



Progression of Narrative Writing

Narrative is central to learning, especially for young children who develop their understanding through making up stories about what has happened and what might happen. Children use narrative to organise their ideas, structure their thinking and, ultimately, their writing. Telling and writing stories is not simply a set of skills for children to learn, but an essential means for them to express themselves in creative and imaginative ways.

Progression in Narrative Texts

The purpose of narrative can be defined simply as to tell a story. However, that does not convey the many purposes of stories and the way that they work at different levels. The purpose of a narrator is to make the listener or reader respond in a particular way. Stories are written or told to entertain and enthrall an audience. Stories can make us sad, horrify us, make us laugh, make us excited. They create imaginative worlds that can help us understand ourselves and the things around us and take us beyond our own experience. From the earliest times, stories have been a part of the way that people have explained their world, passed on their beliefs and memories and entertained one another

Common forms of narrative text:

Stories that use predictable and patterned language

Traditional and/or folk tales

Fairy tales

Stories set in familiar settings

Retellings of stories heard and read

Retelling simple stories in different ways (extending the narrative; using technology; rewriting narrative poems as prose, turning prose into a script or vice versa etc.)

Modifying well-known stories (changing a character; amending the ending; changing the setting etc.)

Stories set in historical contexts

Myths and legends

Stories with flashbacks

Stories set in fantasy worlds

Stories from different cultures

Science fiction stories

Adventure stories

Mystery stories

Scary stories

Narratives retold from another perspective (e.g. from the point of view of a different character)

Stories with morals or fables

Stories with dilemmas

Stories told as playscripts

Telling a story from a first-person narrative (e.g. diaries and letters)

Narrative Texts in Year 1		
Generic text structure	Grammatical features	Planning and preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple narratives and retellings are told/ written in first or third person. • Simple narratives are told/ written in past tense. • Events are sequenced to create texts that make sense. • The main participants are human or animal. • Simple narratives use typical characters, settings and events whether imagined or real. • 'Story language' (e.g. once upon a time, later that day etc.) may be used to create purposeful sounding writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories are often written in the third person and past tense e.g. Goldilocks ate the porridge; Goldilocks broke the chair; She fell asleep in Baby Bear's bed. • Personal recounts and retellings often use the first person and past tense, e.g. I had tea at my Granny's house on Saturday; We went to the park after school. • Sentences are demarcated using full-stops, capital letters and finger spaces. • Use of conjunctions e.g. and ... to join ideas and create variety in the sentence structure. • Use of exclamation marks to indicate emotions such as surprise or shock e.g. Help! Oh no! • Question marks can be used to form questions, e.g. I said to Mum can I have a biscuit? Who are you? Said the wolf. • Use of the personal pronoun 'I' to retell personal narratives, e.g. I went to the park yesterday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to stories and narrative texts that use the features required for the writing. • Think about the intended audience and the purpose of the story (e.g. to scare, amuse, teach a moral...) so that plans are shaped to satisfy the audience and purpose. • Make plans and props based on the story or narrative that has been shared. • Recognise and use 'story language' e.g. Once upon a time, later that day, happily ever after etc. • Tell and retell stories orally using props and plans for assistance (e.g. story maps, puppets, pictures) and through drama activities. • Think, say and write sentences to tell the story or narrative in their own words. • Reread the completed narrative aloud, for example, to a partner, small group or the teacher.

