp, crasp (from 'The Phonological Awareness Kit - Intermediate' (Robertson and Salter, p. 42). As before check their ability to decode the same words immediately after.

It is worth spending some time on aural exercises which get pupils aware of blends - it will precipitate their acquisition of phonic blends in reading and spelling. A structured approach to this could be as follows:

First deal with adding an initial phoneme to make a blend:

- Ask them to make the word 'lap' with 3 cubes. Make sure they know which phoneme each cube stands for;
- Ask them to add a cube to make the word 'slap'. Other such examples are *lip-slip; rat-brat; rim-brim; top-stop; rip-trip; rot-trot* etc. Check that they can remove the right cube to get back to the original word each time.
- You can get them to do these two steps with letters if you are sure they are familiar enough with the sound-letter correspondences in question.
- See if they can respond orally (without cubes/letters) to examples of words presented orally, e.g. "what do I add to 'top' to make 'stop'?" Can they tell you which phoneme is added and where. Also include examples (orally) of pairs like *low-slow; row-crow; ray-pray; rye-cry; way-sway* which might be too confusing or difficult to do with letter cards.

Now deal with adding an internal phoneme to create an initial blend:

- Ask pupils to make the word 'bat' using three cubes. Make sure they know which phoneme each cube stands for.
- Ask them to add a cube to make the word 'brat'! Other examples are: *Sam-slam; sit-slit; tap-trap; fat-flat; pan-plan; bed-bled* etc.
- See if they can do these steps using letter cards.
- See if they can respond orally without cubes or letter cards to examples of words presented orally, e.g. "What do I add to the word 'pan' to make 'plan'?" Again you can include words for oral work that may be too difficult to do with letters, e.g. *so-slow; bow-blow; sigh-spy; pay-pray* etc.
- Similarly work can be done on final blends. It is not necessary of course to cover all blends. Reflective work on a sample will give them a productive understanding of the system.

Children should be able to do letter-less and lettered versions of the above exercises, adding and subtracting cubes and letters until they are quite confident with encoding and decoding VC, CVC, CCVC, CVCC, CCVCC words. As our emphasis is on phonemic awareness, it is better not to make demands on them to use letter cards if you think they are not sure of the sound-symbol correspondences involved.

(ii) Deleting initial and final phonemes

Phoneme deletion games as described in Part 1 of the handout are popular with older children too. Present words (orally) without their first sound giving them the category as a clue, e.g. drinks and see if they can identify the original word and tell you what you've done to it (examples: '-ine' for 'wine'; '-uice' for 'juice'; '-oke' for 'coke'; '-offee' for 'coffee' etc). Finally see if they can present similar examples with the initial phoneme deleted. If not, they will need further practice at a receptive level with this type of exercise.

If children have managed the '**Sally Sound Snatcher**' games as in Part 1 of the handout, p7 they can be extended as follows:

Parts of the Body: When Sally Sound Snatcher took away the first sound from these words she was left with some part of your body. What part is it?

Snail (nail) Farm (arm) Pie (eye) Stow (toe)
Clip (lip) Stung (tongue) Fear (ear) Clap (lap)

Now Sally Sound Snatcher is going to steal sounds from the ends of words: If she changes 'beef' to 'bee' she's taken away the last sound /f/

What sound does she snatch if she changes 'toad' to 'toe'?; if she changes 'teeth' to 'tea'?; if she changes 'pipe' to 'pie'?; if she changes 'bean' to 'bee'?; if she changes 'peel' to 'pea'? etc.

Now ask what word Sally Sound Snatcher is left with when she takes the final sound from the following words: pain.....(pay) train.....(tray) tent.....(ten) bone.....(bow) safe.....(say) heel.....(he) tide.....(tie) etc.

Children's Names: Sally Sound Snatcher wanted to collect more children's names so she snatched the final sounds from the following words. What names did she make?

Joke (Joe) Soon (Sue) Cake (Kay) Face (Faye) Rain (Ray) Gate (Gay)
Join (Joy) Ant (Anne)

Deleting medial sounds is the most difficult form of phoneme deletion. 'Sound Wizard: Strategy-Building Games for Phonological Awareness' (Lenchner) has already been mentioned in Part 1 of this handout in relation to its decks of cards. It has a deck of picture cards with Elkonin boxes. On each card one of the boxes is black and the child has to delete that phoneme to pronounce a new word. Without such visual backup, deleting sounds can be difficult. Once children can do it easily with Elkonin boxes, you can present words orally for them to work out. 'Sound Linkage' (Hatcher) has one of the most comprehensive lists for this kind of aural/oral work. Examples: 'What sound can you hear in 'cloak' that is missing from 'coke'?; 'Say the word 'click' without /l/ sound in the middle'.

Nonsense Spelling tests

A good insight into pupils' phonemic awareness is got by giving children a nonsense spelling test. This is a test of both phonological awareness and sound-symbol awareness.

(a) The following list tests the child's phonemic awareness and sound-symbol awareness in CVC words:
gat; yef; mip; sot; nup; har; lem; hig; bon; mus.

(b) More difficult is a test involving blends as follows:

gron; cled; mond; fust; flant; brulk; spink; shrept; splant; sprift.

(c) A nonsense spelling test involving 'long' vowel sounds gives you an idea of how pupils 'view' what you present to them and you will see what strategies they are using to encode such words, e.g. if they are using rhyming words to help them spell. Of course in many cases there are a few acceptable ways of spelling.

shile; croat; spake; preed; flube; heech; waint; brool; grike; dreek.

Spelling Suggestions and Activities adapted from First Steps Spelling Resource Book

- Create a classroom environment that encourages risk taking and having a go.
- Value the child's effort.
- Encourage problem solving and use of resources.
- Print –rich environment- meaningful contexts- children should be encouraged to prepare and use these labels, signs, timetables, word banks etc
- Create Reading and Writing centres in the classroom
- Create class books- Maths, Science, Music, general interest
- Children partake in developing word banks eg high frequency words, visual or sound patterns, topic based, letter string patterns
- Record children's discoveries around spelling patterns, letter strings
- Provide a range of reference materials for checking spelling efforts
- Children use individual Have a go Pads and Spelling Journals
- Give children opportunities to **problem solve** relationships between sounds and symbols.
- Teacher models specific strategies during modelled and shared writing sessions
- During writing encourage children to write as much of the word as they can, tap out syllables, write out the word a few ways and choose one which looks best, refer to environment & reference materials
- Look, Cover, Say, Write, Check
- Look- examine word in detail- how many letters?, long/ tall letters?, doubles? Vowel patterns? Known strings? Words within words? Then visualise these features
- Use mnemonics- Because- Big elephants can always understand small elephants.

Spelling Journal (cf p. 12ff.)

- Children select and learn words from own writing. They can then set personal goals. Based on children's writing needs.
- Used as part of language programme- focus on the key features of the word
- Can use self-evaluation, partner testing and student- teacher conferences.

Activities

- **What Comes Next?** Like Hangman but letters must be chosen in sequence. Develops awareness of letter strings and combinations. Perhaps begin with children's names, short words and high frequency words.
- **Word Sorts.** Sort words using a given closed criteria- all words beginning with a specific blend eg dr/ all words with two syllables/ vowel sound eg ai. Open word sorts – child can decide criteria given word bank eg same sound represented by different letter patterns, irregular plurals,
- **Word Sort: Guess My Rule.** Given a group of sorted words child decides how they have been sorted eg all one syllable/ begin with same letter etc.
- **Word Sort: Tic Tac Toe.** Board with 3x3 sections and a word in each. Each player has eight word cards. Player makes a category with one of their words and a word on the board and places a marker on that square. First with three markers in a row wins.
- **Word Sort: Concentration.** Shuffle 16 word card and place them face down on table. Each player upturns 2 and tries to make a connection between them.

