



Evidence-Based Intervention: Talk For Writing “*inspired*” writing intervention

1. Introduction

Talk for Writing (T4W) is an effective, research-informed teaching framework designed around the way children learn. Pupils first orally mimic exemplar texts to internalise structure and language, then analyse them through shared reading, and finally craft their own versions. This sequence of imitation → innovation → invention supports learners as they move from dependence to independent writing, guided by both teacher modelling and scaffolded support.

While the T4W programme is typically used in whole-class settings, **the method can be modified to create “T4W inspired” one-to-one or small-group interventions**, suitable to be implemented as additional support for YP facing challenges with the development of writing skills.

2. Purpose of Intervention

The aim of a T4W inspired intervention is both to **raise writing attainment** and to **foster greater enthusiasm and engagement in writing activities** by developing writing skills through a fun and engaging multi-phase model. This involves:

1. Imitation: Pupils internalise model texts through oral repetition to recognise transferrable ideas and structures.
2. Innovation: Learners co-construct adapted versions of texts with adult support, applying previously internalised features.
3. Invention: Pupils independently produce original texts, drawing on learned structures and techniques.

This process builds pupils’ understanding of text structures and language features, enhancing their creative and writing proficiency.

3. Target Audience

Can be used as a whole class approach or adapted to small group or one-to-one interventions. Whilst more commonly used in primary schools, it can be adapted to the secondary curriculum too.

4. Who Can Deliver the Intervention



A full implementation of Talk for Writing is best delivered by teachers with formal training in the approach.

However, smaller intervention groups that are underpinned by the core principles of T4W (e.g. the imitation-innovation-invention structure and “talking the text”) can be delivered by skilled teachers and teaching assistants who are familiar with (or can engage in CPD related to) the methodology.

5. Session Structure

A TFW inspired small group or one-to-one intervention may be best delivered as daily sessions (5 sessions a week). The duration of the sessions can vary depending on the child’s level and focus. Therefore, session durations are decided for each individual case. The intervention should follow the following structure:

1. Cold Task ("Can-do task"): An initial, fairly independent writing exercise to assess pupils' baseline levels and understanding of the current learning objective related to writing.
2. Imitation Phase: Introduce a text using an engaging 'hook' to spark interest (e.g., imagining writing to Dr Who about the TARDIS). During this phase, pupils orally retell or “talk the text” multiple times to become familiar with the text and grasp its structure, syntax, and vocabulary. As part of this, they may also act out the text, play games relating to the text and engage in other engaging activities.
3. Innovation Phase: Guided co-construction of a text, where pupils adapt elements of the model text with teacher support. This can vary based on the child’s ability, it may be as simple as changing a character name or story setting, or something more complex such as adding higher level descriptions or adapting sentence types.
4. Invention Phase: Pupils independently compose a similar version of the text. Using their adaptations in the innovation phase to produce a creative text using the learned features.
5. Hot Task (Final Assessment): This can be optional in the adapted intervention, dependent on the pupils’ ability to work independently. This phase is an independent writing activity that can be compared to the cold task (phase 1) to assess progress and identify newly learnt skills.

This cycle combines progression, modelling, and assessment to support cumulative learning.



Depending on the age/level of the pupil and the complexity of the model text and learning objectives, the time spend on each phase may between intervention groups. Some may complete a whole learning sequence within a week (1 phase per day), or some may spend much longer on each phase and may take several weeks to complete the learning sequence.

6. Key Principles

- Talk as a learning tool: Oral rehearsal (“talking the text”) helps pupils internalise language and sentence structure.
- Gradual release of responsibility: Students move from supported to independent writing.
- Genre awareness and toolkits: Focus on specific text types, supported by writing toolkits and exemplar strategies.
- Engagement through creative hooks: Using imaginative stimuli to situate writing in real and purposeful contexts.

7. Training and Implementation

- Information and explanation of the principles of T4W that can be used develop and underpin T4W inspired small group and one-to-one interventions can be found readily online. Staff will just need to be given dedicated CPD time to learn about these principles and how to embed them into intervention planning.
- Additional training on how to develop these interventions further can be purchased via the psychology and therapeutic services traded packages (if you purchase a package, your link EP can connect you with a member of the team who is able to deliver this training).
- Full T4W training (for whole class English curriculum teaching) can be booked via the Talk4Writing website and is usually rolled out through structured whole school professional development.

8. Evidence and Outcomes

A detailed research review by Roger Beard (UCL Institute of Education) noted that T4W incorporates components aligned with evidence-based approaches, such as Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) including elements such as notably teacher modelling, genre use, scaffolded support, and pupil self-evaluation, all of which have strong empirical support.

The Education Endowment Foundation’s evaluation (2013–2014 pilot across Portsmouth schools) highlighted widespread enthusiasm among teachers, increased confidence in teaching writing, and feasibility of implementation.



Data from T4W's own training centres report that schools using the approach tend to exceed national averages in writing outcomes by 10-11%.

Case studies, indicate improvements in Ofsted ratings, for example one school went from “requires improvement” to “good” and shared that this was attributed in part to T4W's introduction, with reported increases in pupil enjoyment and progress in reading and writing.

9. Pupil Feedback

Although systematic surveys to gather pupil feedback are limited, previous research has suggested that pupils find writing sessions using T4W principles are more engaging and accessible, often enjoying the orality of “talking the text”, the clear structure of learning tasks, and the creative hooks that build purpose and engagement.

10. Further Information and Resources

- Resources such as model texts and planning support - <https://www.talk4writing.com/resources/planning/>
- Example T4W planning frame - <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/talk-for-writing-planning-frame-11881681>
- Additional information and explanation of each learning phase - [What is Talk for Writing? - Talk for Writing](#)