



Hampshire
County Council

Improvement and
Advisory Service

HIAS MOODLE OPEN RESOURCE

Building secure writers

KS2 text-led dictation and transcription in practice

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Overview

This document contains...

Guidance on implementing text-led dictation with a focus on transcription elements at KS2

Points to consider when using this resource

Planning exemplification for text-led dictation at both KS1 and KS2 is available on Moodle+.

Building Secure Writers in KS2: Transcription and Text-Led Dictation in Practice

The Writing Framework is explicit: before pupils can write effectively, they must first write securely. Writing fluency depends on transcription skills – handwriting and spelling – becoming automatic. When these are not yet secure, they place significant demands on pupils' working memory, reducing the capacity available for higher-order aspects of writing such as sentence construction, vocabulary selection and communicating meaning.

For this reason, transcription should not be seen as a preliminary stage to move beyond. It is a foundational component of writing that requires ongoing, explicit teaching throughout KS2. Pupils who experience difficulty with handwriting or spelling often produce writing that is shorter, less coherent and less independent. Securing these transcription skills is therefore critical if pupils are to develop confidence and control in their writing.

Alongside transcription, pupils need secure sentence-level knowledge. This requires explicit and systematic teaching of how sentences are constructed, and how grammatical choices and vocabulary are shaped by purpose, audience and meaning. Writing develops not simply through increased practice, but through deliberate instruction and structured rehearsal. As the framework states:

“It is essential to teach pupils transcription skills (handwriting and spelling) from an early age... allowing them to free up working memory for composing.”

DfE (2025) The Writing Framework, p6.

Many schools find that, despite teaching explicit spelling and handwriting lessons, pupils do not consistently apply these skills in their independent writing. To address this, a structured approach has been developed that purposefully integrates text-led dictation with the teaching of handwriting, spelling and sentence construction.

These sessions are designed to be short and focused – approximately ten minutes – making them easy to integrate into regular teaching. Each session is closely linked to the class text, ensuring relevance and coherence. Each week centres on a dictation built around a sentence structure that has already been taught as part of the writing curriculum. Across subsequent sessions, pupils focus on specific words, drawn from statutory word lists or current spelling priorities, as well as key handwriting patterns, before completing the dictation.

This approach ensures that dictation is not an isolated activity. Instead, it connects directly to the wider writing curriculum, meaning that sentence structures, vocabulary, spelling and handwriting are purposeful and more likely to transfer into pupils' independent writing.

The approach supports both accessibility and high expectations. Sessions can be adapted using strategies such as dual coding (for example, colour-coding sentence structures) and the use of cloze procedures to manage cognitive load. Spelling can also be tailored, including revisiting Key Stage 1 common exception words, enabling all pupils to engage and develop fluency.

At the same time, opportunities for challenge are embedded. Pupils can explore word families through morphemic analysis, extend sentences using related vocabulary, and manipulate sentence structures by varying tense, clause order or conjunctions.

An overview of this approach is outlined below, with fully worked examples for Lower KS2 and Upper KS2 available on Moodle+ to support immediate classroom application. Over time, sustained and deliberate practice enables transcription and sentence construction to become automatic, reducing cognitive load and enabling pupils to write with greater fluency, control and clarity of meaning.

Exemplar transcription plan, available on Moodle+ to support classroom application

Transcription overview				
Sentence focus	Spelling focus	Handwriting focus	Text-led dictation	Text-led dictation
Share the sentence. Pupils read it aloud (option: fluency or expression focus). Clarify vocabulary and check understanding. Explore the sentence: - What type of sentence is it? - How do we know? - What punctuation is used? - Which tense is it written in? Possible independent task - Identify or sort sentence types - Annotate sentence	Choose up to three key words from the sentence. For each word, identify: Word class (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) Spelling strategies, including: <i>Morphology</i> – root word, prefixes, suffixes <i>Orthography</i> – spelling patterns, rules, letter strings <i>Phonology</i> – how sounds map to letters <i>Etymology</i> – origin and meaning that support spelling Link words: Find other words that share the same pattern.	Focus on specific words or letter joins, especially: - Common exception words - Words from the sentence - Tricky joins or break letters Model: - Correct letter formation - Correct joins - Capitals that do not join Pupils practise in books	Read the sentence aloud to the class. Pupils write it in their books. Mark together: - spelling of the focus words - punctuation - handwriting presentation	Pupils write a new sentence that: - uses the same pattern as the model sentence - varies one or two elements (word choice, subject, clause content) This links directly to: - previous day's assessment - evaluating whether pupils can transfer the pattern independently

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