Narrative Texts in Year 2		
Generic text structure	Grammatical features	Planning and preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives and retellings are told/ written in first or third person • Narratives and retellings are told/ written in past tense • Events are sequenced to create texts that make sense. • The main participants are human or animal. They are simply developed as either good or bad characters. • Simple narratives use typical characters, settings and events whether imagined or real. • Language choices help create realistic sounding narratives. e.g. adverbs, adjectives, precise nouns (turquoise instead of blue, jumper instead of top, policeman instead of man) etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories are often written in the third person and past tense e.g. Goldilocks ate the porridge; Goldilocks broke the chair; She fell asleep in Baby Bear's bed. • The past progressive form of verbs can be used, e.g. the Billy Goats Gruff were eating, Rapunzel was hoping someone would come and rescue her... • Apostrophes can be used for possession, e.g. Granny's house, baby bear's bed. • Apostrophes to show contraction can be used, e.g. Goldilocks couldn't believe her eyes. • Personal retellings often use the first person and past tense, e.g. I had tea at my Granny's house on Saturday; We went to the park after school. • Sentences are demarcated using full-stops, capital letters and finger spaces. • Use of conjunctions e.g. and, so, because, when, if, that, or, but ... to join ideas and enable subordination of ideas. • Use of exclamation marks to indicate emotions such as surprise or shock e.g. Help! Oh no! and to form exclamative sentences, e.g. How amazing was that!, What an incredible sight! • Question marks can be used to form questions, including rhetorical questions used to engage the reader. • Adjectives including comparative adjectives are used to aid description and make comparisons, e.g. the troll was big but the eldest Billy Goat Gruff was bigger. • Noun phrases can be used to create effective descriptions, e.g. the deep, dark woods. • Commas can be used to separate lists of characters, ideas and adjectives in expanded noun phrases. • Verbs should be chosen for effect e.g. walked instead of went, grabbed instead of got etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to stories and narrative texts that use the features required for the writing. • Think about the intended audience and the purpose of the story (e.g. to scare, amuse, teach a moral...) so that plans are shaped to satisfy the audience and purpose. • Make plans and props based on the story or narrative that has been shared. • Recognise and use 'story language' e.g. Once upon a time, later that day, happily ever after etc. • Make use of ideas from reading, e.g. using repetition to create an effect. • Tell and retell stories orally using props and plans for assistance (e.g. story maps, puppets, pictures) and through drama activities. • Think, say and write sentences to tell the story or narrative in their own words. • Write narratives using their plans. • Edit, proofread and amend their writing based on their own thoughts and those of their peers and teachers. • Reread completed narratives aloud, for example, to a partner, small group or the teacher.

Narrative Texts in Year 3		
Generic text structure	Grammatical features	Planning and preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives and retellings are written in first or third person. • Narratives and retellings are written in past tense, occasionally these are told in the present tense. • Events are sequenced to create chronological plots through the use of adverbials and prepositions. • Descriptions, including those of settings, are developed through the use of adverbials, e.g. in the deep dark woods... • Narratives use typical characters, settings and events whether imagined or real. • Dialogue begins to be used to convey characters' thoughts and to move the narrative forward. • Language choices help create realistic sounding narratives. e.g. adverbs, adjectives, precise nouns (turquoise instead of blue, jumper instead of top, policeman instead of man), expressive verbs (e.g. shouted/muttered instead of said etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs are useful for organising the narrative into logical sections, e.g. paragraphs about the setting or characters, or paragraphs used to denote the passage of time. • Adverbs e.g. first, then, after that, finally... are useful for denoting shifts in time and for structuring the narrative. • The use of conjunctions e.g. when, before, after, while, so, because...enables causation to be included in the narrative. • Using prepositions e.g. before, after, during, after, before, in, because of... enables the passage of time to be shown in the narrative and the narrative to be moved on. • Present perfect form of verbs can be used within dialogue or a character's thoughts, e.g. What has happened to us? What have you done? They have forgotten me... • Headings and subheadings can be used to indicate sections in the narrative, e.g. Chapter 1; How it all began; the story comes to a close... etc. • Inverted commas can be used to punctuate direct speech this allows characters to interact and the story to be developed. • Noun phrases can be used to create effective descriptions, e.g. the deep, dark woods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read stories and narrative texts that use the features required for the writing. • Think about the intended audience and the purpose of the story (e.g. to scare, amuse, teach a moral...) so that plans are shaped to satisfy the audience and purpose. • Make plans that include a limited number of characters and describe a few key details that show something about their personalities. • Compose and rehearse sentences or parts of stories orally to check for sense. • Recognise and use narrative language e.g. On a cold Winter's day, Dear Diary, And after all that... etc. • Make use of ideas from reading, e.g. using repetition to create an effect. • Try to show rather than tell, for example, show how a character feels by what they say or do. • Write narratives using their plans. • Reread completed narratives aloud, e.g. to a partner, small group. • Edit, proofread and amend their writing based on their own thoughts and those of their peers and teachers.