- **Word Sort: Rummy.** Players have 5 word cards each. They explain connections between their word cards and/or cards in the pack.
- **Word Sort: Snap.** Players can claim cards if they can justify connections between pairs.
- **Word Sort: Guess My Group.** Each child has ten words and must sort these into as many categories as possible.

Word Origins

Should be taught in context. Focus on a root from Greek, Latin or French eg aqua. Build up word banks and explore meanings of words with this root eg. aquamarine, aqueduct, aquatic. Can children deduce the meaning of aqua.

Words within Words: Pupils find smaller words within bigger.

Word Snakes: Focus on nouns/ verbs/adjective/adverb from reading material. Create word snake building on first word. The last letter of word is first of next. Squared paper can be used.

Word Squares: variation on above to create a square.

- Children practice writing words in a motivating way eg as steps or in designs (Spellamadoodle). The words have to be written correctly at least three times.
- Create and discuss alliteration sentences
- Add a letter: each child adds a letter to two letter word, each time creating a new word eg to, tot, tote, totem,
- Explore rhyming pairs
- Riddle Me Rees
- Word Building eg add another letter to was to create an insect
- Hide High frequency words during shared reading activity. Children write the word
- Jumble letters, blends and strings written on cards to create new words
- Use a quiz to encourage children to focus on words. Given a list of words can the child write the word that ends with “me”, has “one” in the middle etc.
- Compose alphabet rhymes with the class

Five Guidelines for Learning to Spell and Six Ways to Practice Spelling

By: Susan Jones (1999)

Five guidelines for learning to spell

1. Practice. Did somebody tell you practice made perfect? That's only if you're practicing it right. Practice makes permanent. Each time you spell a word incorrectly, you're 'practicing' the wrong spelling. So, if you're not sure how to spell the word, find out, *then* practice that spelling. Keep an ongoing notebook of words, so you have your own personal dictionary and you can see your progress. Start small, though!
2. Don't try to learn all the words at once. Even if you learn them all in one sitting, practice them a few at a time. Then, add another word to your list, or start on different ones. Each time you learn another word, go back and practice the ones you learned before it, because, after all, practice makes permanent.
3. Review the words you know. If you already know some of the words on your list, practice them each once or twice before you start tackling the ones you don't know yet. It's a good confidence booster (practice makes permanent!).
4. Use the words you've practiced. That's the point to learning them, anyway. Have a list of words you're learning handy, in a notebook, and you can look them up to make sure you're spelling them right. Besides, using them is practicing them, and practice...

Six different ways to practice spelling

1. "Trace, Copy and Recall"

- Make a chart like this with 3 or four spelling words you want to learn:

TRACE	COPY	RECALL
-------	------	--------

- Then fold over the "recall" part so that only the first two columns show:

Trace	Copy	Recall
word		

- Then
 - Say the word to yourself.
 - Trace it in the first column, saying the letters as you trace, and say the word again. You might put a little rhythm into it. ("WORD . W - pause - O - pause R-D - WORD!).
 - Go to the second column, say the word, and write it the same way.
 - Then, while the rhythm and the sound and the feeling are fresh in your mind, flip the paper over and say the word and spell it out -- the same way, saying each letter (because, after all, practice makes permanent).
 - If it's a hard word, put it on the list more than once. If you're feeling particularly smart, trace and copy TWO words, and try to remember them both before you flip the page over. However, if your short-term memory isn't big enough to hold all that, do one at a time because you want to practice the words RIGHT, not make guesses!
 - After you've gone through all the words this way a few times, start doing them two or three at a time, and when you feel like you know them, go through the list again. However, skip the tracing, or, when you're feeling VERY confident, skip both the tracing and the copying.

2. Reverse chaining by letter

1. Say the word. Then write it out, saying each letter aloud (see number one about putting rhythm into it). W - O - R - D
2. Skip a line and say it and write it again -- minus the last letter. Say the last letter, but don't write it. W - O - R - ____
3. Skip a line and say it and write it again -- minus the last two letters. Say them, but don't write them. W - O - ____ - ____
4. Do this until you're only writing one letter.
5. Go back to the top. Read the word, then spell it aloud.
6. Fold the page over so you can't see the whole word. Say the word, spell it, and add that last letter.
7. Fold the page back again. Say the word, spell it, and add the last two letters.
8. Keep going until you spell the whole word.
9. GO BACK AND CHECK and make sure you didn't leave out a letter!
3. Reverse chaining by syllable (this is harder and should be used for longer words)
 0. Say the word, then write it out, saying each letter aloud (see number one about putting rhythm into it). S-E-P-A-R-A-T-E
 1. Skip a line and say it and write it again -- minus the last syllable. Say the last syllable and spell it out loud, but don't write it. S-E-P-A-_____
 2. Continue until you aren't writing anything -- but continue to say the spelling aloud.
 3. Go back to the top. Read the word, then spell it out loud.
 4. Fold the page over so you can't see the whole word. Say the word, spell it, and add the last syllable.
 5. Fold the page back again. Say the word, spell it, and add the last two syllables.
 6. Continue until you spell the whole word.
 7. Go back and check and make sure you didn't leave out any letters!
4. 4. Highlighting the hard parts:

Some words, like separate, are only hard in some parts. You might be getting these right on a test -- but always spelling them WRONG when you write, frustrating you and your teachers. As practice makes permanent, every time you practice it incorrectly, you're making it more likely that you'll write it incorrectly the next time. This exercise should help you focus on the troublesome part of the word.

This is also helpful for learning rules and patterns. If you want to learn to spell IE words -- that "I before E" rule that so many people find so hard to use -- this is a good way to do it.

Get different color pens or pencils or markers, and index cards. Write the words boldly on the cards -- and make the difficult part of the word a different color than the rest. Make a mental picture of that card, read the word aloud and spell it aloud, and change the way you *say* the difficult part, perhaps saying it louder, or using a British accent. So, you'd write:

sepArate

believe

relieve

grieve

achieve

When you write the whole word, think about how the difficult part looks or sounds. So, while you're writing "separate," you might be thinking "sep AY rate" and/or that bold, red A.

Again, the keys here are to NOT overwhelm your brain -- don't try to learn five words at a time like this unless you've got an amazing visual memory. Better to do one word five times -- and start spelling it in your writing.

5. Using a tape recorder to test yourself, and to practice using them.

Pronounce the words correctly into a tape recorder. Record it like it's a spelling test (For example, you'd say " Separate. Put the papers in separate piles. Separate.")

6. Practising using the words in short phrases.

If separate is the word, see if you can think of 5 *different* phrases containing the word and write them out. For example: separate rooms, separate cars, separate houses, A Separate Peace. Or, try to use 20 of your words in the same story. You can get pretty silly!

Spelling

(Teaching & Learning Strategies For The Classroom)

Marguerite Mc Namara

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Introduction

There is a lot of educational discussion at the moment around the whole area of assessment. But did you know that spelling is probably the most tested area of the whole curriculum? It is also an area teachers are very concerned about. Within your school, you may find that even though children have mastered reading skills, spelling continues to present a problem. This may be due to too much emphasis devoted to word recognition and too little to writing. Spelling is an entirely different skill to reading and much more difficult to acquire.

Back To Basics!

