

EAL & NEW ARRIVALS · GRADES 2–6

EAL Writing Frames

Six levels of support

Picking the right level

Match the frame to the child's current English. Don't aim too high — frustration kills writing. Don't aim too low — boredom kills writing. The right frame is one where the child can complete it independently in 10–15 minutes with mild stretching. Move up a level every few weeks as the child gains confidence.

Level A — Copy and complete (newest arrivals)

TASK: A picture is provided. The child writes one or two words to label it. EXAMPLE — Things in my classroom: [picture of book] This is a _____. [picture of chair] This is a _____. [picture of pencil] This is a _____. For children with virtually no English. Success = correct word in the gap. Don't worry about handwriting, capital letters, full stops yet.

Level B — Sentence completion

TASK: Most of the sentence is given. The child completes it with their own answer. EXAMPLE — My family: My name is _____. I live in _____. My mum's name is _____. I have ___ brothers and ___ sisters. My favourite thing to do is _____.

Level C — Sentence stems

TASK: A starter is given. The child completes the rest of the sentence. EXAMPLE — My weekend: On Saturday, I _____. Then we went _____. It was _____. On Sunday, I _____. My favourite part was _____.

Level D — Frame with vocabulary support



TASK: A loose frame with vocabulary suggested at the side. EXAMPLE — A trip to the seaside: Last weekend, I _____. I saw _____. The weather was _____. My favourite part was _____. Useful words: walked, played, swam, sandy, sunny, windy, wet, dry, exciting, fun, tired

Level E — Open writing with success criteria

TASK: A topic and 3-4 success criteria. The child writes freely. EXAMPLE — Write about a person you admire. Success criteria: • Their name and your relationship to them • Two things you like about them • An example of something they did • A reason why they are important to you At this level, the child writes freely but with structure.

Level F — Independent

TASK: The child writes independently with the same task as the rest of the class. Provide a vocabulary list before the lesson if needed (pre-teaching). At this level, the EAL child is essentially working with the rest of the class, with light vocabulary support but no special frame. Writing will still have grammar errors that may persist for years — this is normal and not a failure of teaching.

Marking EAL writing

Don't try to correct everything. Pick ONE thing to focus on. If the child has written a beautiful piece with grammar errors, praise the meaning and content. Choose one grammatical pattern (e.g. past tense -ed endings) to address next time. Constant correction makes children stop writing — and you can't improve writing they don't do.