Narrative Texts in Year 4		
Generic text structure	Grammatical features	Planning and preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives and retellings are written in the first or third person. • Narratives and retellings are written in the past tense, occasionally these are told in the present tense. • Events are sequenced to create chronology through the use of adverbials and prepositions • Descriptions, including those of settings, are developed through the use of adverbials, e.g. in the deep dark woods... • Narratives use typical characters, settings and events whether imagined or real. • Dialogue is used to convey characters' thoughts and to move the narrative forward. • Language choices help create realistic sounding narratives. e.g. adverbs, adjectives, precise nouns, expressive verbs and figurative language etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The third person and past tense are used. This can include the past progressive (e.g. the Billy Goats Gruff were eating), Present perfect (e.g. What have you done?). • Standard English forms of verb inflections are used instead of local spoken forms, e.g. 'we were' instead of 'we was', 'we did that' rather than 'we done that'. • Fronted adverbials can be used e.g. During the night..., in a distant field.... These should be punctuated using a comma. • The use of adverbials e.g. therefore, however creates cohesion within and across paragraphs. • Cohesion can also be created, and repetition avoided through the use of nouns and pronouns e.g. Sammy and John... they... the boys... • Paragraphs are useful for organising the narrative into logical sections. • Verbs and adverbs should be chosen for effect e.g. shouted/muttered instead of said; angrily/quietly etc. to show rather than tell how characters feel and behave. • The use of conjunctions e.g. when, before, after, while, so, because...enables causation to be included in the narrative. • Descriptions can be developed through the effective use of expanded noun phrases e.g. the big blue bird (expanded with adjectives); oak tree (tree modified with a noun); the teacher with the curly hair (noun modified with preposition). • The full range of speech punctuation can be used to indicate dialogue this allows characters to interact and the story to be developed. • Apostrophes can be used to indicate plural possession e.g. The girls' names, the children's mother, the aliens' spaceship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read narrative texts that use the features required for the writing. • Think about the intended audience and the purpose of the story (e.g. to scare, amuse, teach a moral...) so that plans are shaped to satisfy the audience and purpose. • Make plans that include key events, being sure that all the events lead towards the ending. • Plan a limited number of characters and describe a few key details that show something about their personalities. • Make use of ideas from reading, e.g. using adverbial phrases to describe settings and characters or rhetorical questions to engage the reader. Recognise and use narrative language e.g. On a cold Winter's day, Dear Diary, And after all that... etc. • Try to show rather than tell, for example, show how a character feels by what they say or do. • Write narratives using their plans. • Edit, proofread and amend their writing based on their own thoughts and those of their peers and teachers. • Reread completed narratives aloud, e.g. to a partner, small group.