(some points to remember)

- Spelling must be fun.
- Learning to spell is not learning lists of words every week.
- Words which cannot be read must never be taught as spelling. They are too difficult for the child.
- Spelling activities should be written – Oral Spelling is of little value
- Writing out spellings a number of times is a totally inefficient procedure.
- Spelling lessons should be daily, short & snappy.
- Do not spell out requested words letter by letter.
- Spelling must never be a barrier to childrens writing. We must not dampen a childs enthusiasm to write by always insisting on accurate spelling.
- Children should be encouraged to take risks and attempt unknown words. The value of invented/approximate spellings must be recognised. It is appropriate to encourage invented spelling particularly in the early stages of learning to spell.
- A Whole-School Approach to spelling is essential. We must look at the current methods used in each classroom and adopt an agreed approach so that changing teacher or class does not present difficulty to the child.

Learning High-Frequency Words

Children need to have a bank of known words that they can spell every time. Many of these words do not lend themselves to sounding out for correct spelling. Over-learning is the key to knowing how to write these words

High Frequency Words

The go he is in I me to a my and look it no we at be like
can see she up big on so you am by an come do for
going not got here his into some yes as are came down get
have her him little make off one out today went that this
play run jump

(“A Blueprint For Literacy Success” – Sandra Iverson)

Technique in teaching & learning spelling

(Let’s learn to spell “little”)

Children need to develop techniques for learning to spell the words they will need in their writing. They are unlikely to pick them up from their reading.

“look ‘n’say”

1. Show the word “*little*” to the child. The child must be trained to look carefully at the word. The word must be readily recognisable and pronounced correctly.
2. Child says the word “*little*”
3. Talk about the word
 - The teacher and the child examine how the word is made up.
“Is there anything unusual/striking about this word?”
“Can you see the double letters?”
“How many syllables does the word have? Let’s clap out the syllables & point to each one as we say it.
“Can you see a smaller word in the word?” – (The ability to see words within words & the similarity between words is essential for good spelling)
“How many letters in the word, show me the big/small letters, name the vowels, show me the letters at the beginning/middle & end of the word.

The following activities can be used for children who need extra support in spelling

- *Make the word using magnetic letters*
- *Read the word*
- *Break the word*
- *Remake the word*
- *Child copies word into copy*
- *Child traces over the word*

Cover

Child closes their eyes and tries to remember the word. Children must be trained to visualise words with their eyes shut “to see them inside your head”

Write

Ask the child to write the word without looking. The child says the whole word as they write. They should not sound out individual letters.

Check

- The child checks his word to see if it is correct. We use sight to check this.
- If an error is made, it often helps to underline it in colour the part of the word that presented difficulty
- The child then crosses out the misspelled word or covers it.
- The child writes the word again (I never allow children to merely correct the misspelled word, they must start again)-*children may peek at the word if necessary while they are learning to write it correctly.*

This approach is multi-sensory. The child uses its ears to hear the word, their voice to say it, their eyes to see it & their hand to write it. The biggest complaint is that children learn drill and then forget to use it when learning spelling. The drill should become routine and be practiced daily so it should become automatic.

Spelling Is Visual

English is not a regular language but it is systematic & patterned. Children learn to spell when they work out the system & pattern. As spelling is visual, learning to spell cannot follow a completely Phonic programme. The pattern in words must be visual. Words that look alike should be grouped together not sound alike:

Example :caught, daughter, taught

The focus must be on letter patterns. Instead of just learning *mat/hat, but/cut,* why not look at “*at*” patterns (letter strings), therefore include *ate, what*

We must teach words which look the same irrespective of their sound eg.

Come, home, some, women....

Children must be trained to look at words, see words within words and compare letter strings regardless of sound.

When a child asks you to spell a word for them, there is little benefit in calling out the letters one by one. Instead write down the word. Encourage the child to really look at the word. Remove the word and child attempts to

write the word for themselves. This emphasises the importance of writing from memory & the visual aspect of spelling. The speller who continues to rely on sound will not become a competent speller. As Smith (1985) states the worst spellers are the “*wuns hoo spel fonetikly*”

What Do Children Spell (Deciding Where To Start)

The content for the spelling could be taken from

- The child’s own writing – look at their current work, you do not need to note every spelling mistake in a piece of writing but look at the most pressing need.
- Theme words eg animals – cat, dog, cow.....
- Common words for everyday use – the, in, it.....
- Phonics: At an early stage words may be taken from The Phonological Awareness Programme.

A contribution of words from those areas listed above could make up the spelling list for a child.

The Friday Test!!!!

The child should not be aiming to do well on The Friday Spelling Test but rather improve their spelling in writing. While children may perform well in their spelling tests and their workbook assignments, unless there is an improvement in child’s writing, it is pointless. The “*five-a-night test on Friday*” routine is of little value to the weak speller. So what can we do? I agree Spelling must be checked. As spelling is a written activity, it must be checked in writing. There is little value in oral testing of spelling.

- Do not call the spelling check a test
- Do not mark every spelling wrong – underline the bit of the word that is incorrect
- Do not give long lists of mixed words to learn every week
- Do not do the check on Fridays only-it should be seen as part of your spelling class
- Do not make public any child’s results
- Do not make child write out corrections several times

Remember the ultimate test of learning to spell is correct usage.

Cf - Sample sheet for Spelling Check

Hints to make my classroom spelling friendly

Print Rich Environment

Children should be provided with a rich experience of environment print. The most important charts in the classroom are those created by the children. These should over the year include the following:

- Child's name (Christian & Surname)
- Relations
- County Name eg Clare, Sligo
- Places in their locality eg Tubbercurry, Kilmihil
- Favourite places
- Towns/Cities/Provinces
- Days/Months/Seasons
- Feasts
- Planets
- Trees
- Numbers
- Colours
- Shopping
- Story Words – *Once upon a time.....Happily ever after*
- Rhymes

Over the year charts should be made with the children on these various topics and displayed in the classroom. This is a way of building word banks.

Important Spelling Lists

Build up displays of the following:

- *pp* – happy, pepper, stopped, shopping
- *ough* – bought, rough, though
- *homophones* – sail/sale, peace/piece, buy/by
- *?* – when, where, why, what, who
- *qu* – quiet, inquiry, question
- *i&e* – sieve, niece, field, friend, receive, deceit
- *extra-exciting*, *excellent*, *expensive*
- *specials* – accommodation, because, answer, especially, necessary, usual

Fun With Foreign Words

Children love looking at foreign words. Display them on charts. Link to Geography Curriculum.

- *Greek* – Drama, medal, grotto, acrobat, psychology, encyclopaedia

- *Scottish* – craft, whiskey
- *Roman* – castle, campaign
- *Indian* – bungalow, pyjamas, curry, dungarees
- *German* –hamburger, kindergarten
- *French* – beef, pork, buffet, café
- *Spanish* – cigar, mosquito, rodeo, tornado

These words can be learned in context when you are studying the various countries.

Mnemonics

Mnemonics are very useful when learning to spell words that are difficult to learn as they help in remembering the spelling of the word.

- *piece* – have a piece of *pie*
- *could* – o u love doughnuts (other “ould” words : *should, shoulder, mould*)
- *friend* –fri is the *end* of the week
- *hear* – you *hear* with your *ears*
- *island* – An *island* is land
- *necessary* – has one *collar* & two *socks*
- *Principal* – The *Principal* is your *pal*
- *parallel* – has three *parallel* lines
- *business* – take a *bus* to your *business*
- *believe*- never believe a *lie*
- *special* – A *Special* Agent is someone in The *CIA*
- *separate* – has a *rat* in it
- *accommodation* – Colin & Carol *may marry*

Encourage the children to create their own mnemonics and share their ideas with others.

