

Improving Writing

Dear Parents,

In order to help the children to improve their writing, we have been focusing on four key elements of writing that ALL creative writing should aim to use and which are applicable to many non-fiction areas of writing also.

These are:

- Vocabulary (V) – the words that we use.
- Connectives (C) – the words we use to link phrases into longer sentences and to link one sentence to the next.
- Openers (O) – how we start our sentences.
- Punctuation (P) – the range of punctuation used.

In School we use a 'pyramid' which has ideas on for each of these aspects which the children are encouraged to 'steal' and use in their own writing. The top of the pyramid is the most basic level and the further down each side you go, the greater the complexity of the VCOP.

For homework we would like the children to make their own VCOP pyramid which they can keep and use at home. They will need to follow the instructions below to do this.

How to make my VCOP Pyramid

1. Cut out the pyramid shape.
2. On the reverse of the side with 'first, because' etc. at the top write 'Vocabulary'.
3. On the reverse of the side with 'and' at the top write 'Connectives'.
4. On the reverse of the side with 'the, my, I' at the top write 'Openers'.
5. On the reverse of the side with a full stop at the top, write 'Punctuation'.
6. Colour each side
 - Level one (at the top) is red.
 - Level two (second down) is orange.
 - Level three (third down) is light blue.
 - If there are five levels on the side, then the fourth level is dark blue.
 - Final level (level four or five) is green.
7. Fold the pyramid along the triangular sides (not the horizontal lines) and tape together with the sellotape on the reverse.

Please can you encourage your child to refer to their VCOP pyramid whenever they are doing any writing at home, whether it be for English homework or writing in another curriculum area. At School, when the children have completed a piece of work, they are asked to check their work in relation to VCOP and then to highlight examples of VCOP that they are particularly proud of. It would be helpful if you could encourage this routine at home also.

We strongly feel that looking at writing in terms of these four elements gives the children specific elements to focus on which can very easily improve the overall standard of their writing.

We would greatly value your support as always in helping your child to make the best possible progress that they are capable of.

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