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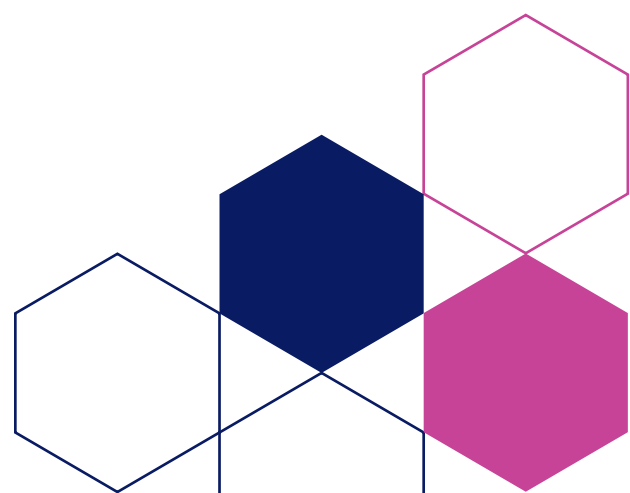
**Northern Ireland Curriculum 2028**

An entitlement to excellence and equity

## English and drama

Draft curriculum framework for Public Consultation

This document forms part of a suite of curriculum materials published for consultation





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## Vision statement for English

English is the study of language both as a means of living and as a tool for human thought. A high-quality English curriculum allows pupils to participate fully in the world and fosters their sense of belonging within it. Through accurate and fluent speaking and writing, pupils can communicate ideas, experiences and emotions. Through confident reading and attentive listening, pupils not only allow others to communicate successfully with them, they enter the wider conversation in which literature records and reshapes human experience. The study of English becomes a gateway to deep wells of thought and experience beyond their own.

A strong English curriculum lays the foundation for a lifelong habit of reading across many forms and genres. The intensely personal pleasure of immersion in the flow of well-crafted prose makes a text a place to live inside and where a pupil makes meaning at their own pace. Whether through the narrative tension and fully imagined world of a novel or through an intricately crafted argument, a literary text captivates the readers mind. Literature gives space for beliefs, emotions and relationships to be examined with care. Through the rich range of specific and connected texts that they study in school, through the passion of their teachers from a lifetime of reading and discussing literature, and through the lasting desire to keep reading that these experiences form, pupils are given one of the most important means that humans have ever produced for personal development. As individuals, as members of reading communities and in wider society, they grow culturally, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

English thus extends beyond practical utility. Pupils encounter a rich and varied diet of whole texts that require patience, sustained attention and informed interpretation. With support to build stamina for extended reading, they learn to follow argument, trace narrative and recognise patterns, fostering their own creativity as they learn from and adapt stylistic and structural conventions. Wide reading reveals how writers connect across time, genre and tradition. Through knowledge of context and intertextuality, pupils learn that stories do not stand alone but belong to a shared cultural landscape in which ideas are inherited, contested and refined. Through encounters with literature from different periods, cultures and traditions, pupils gain the knowledge and experience to give them genuine choices and informed judgement.

Vocabulary runs through every aspect of the subject. Words function as conceptual tools that enable pupils to make finer distinctions, perceive pattern and hold more complex ideas in mind. As vocabulary expands, so does the reach of thought. For this reason, vocabulary, background knowledge and context are taught deliberately. This matters as much in early reading as in later study, since without it, pupils cannot make sense of texts or the ideas they contain.

A cumulative approach shapes the teaching of reading, writing and spoken language. Reading fluency and disciplinary knowledge must be built step by step. In Foundation and Key Stage 1, this means that phonological awareness and decoding ability are priorities until automaticity, accuracy and prosody are achieved by all. Success in both spoken and written language requires early and regular participation in rich sound-worlds – poems, rhymes and songs, memorable folktales and stories – with plentiful oral recitation and rehearsal as well as enjoyment of the social and emotional benefits of discussing them. It requires practice in purposeful listening and clear contribution. Writing depends on explicit teaching of handwriting, syntax, spelling, sentence control, vocabulary, structure and argument. Together, these strands enable pupils to communicate with increasing confidence and precision.