(Summary by Marguerite Mc Namara of docs by Neansai Bn Ui hEigeartaigh, S.N.Mhin Tine De, Ardara and information taken from "A Blueprint For Literacy Success" by Sandra Iverson, "Helping Children With Reading & Spelling" by Rea Reason & Rene Boote, "Show Them How To Write" by Mary Hodgson & "Dancing With The Pen".

Clocha Rince NS

Grammar and Punctuation Scheme

First class	Second class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Jolly Grammar 1</u> • Capital letters • Sentences • Proper nouns • Common nouns • Alphabetical order • 'a' or 'an' • Plurals - 's', 'es' • Pronouns • Verbs • Conjugating verbs • Past tense - 'ed' • Past tense - doubling rule • Future tense • Adjectives • Compound words • Adverbs • Antonyms • Speech marks • Alternative words • Questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Jolly Grammar 2</u> • Alphabetical order • Sentences • Speech marks • Questions • Commas in lists • Exclamation marks • Proper nouns • Adjectives • Plurals 's' and 'es', 's' and 'ies' • Possessive adjectives • Homophones - there, their, our, are • Adverbs • Verb 'to be' - past and present • Regular and irregular past tense • Using a dictionary • Proofreading • Expanding a sentence • Conjunctions • Using a thesaurus • Prefixes un, dis, mis, im • Apostrophe 's' • Contractions • Prepositions • Suffix 'ing', • Comparatives and superlatives 'er', 'est' • Commas in speech • Parsing
Third class	Fourth class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Jolly Grammar 3</u> • Using a dictionary • Parsing • Simple tenses • Third person singular - verbs ending in 'y' • Verb 'to be' - past, present and future • Syllables • Present participle • Present continuous • Proper nouns - places • Proper adjectives • Paragraphs • Speech marks • Future continuous • Suffixes 'less' and 'ful' • Contractions • Comparatives and superlatives • Adverbs - adding 'ly' to adjectives • Nouns acting as adjectives • Adjectives - adding 'y' to nouns • Irregular plurals • The subject of a sentence • The object of a sentence • Possessive pronouns • Homophones - their, there, they're, our, are • Questions and exclamations in speech • Prefixes • Collective nouns • Sentences and phrases • Verb tenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Jolly Grammar 4</u> • Verb tenses • The subject and object of a sentence • Homophones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your and you're - Its and it's - to, too and two - where, wear and were • Antonyms • Grammatical agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plural nouns - subject and verb • Synonyms • Concrete nouns • Abstract nouns • Possessive nouns - singular and plural • Present participles as adjectives • Comparatives and superlatives - more and less, good and bad • Suffix 'al' - making nouns into adjectives • root words, prefixes and suffixes • Grammatical person • Changing grammatical person • Parsing a verb • Questions and statements • Changing a statement into a question • Simple and compound sentences • Noun phrases • Phrases, clauses and sentences • Infinitives • Onomatopoeia • Hyphens

Fifth Class	Sixth Class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of speech and parsing • One word – different parts of speech e.g. clean as a noun and a verb • Sentence walls • Simple and continuous tenses • Irregular verb 'to have' • Past participles – regular • Perfect tenses • Contractions and the verb 'to have' • Past participles – irregular • Identifying verb tenses • Adverb placement • Proofreading • Prepositions • Prepositional phrases • Noun phrases as subjects and objects • Transitive and intransitive verbs • Prepositional phrases as adverbs • Phrasal verbs • Making verbs from nouns and adjectives • Nouns and verbs – ce, se, cy, sy • Adjective order • Adverbs of manner • Adverbs of degree and place • Adverbs of time and frequency • Adverbs describing other adverbs • Adverbs describing adjectives • Irregular plurals 'i' • Using a colon and bullet points in a list • Parentheses • Homophone mix-ups • Homographs and homonyms • Homographs and heteronyms • Antonyms and synonyms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and prioritise revision of grammar topics covered previously

Clocha Rince NS

Reading

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First Class	Second Class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decodable books • Oxford reading tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decodable books • Oxford reading tree • Ella Goes to the Airport • The Wrong Car • Globby Helps Out • The Beach House • Jolly Phonics tricky word list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finn's Dream • Four Friends • Two Little Frogs • 2 class novels • Oxford reading tree • Dolch list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Grumpy Teaspoon • The Green Genie • 2 class novels • Oxford reading tree • Dolch noun list
Third Class	Fourth Class	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Talking Horse • 2 class novels • Oxford reading tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Golden Harp • 2 class novels • Oxford reading tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call of the Sea • 2 class novels • Oxford reading tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Ice Cream • 2 class novels • Oxford reading tree

Clocha Rince NS **Handwriting Scheme**

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First Class	Second Class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre cursive lower case letters • k and f as per Jolly Phonics scheme • Curved w instead of pointed w • Just Handwriting Junior Infants • B2 handwriting copy • Pencil • Pupils will experience joined vowel and consonant digraphs as per Jolly Phonics scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre cursive lower and upper case letters • k and f as per Jolly Phonics scheme • Curved w instead of pointed w • Just Handwriting Senior Infants • B2 handwriting copy • Pencil • Pupils will experience joined vowel and consonant digraphs as per Jolly Phonics scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre cursive lower and upper case letters • k and f as per Jolly Phonics scheme • Curved w instead of pointed w • Just Handwriting 1st Class • B2 handwriting copy • Pencil • Pupils will experience joined vowel and consonant digraphs as per Jolly Phonics scheme • Pupils will begin to join vowel and consonant digraphs as per Jolly Phonics scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre cursive lower and upper case letters • k and f as per Jolly Phonics scheme • Curved w instead of pointed w • Just Handwriting 2nd Class • B2 handwriting copy with progression to B4 • Pencil • Pupils will experience joined vowel and consonant digraphs as per Jolly Phonics scheme • Pupils will join vowel and consonant digraphs as per Jolly Phonics
Third Class	Fourth Class	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of cursive • Write On 1 • B4 handwriting copy • Pencil • Pupils will begin to experience cursive writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cursive • Write On 2 • B4 handwriting copy • Pupils should have progressed to writing with a handwriting pen by the end of the first term of fourth class. • Pupils will experience cursive writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cursive • Write On 3 • B4 handwriting copy • Handwriting pen • Pupils will experience cursive writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluently writing in cursive • Handwriting pen • Pupils will experience cursive writing

Clocha Rince NS Creative Writing Scheme

Writing genres:

Term 1 September-December	Term 2 January - March	Term 3 April - June
Report	Procedural	Explanatory
Narrative	Writing to socialise	Persuasive
Recount		

The formal teaching of one individual genre will take place over 6-8 weeks during each term, while the remaining genres will be recapped on and revised.

	Term 1 September-December	Term 2 January - March	Term 3 April - June
JI	Report	Procedural	Explanatory
SI	Narrative	Writing to socialise	Persuasive
1st	Recount	Procedural	Explanatory
2nd	Report	Writing to socialise	Persuasive
3rd	Narrative	Procedural	Explanatory
4th	Recount	Writing to socialise	Persuasive
5th	Report	Procedural	Explanatory
6th	Narrative	Writing to socialise	Persuasive

7 steps to teaching a writing genre:

Step 1 – Familiarisation with the genre

Familiarising is a collective term. It describes the ways in which teachers raise children's awareness and activate their prior knowledge. It involves integration with reading and oral language, for example comparing samples of the genre, using sample displays, reading to and reading with students.

