Ros Wilson’s

Big Writing

A whole-school approach to raising standards in writing

Big Writing training is provided by

www.oxfordprimary.co.uk
Big Writing teaches children how to write and how to write better

It is an approach used in thousands of schools that:

- Is guaranteed to raise writing standards across the whole school
- Supports progress through rigorous assessment
- Develops children’s grammar and punctuation skills and broadens their vocabulary
- Encourages learning through talk
- Gives writing a purpose and makes it fun!

Meet Ros Wilson, the creator of Big Writing

Ros Wilson has over forty-five years’ experience in education, including twenty-seven years in schools, ten years in Senior Management positions and fourteen years in advisory and inspection work. She has taught in primary, middle and secondary schools in England and overseas, and has wide experience in teaching and advising on raising achievement for all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and also pupils with special educational needs.

I am passionate about and committed to raising standards in writing and education generally. In Big Writing I have been saying, ‘If the child can’t say it, the child can’t write it,’ since 1997. That is why the whole philosophy of Big Writing is rooted in teaching children to write better through talk.
Big Writing Professional Development courses
Andrell Education and their expert team of consultants, led by Ros Wilson, offer a range of courses to enable successful implementation of the Big Writing methodology. They include management and leadership seminars as well as practical workshops for class teachers.

For information about Big Writing professional development courses go to www.andrelleducation.co.uk or call 01924 862777

Oxford University Press is proud to be working with Ros Wilson and Andrell Education to bring you a new edition of the popular Big Writing handbooks.

If you are doing Big Writing well, the children will love it and will make progress.

Raising Writing Standards
A powerful and effective whole-school approach is aimed primarily at head teachers and senior leaders. It outlines the Big Writing approach both to raising standards in writing, and to improving levels of confidence and engagement amongst pupils and teachers alike. The enclosed CD-ROM provides useful school policy documents, support for assessment and planning, and further case studies.

Talk the Big Talk
Laying the foundations for Big Writing and beyond is aimed primarily at leaders and practitioners in the Foundation Stage, although the principles can be applied throughout the primary phase. It includes plenty of practical tips for developing ‘higher level talk’ as the basis for writing.

Using Project X to support your Big Writing teaching
Big Writing and Project X share many values. Big Writing helps children learn HOW to write whilst the motivating characters and fantasy adventure within the Project X series provides lots of exciting things for children to write about.

This guide, written by a head teacher of a school that uses both, is designed to help you link the two programmes for maximum impact in the classroom.

Writing Voice and Basic Skills
The class teacher’s guide to Big Writing is a practical guide to how to plan and teach Big Writing in the classroom. It is designed to give an overview of the Big Writing approach and to provide practical tips and lesson ideas for teachers to use, adapt and extend according to their personal teaching style and the needs of their pupils.
What is Big Writing?

Big Writing is an approach to teaching writing and raising writing standards that focuses on:

- The importance of TALK and oral rehearsal
- Accurate basic skills – spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting
- Regular and meaningful assessment and target setting
- High expectations for all pupils
- Giving writing a purpose and making it fun!

The Writer’s Toolkit

In Big Writing, the full range of writing skills is called the Writer’s Toolkit and can be summarised as ‘The Two WHATs and the Two HOWs’:

- WHAT 1: The text type or genre to be written
- WHAT 2: The stimulus or purpose for writing
- HOW 1: Basic Skills: GHaSP
- HOW 2: ‘Writing Voice’

Most schools are now confident in teaching the two WHATs. Big Writing provides schools with a framework for teaching the two HOWs through lively, fun, focused activities and a weekly opportunity for children to apply their skills in an extended writing task.

HOW 1: Basic Skills

The four basic skills that children need to draw on with increasing automaticity and fluency in their writing are:

- Grammar – the use of correct grammar/standard English at all times.
- Handwriting – accurate, fast and flowing, preferably using a cursive style. At a minimum, neat and legible.
- Spelling – accurate in all sight words and the majority of ambitious vocabulary, and demonstrating the full range of phonic strategies.
- Punctuation – accurate use of all sentence punctuation and creative but accurate use of a wide range of punctuation for ‘voice’ and effect.