Narrative Texts in Year 5		
Generic text structure	Grammatical features	Planning and preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives and retellings are written in first or third person • Narratives and retellings are written in past tense, occasionally these are told in the present tense. • Narratives are told sequentially and nonsequentially (e.g. flashbacks) through the use of adverbials and prepositions. • Descriptions of characters, setting, and atmosphere are developed through precise vocabulary choices e.g. adverbs, adjectives, precise nouns, expressive verbs and figurative language • Dialogue is used to convey characters' thoughts and to move the narrative forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The third person and past tense are used. This can include the past progressive (e.g. the Billy Goats Gruff were eating), Present perfect (e.g. What have you done?). • Opportunities also exist for the use of the past perfect e.g. The children had tried...earlier in the day, the goblins had hidden... and Past perfect progressive forms e.g. the children had been searching... they had been hoping to find the treasure since they started on the quest ... • Adverbials can be used e.g. therefore, however to create cohesion within and across paragraphs. These adverbials can take the form of time (later), place (nearby), and numbers (secondly). • Modals can be used to suggest degrees of possibility, e.g. They should never have...If they were careful, the children might be able to... • Adverbs of possibility can be used to suggest possibility, e.g. They were probably going to be stuck there all night..., they were definitely on the adventure of a lifetime... • Parenthesis can be used to add additional information through the use of brackets, dashes or commas e.g. using brackets for stage instructions in a playscript. • Layout devices can be used to provide additional information and guide the reader, e.g. Chapter 1, How it all began..., The story comes to a close... • Relative clauses can be used to add further information, e.g. the witch, who was ugly and green,...The treasure, which had been buried in a chest... this should include the use of commas when required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read narrative texts that use the features required for the writing. • Think about the intended audience and the purpose of the story (e.g. to scare, amuse, teach a moral...) so that plans are shaped to satisfy the audience and purpose. • Make plans that include key events, being sure that all the events lead towards the ending. • Plan a limited number of characters and describe a few key details that show something about their personalities. • Make use of ideas from reading, e.g. using adverbial phrases to describe settings and characters or rhetorical questions to engage the reader. • Recognise and use narrative language e.g. On a cold Winter's day, Dear Diary, And after all that... etc. • Try to show rather than tell, for example, show how a character feels by what they say or do. • Write narratives using their plans. • Show how the main character has developed as a result of the narrative. • Edit, proofread and amend their writing based on their own thoughts and those of their peers and teachers. • Read their completed narratives to other children.

Narrative Texts in Year 6		
Generic text structure	Grammatical features	Planning and preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives and retellings are written in first or third person. • Narratives and retellings are written in past tense, occasionally these are told in the present tense. • Narratives are told sequentially and nonsequentially (e.g. flashbacks) through the use of adverbials and prepositions. • Descriptions of characters, setting, and atmosphere are developed through precise vocabulary choices e.g. adverbs, adjectives, precise nouns, expressive verbs and figurative language. • Dialogue is used to convey characters' thoughts and to move the narrative forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By writing for a specified audience and with a particular purpose in mind, the writer can choose between vocabulary typical of informal speech and that appropriate for formal speech e.g. the battalion traversed the mountain range; the soldiers walked over the mountains. • The passive voice can be used e.g. it was possible that..., the map was given to the children by..., more ingredients were added to the potion etc. • Writers may use conditional forms such as the subjunctive form to hypothesise, e.g. If the children were to get out of this situation..., if only there were a way to solve this problem..., I wished I were somewhere else...etc. • Past perfect progressive forms can be used to indicate specific points in time e.g. the children had been searching... I had been dreaming of riding a unicorn all my life... • Create cohesion across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices such as organisational features, pronouns, nouns and adverbials. Or by choosing to use repetition or ellipses for effect. • Colons, semi-colons and dashes can be used to separate and link ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read narrative texts that use the features required for the writing. • Think about the intended audience and the purpose of the story (e.g. to scare, amuse, teach a moral...) so that plans are shaped to satisfy the audience and purpose. • Make plans that include key events, being sure that all the events lead towards the ending. • Plan a limited number of characters and describe a few key details that show something about their personalities. • Make use of ideas from reading, e.g. using short and long sentences for different effects. • Try to show rather than tell, for example, show how a character feels by what they say or do. • Use all the senses when imagining and then describing the setting, for example, include the weather, season, time of day. • Write narratives using their plans. • Show how the main character has developed as a result of the narrative. • Edit, proofread and amend their writing based on their own thoughts and those of their peers and teachers. • Read their completed narratives to other children