- Provide opportunities to read and view a variety of recount/report/persuasive texts
- Discuss and compare texts
- Build an awareness of the common features of recounts/reports/expositions by:
 - Talking about the purpose
 - Identifying the possible intended audience
 - Drawing attention to the text organisation
 - Highlighting the type of language used

Step 2 - Use an example to devise a framework

Children **analyse** one effective sample of the text form. Children **discover** the framework of a form of a text. Create a framework with key words/prompts for the genre e.g. in narrative: Title, setting, characters, problem, resolution.

Step 3 - Modelled Writing (teacher only)

The teacher 'thinks aloud' as he/she writes while the class observe. Teacher explains to the children that they should listen only. It is useful to use a red marker as a signal to children that they do not have to contribute. To ensure optimum engagement by the children it should be short and sharp - probably no more than 5 minutes. Teacher can lead into shared writing by changing to a blue marker.

Step 4 – Shared Writing

Teacher has the pen. Teacher continues to 'think aloud', but consults the children for ideas. Shared writing is an effective and non-threatening way to support children's writing and involves the teacher and the children writing together. Children volunteer parts of the story and the teacher writes it down on a flip chart or white board, thus modelling the writing conventions.

Teacher reads and re-reads the text to highlight the importance of events impinging on one another, an aspect of writing that young children find hard to master. Changing the colour of marker on the flip-chart to a blue marker perhaps acts as a signal to the children that they can contribute to this part of the lesson.

Shared writing provides the teacher with an opportunity to encourage/introduce language features of the text such as language of conviction in persuasive writing and because children are focusing on the thinking–composing process without the additional task of transcribing, shared writing frees their imagination and helps them gain confidence in writing independently. Children engage in talking, writing and reading within the genre.

Step 5 – Guided Writing

Children plan their writing in **pairs/groups** using the framework they have devised. In guided writing, the student does the actual writing and the teacher facilitates, guides, suggests, and encourages. This is a very worthwhile step before students are asked to write independently. Indeed all that is learned in shared writing is incorporated by students (with teacher guidance) in guided writing.

Although the holding of the pen or pencil has been switched from teacher to student, collaboration remains a part of the process as long as the student needs it. Yet, the ownership of the writing is always the student's. The teacher's role is to help young writers discover their own abilities by providing opportunities for choice and peer response. During guided writing the teacher demonstrates and conducts mini lessons, where appropriate, that help the students learn to draft, revise, and edit their writing.

Children compose with a partner or in a small group so that there is peer support as they write using the framework demonstrated by the teacher. The teacher's role is to guide and encourage students by giving explicit feedback that refers to the structural or language features required in the text form.

Supporting Students at Guiding Stage

- Allow students to work with others to compose a text
- Provide planning formats
- Break the task into manageable parts
- Provide practice on specific elements relevant to the form
- Provide assistance at key points
- Create opportunities to practice different forms across the curriculum

Step 6 – Independent Writing

Children plan and write their own piece including drafting, editing and redrafting.

- Children plan and write their own text.
- They may consult a partner or the group and/or the teacher at the planning stage.
- They write a first draft (framework) and proof read and check it with partner.
- Final draft is written for an audience.

Step 7 – Presentation to an Audience

Children write for real purpose and for real audience

- class/teacher/principal
- display
- family/friends
- publish on website
- Writing to firms/organisations
- ICT
- visitor

It is extremely important that children write for a real purpose at all stages and that they also write for a real audience. The Primary School Curriculum states that as children mature their audience should expand accordingly.

Infant Classes:

While Infant classes will not engage in all seven steps, they will be informally exposed to the genres and specifically engage in modelled and shared writing.

Implementation of a genre over a seven week timeframe:

Creative writing lessons will be taught weekly.

Week 1:

- Familiarisation - showing the children lots of examples of the genre
- Discovery (direct model) - engaging in focussed talk and discussion, questioning etc.
- Teacher models - teacher writes their own sample of that genre using their own ideas, not the children's

Week 2:

- Familiarisation
- Discovery (analysing text) - breaking down the text into its various subheadings etc.
- Teacher models - highlights the structure, the language features, grammar and so on.

Week 3:

- Modelled writing
- Shared writing - teacher writes the children's ideas

Week 4:

- Modelled writing
- Guided writing - using frameworks devised by teacher or the resource book

Week 5:

- Modelled writing
- Independent construction

Week 6:

- Modelled writing
- Independent construction
- Presentation to audience (reading it for different classes, hall display, school website, class book, parish newsletter etc)

Week 7:

- Independent construction
- Presentation to audience

Free Writing

Each class should have 10-15 minutes of free writing a number of times a week. Free writing should be just that, 10-15 minutes max where the children can write freely.

- It should be in a special copy.
- It should be dated.
- Children should be told beforehand that it will not be marked, corrected or criticised.
- Children may be given an opportunity to read what they have written to the teacher.
- The children can choose the topic although they may need some guidance in the beginning. Brainstorm all the different types of writing they can do – news, story, letter, list, menu, instructions, labels etc.
- There should be no pressure on children to “produce” an amount of writing.
- The reluctant writer may use pictures to convey a message

Promoting Independent Writing among Beginning Writers:

Strategies:

- ✚ Respond to the message children have written
- ✚ Encourage children to write for themselves each day
- ✚ Celebrate children's individual writing efforts and display writing
- ✚ Share real writing with children e.g. letters you receive
- ✚ Provide particular situations that enable children to write for a purpose e.g. letter to someone, birthday card ... Encourage children to write their own name on drawings and pictures
- ✚ Talk with children about their "writing" and encourage them to "read" it
- ✚ Encourage children to write and draw after hearing a story
- ✚ Encourage children to problem solve by working out how to write something, then praise their efforts

Some Contexts for Independent Writing:

✚ "The Writing Bag"

Equip a small "back pack" or school bag with interesting articles that could be used for writing:

- A range of plain, lined and coloured paper
- Recycled greeting cards
- Envelopes
- Pencils and felt pens
- Pencil sharpener and eraser
- An alphabet chart
- A brief note to parents to explain the function of the bag.

Encourage children to take turns to take the bag home for one night and return the next day to show and tell about the writing they have done at home.

✚ Personal Notebooks

Make small notebooks available for each child and encourage children to write in them

✚ "The Writing Centre" – see sheet

✚ "The Reading Corner"

- Picture dictionaries
- Paper and pencils
- Library cards
- Card for bookmarks
- Notebooks or charts for children to record their names

✚ "The Class Shop/The Doctor's Surgery/The Fire Station/The Home Corner/ The Post Office"

Source: *"First Steps" – Writing*

Getting Under Way with Writing

Six Guidelines for Writing:

1. Expect that the children will write
2. Ensure that the children have a pencil in their hand and are writing messages every single day
3. Designate time for writing messages that is not handwriting instruction


4. Use authentic contexts to model and demonstrate writing
5. Work from what children can do and progress them
6. Know the 4 main strategies children need to become independent writers:
 - i. Hearing and recording sounds in words
 - ii. Spelling some words correctly every time
 - iii. Making orthographic analogies – using known spelling patterns to spell unknown words i.e. dependable rimes
 - iv. Using people and resources to help i.e. teacher, peer, word wall, personal dictionary

High Frequency Words


The following words are those that children use most often in their writing

**The go he is in I me to a my and look
 it no we at be like can see she up big
 on so you am by an come do for going
 not got here his into some yes as are
 came down get have her him little make
 off
 one out today went that this play run jump**


Two common problems that some young children can face when asked to write every day – *generating* a message and generating a *different* message each day.