If a child can’t say it, a child can’t write it.
HOW 2: Writing Voice

The writing voice defines both the language the writer uses and the style with which he or she structures sentences. In Big Writing it is taught through VCOP, which is:

- The range of **vocabulary** the child has and can use, including ambitious vocabulary (also known as Wow Words).
- The use of a wide range of **connectives**, including higher level connectives.
- The range of ways the child has for **opening** sentences, including the use of the three Power Openers (connectives, ‘ly’ words and ‘ing’ words).
- The range of **punctuation** the child uses, including punctuation for effect or Power Punctuation (? ! ...)

**Big Writing** therefore consists of:

- **Daily basic skills**: 10 minutes every day covering phonics, spelling and handwriting
- **Stocking fillers**: short, 5 minute VCOP sessions to recycle skills from the previous week
- **‘Bells’ work**: quick-fire ‘make me up …’ activities to embed new language and skills whilst waiting for playtime, lunch, etc
- **The Big Write**: extended VCOP session followed by an extended, silent writing session.

The Big Write session consists of:

- A ‘talk’ homework the night before – for children to discuss and prepare (mentally) what they are going to write about.
- One hour per week in Year 1, split into two 30 minute sessions before and after morning playtime. It may be introduced as 10 minutes and 10 minutes initially and built up to the full 30/30.
- One and a half hours in Years 2 to 6, split into two 45 minute sessions before and after morning playtime. In Year 2, it may start with two 30 minute sessions and gradually increase to 45/45.

  - First 35 minutes = fast, fun work on correct use of vocabulary, connectives, sentence openers and punctuation (VCOP).
  - Followed by 10 minutes of planning time.
- After play the children write individually, in silence, with an atmosphere that supports both concentration and creativity (dimmed lights, low volume Mozart, regular brain breaks).
The Big Writing Toolkit

THE WRITER’S TOOLKIT
- The two WHATs
- The two HOWs
- What 1: Text type or genre
- What 2: Stimulus or purpose
- Features of 10 text types
- Exciting, motivating, relevant, cross-curricular

Length through detail and description

LEADERSHIP
- Open
- Body
- End
- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why
- Stop and describe at least one

HOW 1: BASIC SKILLS
- GHaSP
- Booster in first ½ term of Year 3
- 10 mins a day across KS2
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Handwriting

HOW 2: WRITING VOICE = VCOP
- Power punctuation
- Power features
- ‘ly’ openers
- ‘ing’ openers
- Connective openers

The Big Writing Toolkit
BigWritingLeaflet-FP.indd   6
25/09/2012   14:25
Children know how to improve
Criterion Scale
Target setting
Trackers
Evidence base
What to teach next ...
AFL
No secret gardens
Children know how to improve
Whole school policy

ASSESSMENT
Summative
Formative

VCOP
Vocabulary
Connectives
Openers
Punctuation
WOW Words

Elements of Big Writing
Stocking fillers
Talk
Bells work
Cross-curricular, ‘Make me up …’
30-35 mins oral session weekly
Silent writing session:
30 mins (Year 1)
45 mins (Year 2-6)

LEADERSHIP

WOW Words
VCOP
Elements of Big Writing
ASSESSMENT
LEADERSHIP
Oxford University Press is proud to bring you this new edition of Ros Wilson’s *Big Writing*, packed with advice and proven strategies for:

- Developing higher level talk
- Improving basic skills – grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Ensuring effective assessment and progression
- Creating a positive writing ethos

### Raising Writing Standards
A powerful and effective whole-school approach  
978 0 19 838893 7 (£60)

### Writing Voice and Basic Skills
The class teacher’s guide to *Big Writing*  
978 0 19 838895 1 (£30)

### Talk the Big Talk
Laying the foundations for *Big Writing* and beyond  
978 0 19 838894 4 (£30)

### Big Writing: Complete Pack
Save £10 on all three *Big Writing* titles, plus get a free guide: *Using Project X to support your Big Writing teaching*  
978 0 19 838897 5 (£110)

Order the books at [www.oxfordprimary.co.uk](http://www.oxfordprimary.co.uk) or call 01536 452610

For further information about *Big Writing* professional development courses go to [www.andrelleducation.co.uk](http://www.andrelleducation.co.uk) or call 01924 862777