

Helping Your Reception or Year 1 Child to Write

Here you will find lots of ideas to encourage your child to write, whether they are a reluctant writer or enjoy it already and want to do more. Children are far more likely to write willingly if they can see there is a purpose for their writing and all these stimuli offer such a purpose.

While your child is writing, don't get too hung up on spelling or punctuation. If they are using the sounds they know to write words which you can read, then this is fine. It is far better to encourage children to use great vocabulary that is spelt incorrectly, than to stick to safe words they already know how to spell.

Before your child starts to write, do lots of talking about what they are going to write. 'Feed' them useful vocabulary and encourage them to use this in their writing.

Before you start...

Make an enticing writing area. Provide a range of writing implements, paper and other accessories for your child to choose from.

Write a shopping list. Plan your child's favourite meal and talk about the ingredients that you will need to buy. Ask your child to list the things you need from the shops, then go shopping together and let your child hold the list, marking off each item as you put it in your trolley.

Write a letter. This can be to a fictional character, a favourite popstar/celebrity or a member of the family. Talk about what to include in the letter, then put it in an envelope, address it, buy a stamp and post it. See if you get a reply.

Make a 'Wanted' poster. Share a story that includes a well-known 'baddie' such as the Big Bad Wolf from 'Little Red Riding Hood' or the troll from 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Talk about the baddie in the story and make a list together of words you could use to describe him. Then, imagine the police are looking for the baddie. What would the 'Wanted' poster look like? Make the poster, including a picture and descriptive information. This can be as simple as 'He is bad', 'He is ugly', or could even include a description of the baddie's crimes.

Write a postcard. If you are on holiday or away for the weekend, let your child choose a postcard to send home to a friend or relative. Talk together about what we usually write on a postcard and share great descriptive words about your location, the weather and so on. Let your child write the postcard, then go together to purchase a stamp and post the card.

Keep a diary. Take your child to buy a lovely notebook or diary with space to write each day. Talk together at the end of the day about what to write. Some children may wish to write lots, but if your child is at the 'one sentence' stage, ask them to write down the one thing they remember about the day, or the best thing that happened.