-  Shared Experiences e.g. planned and unplanned experiences, imaginary events, investigates and talkabouts

Procedure: Decide on shared experience – allow children to talk freely about it – shared composition of class story – shared reading of story – encourage children to write their own responses to the experience (independently or using class story as a support) – encourage sharing of stories – publish and display

-  Innovations on Existing Stories, Patterns or Themes e.g. renaming characters, adding episodes, changing endings, and writing own version of same story, writing new story using same structure, writing a whole new story. If you are using innovations with very young children you may need to isolate just one sentence from the book for innovation.

Procedure: Read story you will use for innovation – isolate part you are going to change – decide which words you will change e.g. Monster, Monster, big and hairy – decide whether you will change the noun or adjectives – write the sentence on a chart – children supply new words – record the new words above or below – read the new innovations (mix and match) – invite children to write and illustrate their own innovations – some may write completely new innovation, others still require support of class model – share innovations – publish and display

-  Write about a story you have just read independently

-  Use sentence starters to write about stories that have been read-alouds, guided, or independent reading

- ✚ Invite children to retell stories in their own words
- ✚ Have the children write from a model following a demonstration, such as short poem
- ✚ Encourage the children to write from a literacy model, e.g. simple information report or procedure
- ✚ Have the children write for different purposes, such as signing in at school or thank-you letters to parents for birthday and Christmas presents
- ✚ Have the children make lists, such as “Things I have to do today”

Source: “*A Blueprint for Literacy Success*” – by Sandra Iversen

- ✚ Journal Keeping - Encourage children to keep a journal (Jun Inf – journal consists of blank pages, after Christmas, change journal to type that has pages with blanks and specified lines for writing) – as children are writing in their journals, discuss their writing, help them label their pictures or encourage them to sound out words they are trying to write. Share 3 or 4 journals after the session – respond to their journal entries in writing

Modelling is important to achieve this

A writer’s workshop including three main parts:

Teacher Demonstration – The teacher does a sample journal entry on a particular topic, drawing an illustration and telling the story behind the illustration as she draws. She then writes words to accompany her illustration. A minilesson may be included in this demonstration.

Independent student writing time – Students work quietly writing their own journal entries.

Sharing – Students share their journal entry with their peers and the teacher.
is effective in fostering the growth of beginning writers

Writing Stimuli

- Personal diary /Nature Diary.
- Poetry writing e.g. limerick /acrostic etc.
- Class Post-box /Pupils write to one another for a specific purpose.
- Make Party invitations / Greeting cards
- Lists e.g. for party, e.g. guests, food, games to play etc
- Write a joke book (clarify boundaries).
- Write a quiz on a particular topic.
- Write a set of directions.
- Barrier games e.g. using the language of directions
- Agree class rules /Arrange in poster form/ Decorate& Display
- Give a sentence – each child writes for 5 minutes starting with that sentence.
- Give 6 to 8 words – build a story around them.
- Give 3 props- orally create a story and then write story
- Letters of thanks, complaint, invitation.
- Display pupils' written work – writing corner, corridor display, school anthology / newsletter.
- Create book covers/ blurb for back of book/ book review
- Pupils read written work aloud to class, assembly.
- Write-a-Book.
- Create boxes of facts etc. for projects.
- Collect and display good story starters
- Sequence events. Reconstruct a sequence of events from jumbled paragraphs.
- Paired / group writing.
- Write a book for younger family member / younger classes.
- E-mail pen pal, friend, other school.
- Provide middle of story – tease out beginning and conclusion.
- Use rough work drafts before presenting final copy after discussion with teacher.
- Earmark weeks for poetry, letters etc.
- Read a story to the class and ask them to write a summary.
- Re-write familiar story omitting one central character.
- Take a paragraph from a familiar story / piece and re-write in own words.
- Make lists of alternatives for “tired” words e.g. “said”

- Add adjectives/ adverbs to enhance meaning of simple sentences
- Sentence combining-from simple to more complex sentences
- Using problem solving method class creates rules for using direct speech/ punctuation rules/ rules for use of capital letters etc
- Present research on a topic in a variety of ways, e.g. chart with illustrations and notes; picture book with explanation; model with notes etc
- Select a famous person whom you would like to interview and select questions you would, ask.
- Choose someone in the school. Teacher writes a “Who am I”, description-children try to guess who it is.
- Riddles- Read, discuss and write new riddles
- String writing
- Improvise letters, telegrams, cards
- Feel the object, describe identify and write about it.
- I would like to be a e.g. giraffe, lake, waterfall, river, ocean etc
- Write to a manufacturer whose product or packaging is unsatisfactory.

Clocha Rince NS

Reading Comprehension Scheme

Pupils will be explicitly taught a range of comprehension strategies:

<u>Term 1</u> <u>Sep - Dec</u>	<u>Term 2</u> <u>Jan- Mar</u>	<u>Term 3</u> <u>Apr - June</u>
Creating images Skimming Scanning Self - questioning	Connecting Comparing Inferring Predicting	Synthesising Determining Importance Summarising and Paraphrasing

Gradual Release of Responsibility

In teaching these comprehension strategies, teachers will use the gradual release of responsibility model. This involves modelling, sharing, guiding and applying.

Role of the Teacher	Modelling The teacher demonstrates and explains the strategy being introduced. this is achieved by thinking aloud the mental processes used when using the strategy	Sharing The teacher continues to demonstrate the use of the strategy inviting pupils to contribute ideas	Guiding The teacher provides scaffolds for pupils to use the strategy. Teacher provides feedback	Applying The teacher offers support and encouragement as necessary
Degree of control			Pupils work with help from the teacher and peers to practise the use of the strategy	The pupils work independently to apply the strategy in context across the curriculum
Role of the student	The pupils participate by actively attending to the demonstrations	Pupils contribute ideas and begin to practise the use of the strategy in whole-class situations		

Writing Poetry Throughout the Primary School

- **It is important that children have the opportunity to hear, read, write and enjoy poetry on a regular basis.**
- **When writing poetry allow the children to work as a whole class, in groups and pairs as well as individually.**
- **Model writing the different types of poems**
- **Give children plenty of opportunity to see and discuss the style of poem you have selected before writing it themselves. Photocopy and laminate poems and have them in your room.**
- **Give children the opportunity to present their work.**

In the following document we look at various styles of poems for the different classes. These can be adapted for your classes but they need to be developed as children move up through the school.

Junior and Senior Infants

(In most instances the teacher will act as scribe for poetry writing in infant classes, and poems will generally be collaborative class poems)

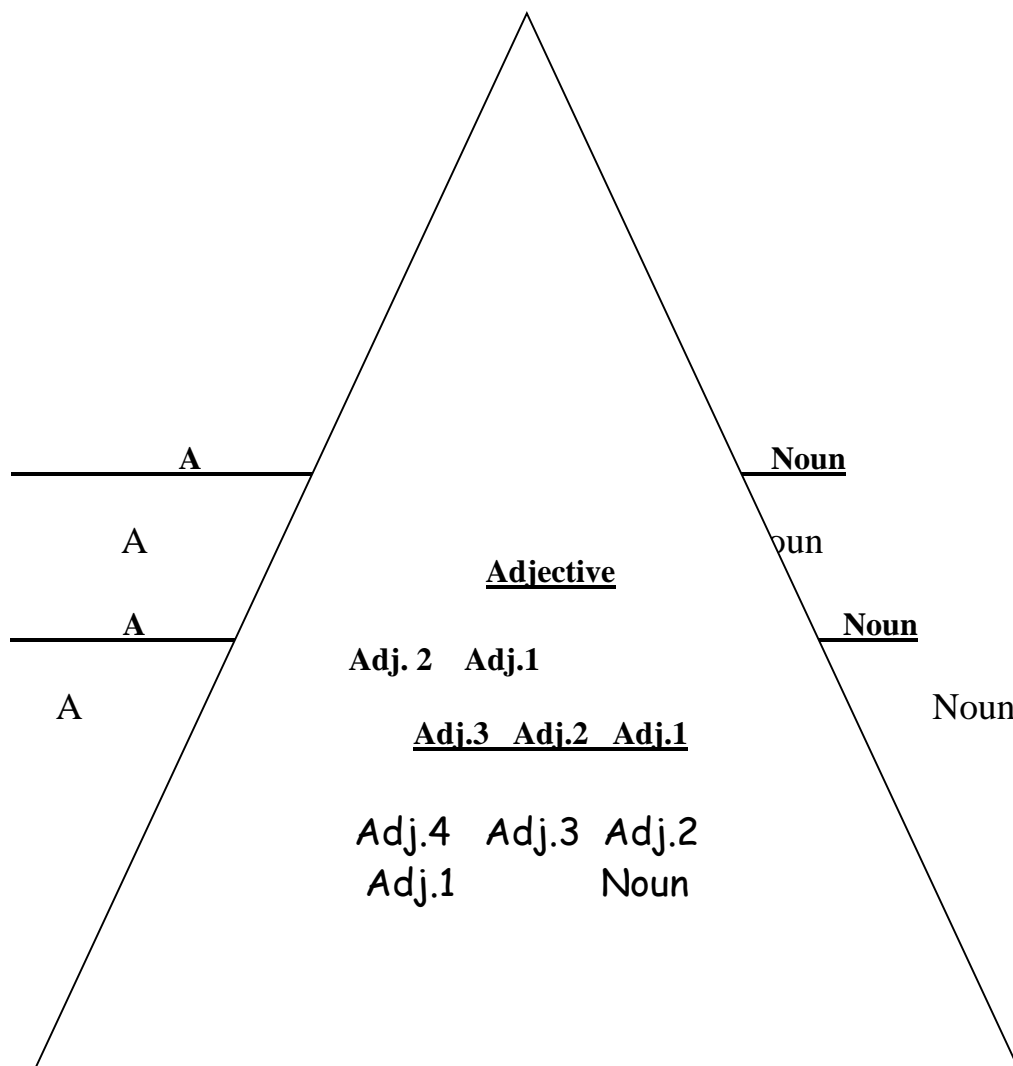
Onomatopoeic Poems

Onomatopoeic Poems are sound poems and are ideal way for young children to think about objects, people, animals, birds etc and the sounds they make. Children would need plenty of preliminary work before creating the poem and it may link with oral language, a story that has just been read, an excursion etc

E.g. The Supermarket

Trolleys banging,
Mammies talking,
Music playing,
Babies crying,
Registers ringing,
I want to go home.

Pyramid Poems



In Pyramid poems get the children to describe the chosen topic using one adjective in the first line, then two adjectives in the second line and so on. The children can add as many lines as they wish, with a short sentence at the end to round off the poem. It is a good idea to begin this activity by creating a bank of adjectives. The following example is based on the story *Can't You Sleep Little Bear* by Martin Waddell.

Bear

A little bear

A cute, little bear

A tired, cute, little bear

A scared, tired, cute, little bear

Go to sleep little bear

First and Second

Acrostics

Write the title vertically on the left hand side of the page, each letter represents a word and can then be added to form a sentence. For younger children you can begin by using their name, mammy, daddy, pets, animals, birds, seasons etc. Develop the theme for older children by using feeling/emotions or other abstract ideas. Also, encourage older children to incorporate such elements as rhyme or alliteration into their work. Encourage children to use sentences or phrases, and demonstrate the technique of run-on lines to them.

Gardening all of the time

Rubs my knee when I fall,

And makes yummy scones.

Never gives out,

Never complains,

Yes I love my granny.

Rhyming Couplets

Teachers can begin using rhyming couplets with infant classes but children need a lot of practice with rhyming words. Nursery rhymes are a great place to start; rhyming couplets can also be linked to phonological awareness or with rhyming poems and stories. Begin by reciting common nursery rhymes to the children, but change the last word on the first line. Prompt the children to fill in a word that rhymes with this e.g.

Humpty Dumpty went to the shop
To buy himself a ...lollipop/spinning top

Humpty Dumpty bought a hat
In it was a big black ...cat/rat

Jack and Jan (Dan, Gran, Stan, Ann)
Went to ...Japan,
To see aman in a caravan

Or just make up your own rhymes. It is important to brainstorm rhyming words with the children before you begin e.g. bear, there, where, lair, mare, hair, chair, glare, pear, pair, stair, tear, wear etc

Deep in the wood was a grumpy bear
Who sat all day in a gloomy lair...

I saw a lovely young red fox
With a black tipped tail and white, white socks.

Alphabet Poems

Good precursors to alphabet poems are oral language games such as the Minister's Cat. These develop children's use of adjectives.
The minister's cat is an awful cat

The minister's cat is a beautiful cat
The minister's cat is a creepy cat etc.

This game can also be played using the names of the pupils

My name is Deirdre and I like doughnuts

My name is Tom and I hate tomatoes etc.

Or

My name is Ita and I am in Italy (countries)

My name is Mary and I eat marmalade (food)

This depends on the level and ability of the class

There are numerous different forms of alphabet poems. In the example below we focus on verbs but you can create a poem using adjectives, nouns etc. The poems don't have to rhyme

The Playground

A asked to go to the loo

B bounced a ball

C crawled under the fence

D danced round Paul

Other themes could include the picnic, the school trip, the classroom, the exam etc.

Adapting the theme for senior classes

ABC Books allow children to choose a word for each letter of the alphabet and describe it in some way. As a class you may wish to focus on a theme e.g. animals, insects, countries, flowers, feelings etc

A is for anger and gritting my teeth

B is for blushing and making silly mistakes

C is for cranky when I don't get my way...

Group Poems

In the following poem the title of the poem is taken and repeated throughout the poem. This ensures structure and rhythm in the poem. It is an ideal form to create with a group or even your whole class and also is ideal for class performance or choral speaking afterwards. Innovative children or teachers could even create rap versions of these poems!

In the Playground

We run around

In the Playground.

We swop lunches

In the Playground.

We play chasing

In the Playground

Free Poems

It is important that children remember that poems don't always have to rhyme in order to be a poem.

Similarly we don't always have to tell children to write a poem for them to express themselves poetically. A young six year old wrote the following piece in her nature copy. She had not been asked

to write a poem but when the teacher saw the piece she praised the child for the beautiful poem, and, of course, the child was delighted. You may have opportunities within your own class that can highlight children writing (or even speaking) poetically.

Flowers come with nature.

Trees come with nature.

We come with nature. (Amy, age 6)

Colour Poems

Colour poems can be written and developed right through the school. When writing colour poems with junior classes just repeat the colour at the beginning of each sentence. Get the children to brainstorm things that are this colour e.g.

Black

Black is my cat.

Black is granny's stove.

Black is my shiny shoe.

You can add variety to the structure by beginning every second line with 'And'...

Black is my cat

And the sky at night.

Black is my granny's stove

And the opposite of white.

You can also focus on themes when writing this sort of poetry e.g. Friends are, autumn is ... etc

Adapting the theme for Senior Classes

War is.., Hunger is ... etc. When working with the older classes you don't have to repeat the colour/theme at the beginning of each sentence. In addition, rather than constantly thinking of solid objects ask the children to think of things that the colour/object/theme represents e.g.

Black

The old mine degenerating in the dead of night,

The exposed body lying helplessly on waste ground,

An engulfing darkness in a maze of winding passages,

A dagger of evil stained with blood,

A cold and lingering silence

Third and Fourth Classes

Adjective or String Poems

In this instance we repeat the title three times on the first and last lines of the poem and at the end of each line in the poem. The poem can be as long or as short as you want. For younger children, the words may be of just one syllable but in order to develop this type of poem for the middle classes and senior classes you can ask for two and three syllable words also. You can also ask that all of the adjectives in each line begin with the same letter e.g.

Pirates

Pirates, Pirates, Pirates,

Big, beefy, burly pirates,

Dark, dour, dangerous pirates,

Mean, mucky, massive pirates

Pirates, Pirates, Pirates,

A variation of this poem is to use verbs and adverbs e.g.

Sailing

*Sailing, sailing, sailing
Silently sailing,
Swiftly sailing,
Surely sailing
Sailing, sailing, sailing*

UP and DOWN POEM

This is a variation on Acrostics, and can be used with the older classes. To begin, **choose one key word as the focus** - e.g. slavery, Peace, freedom, etc. **Brainstorm** related key words - adjectives, adverbs, feeling words, power words, etc. **Write the word DOWN the middle of the page**, (one letter per line). Students can write individually, in pairs or in small groups. **Fit words and phrases around the letters** by choosing your own words, or by using the brainstorm list to help. The idea is that each letter from the key word becomes incorporated into the word or phrase going across. The one rule is that the first line and the last should be connected in some way - same word or same sentiment. A more difficult exercise is to write the title down the right side of the page, so that all the lines of the poem end with those letters.

HOMEWORK

Horrible stuff,
cOmpletely disgusting, in fact!
Makes
mE
Want to
gO and find a
"Real job"..
Nah, I don't thinK so!!

Sausage Poems

Sausage poems are lots of fun. In these poems the last letter in the first word is the same as the first letter in the second word and the last letter in the second word is the same as the first letter in the third word and so on.

Before you begin, play Word Tennis Pairs It's a great oral language game and a good introduction to these types of poems.

Word Tennis Pairs (countries) e.g. EnglanD, DenmarK, KenyA etc.

Examples of Sausage Poems:

HoW Would DangerouS SnakeS SnaP PetrifieD DonkeyS?

HippoS Swop PyjamaS SO OfteN No-onE EveR RememberS

Now try writing the poems so that the last letter of the last word is the same as the first letter of the first word. This is known as a circle sausage poem.

Riddle Poems

Riddle poems can be just two lines long e.g.

I am a see-through pear
Hanging from my tree-less branches
Answer: Light bulb
(Puskin)

However there are riddles that have a standard format

Line 1: Clue about the subject

Line 2: Hint using an adjective and a noun

Line 3: Two actions connected with the riddle

Line 4: Last clue in the form of a phrase/statement

Line 5: Answer to the riddle

Character poems

(Character first name) _____
Lives _____ where _____
Hears _____,
Sees _____,
Touches _____,
Needs _____,
Fears _____,
Gives _____,
Wonders _____,
Dreams _____,
Believes _____,
Loves _____ and
Is _____.
(last name of character)

An example of a character poem:

Frodo
Lives in Bag End where he
Hears horses' hooves,
Sees black riders gallop,
Touches the one ring to rule them all,
Needs to save the Middle Earth,

*Fears the Orcs,
Wonders if he can fulfil his quest,
Dreams of home,
Believes in Gandalf's magic
Loves Bilbo, and
Is strong enough to defeat all enemies.
Baggins*

Limericks

In limericks lines one, two and five rhyme; and lines three and four rhyme.

*Last week a young dog from Dun Laoighaire A
Felt miserable, tired and so teary. A
He went to the vet B
Who said not to fret B
A good bone would make him less weary. A*

It is a good idea to get children into the habit of tapping out the rhythms of Limericks. A good limerick is as dependent on its rhythm as on its rhyme.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

Kennings

A title or topic is chosen and children describe it in other ways without using the name.

Storm

An angry sky-god
A lightening-thrower
An electricity-charge
A tree-destroyer

Alliteration Poems

For the middle classes poems with alliteration can be scaffolded. Here the children are given sentences that may act as starting points, e.g.

*Sat at the top of the tallest tree
Watching the badgers bustling busily
Watching the squirrels scrambling skilfully...*

Other starters could include –

1. Down at the bottom of the deep blue sea
Down by

2. Soaring upwards in a Summer sky
Over/above the

Using numbers can help children create playful alliterative jingles and verses -

*One waggly walrus won a wet wager
Two trustful twins tumble in a typhoon,
Three thin thoroughbreds thumped a thick thief ...*

Cinquains

The form of a cinquain is five lines of 22 syllables: Two, four, six, eight and two. The short last line with only two syllables needs to make some impact. The lines can run on and it is often better if they do

Barbershop quartet
I saw
Four alley cats
Sitting in tin dustbins
And banging the lids together
Loudly

Here is another suggestion for 5 line poems. It is sometime called a cinquain, but strictly speaking is not.

Line 1: 1 noun

Line 2: 2 related adjectives

Line 3: 3 descriptive gerunds (verb + -ing)

Line 4: 1 complete, related sentence

Line 5: 1 noun (a synonym of first noun)

War

War

Sad, destructive

Killing, injuring, destroying

A thing that kills life.

Terminator

Diamante Poems

Line 1: 1 noun (a)

Line 2: 2 adjectives to describe the noun (a)

Line 3: 3 gerunds (verb + ing) (what you do in/with noun)

Line 4: 2 nouns linked with a + 2 nouns linked with its antonym (opposite) (b)

Line 5: 3 gerunds (verb + ing) to describe noun (b)

Line 6: 2 adjectives to describe noun

(b)

Line 7: noun (b)

Seasons

Winter

Rainy, cold

Skiing, skating, sledding

Mountains, wind, breeze, ocean

Swimming, surfing, scuba diving

Sunny, hot

Summer

Haiku

This is a traditional form of Japanese poetry consisting of three lines of 17 syllables as follows: Line one – 5 syllables, Line two – 7 syllables, Line three – 5 syllables

A broken oak branch
In the dark and soggy wood
Supports my trip home

Haikus also provide an opportunity to point out the importance of titles. A title should add something to a poem, and with haiku, the extra syllables you can gain by giving a title can be very useful.

Assessment

Oral Language

- Drumcondra Oral Language profiles on all children at the beginning of the year and review at the end of the year.
- Listener and speaker skills. Choose from teacher checklists, self-assessment, peer assessment etc.
- At least one text type will be assessed during the year at each class level:

JI	SI	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Oral reports	Storytelling and anecdotes	Giving instructions/procedures	Conversations	Questioning and interviews	Arguments and formal/informal debates	Oral reports	Arguments and formal/informal debates

Reading

- Phonics checklists - infant classes
- Sight vocabulary checklists - Senior Infants - 2nd Class
- Jolly Phonics assessment - infant classes
- MIST - Senior Infants
- Dyslexia screener - 2nd Class
- Micra-T - 1st-6th Class

Writing

- One handwriting sample will be assessed each term
- One creative writing sample will be assessed each term from 1st - 6th Class

	Term 1 September- December	Term 2 January - March	Term 3 April - June
1st	Recount	Procedural	Explanatory
2nd	Report	Writing to socialise	Persuasive
3rd	Narrative	Procedural	Explanatory
4th	Recount	Writing to socialise	Persuasive
5th	Report	Procedural	Explanatory
6th	Narrative	Writing to socialise	Persuasive