The aim of English is to give young people an entitlement to:

- knowledge that helps them understand the world, including knowledge of letter and print that renders the world of text accessible
- language that helps them express ideas with precision
- literature that illuminates human experience
- habits of attention that support thoughtful and creative engagement

In this way, English prepares pupils not only for academic success but also for participation in the ongoing conversation of humankind, understanding the traditions they inherit and contributing to their future. Reading for pleasure emerges as a long-term outcome of a curriculum that builds the competence, confidence and shared cultural entitlement required for all aspects of English to become genuinely enjoyable.



# Subject-specific categories

Although English draws on many kinds of knowledge, the subject becomes easier to plan and teach when its complexity is organised into a few stable categories. The categories of pattern, story, argument, metaphor, grammar and context form a coherent framework because each describes a way in which meaning is made within the discipline of English. Taken together, they give pupils a set of lenses through which language and literature become intelligible rather than mysterious.

These six categories work because they overlap without becoming redundant. Each names a distinct strand of disciplinary knowledge, yet each strengthens the others. Each one orients the curriculum towards making meaning. Working together, they form a structured journey into how language works.

The individual categories should never be used to form standalone units of work. Their content rather provides different and sometimes overlapping lenses onto the same texts. Together, they capture and organise pupils' full entitlement in English.

## Pattern

Pattern draws attention to the structures that sit beneath the surface: sound, rhythm, repetition, contrast and form. When pupils learn to notice patterns, they begin to read with greater sensitivity and can see how writers organise meaning at both micro and macro levels. This includes patterns of sound and spelling, the distinctive metrical and formal structures of poetry, and the more diffuse, subtle patterning of extended prose: echoes, returns, shifts in pace, or the balancing of scenes and ideas. Pattern also helps pupils write with control, since it alerts them to how linguistic choices create coherence or dissonance. By recognising how patterns guide interpretation, pupils come to understand that meaning is rarely a single moment on the page but the product of recurring structures unfolding over time and space.

## Story

Stories provide the basic architecture for how humans understand events, motives and consequence. When pupils grasp narrative as a way of organising knowledge, they can track how character, plot and theme interact across texts. They also begin to recognise the patterns shared by different kinds of stories: quest and return, comedy and tragedy, rise and fall, the testing of a hero, the unravelling of a secret. These forms do more than organise events: they shape meaning. A tragedy invites one set of expectations about error and consequence; a quest frames struggle as discovery; a comedy turns disruption into renewal. Because narrative

form influences how readers interpret what happens, pupils learn that meaning is not carried by content alone but by the structure that holds it. Story anchors the historical development of literature (and history) allowing pupils to place new texts within a longer tradition and to see how familiar forms are adapted, challenged or reinvented.

## Argument

Argument is the discipline of reasoning with language. It teaches pupils to form claims, weigh alternatives and justify interpretations, whether in text or presentational talk. Without some grasp of how arguments work, literary analysis collapses into impressionistic comment and pupils are at risk of being misled and manipulated. Treating argument as a category ensures pupils learn how writers persuade, how ideas contend within texts, and how to construct interpretations that hold together. It includes the study of rhetoric, where pupils learn how writers shape an audience's response; structured discussion, where ideas are tested against counterarguments; and essay writing, where reasoning must be made explicit and coherent. Through this work pupils come to see argument not as a set of exam techniques but as a way of thinking: a means of organising evidence, exploring ambiguity and arriving at defensible judgements.

## Metaphor

Metaphor shapes thought before it becomes a stylistic device. All language is inherently metaphorical, even at the level of individual words: terms we take as literal began as comparisons that have hardened through repeated use. This becomes even clearer when pupils notice the conceptual metaphors that organise everyday thinking. We speak of *seeing* or *grasping* an idea to signal understanding, treating knowledge as something visible or held. Because language works this way, pupils cannot interpret or write with nuance unless they recognise how meaning moves from one domain to another. Teaching metaphor as a category helps them see that all language users rely on analogy to frame experience, extend meaning, connect texts or use familiar metaphors to make sense of unfamiliar ideas.

## Grammar

Grammar names the resources of the language itself. It is the set of tools that allows pupils to control meaning in their own writing and to analyse how other writers shape theirs. A secure grasp of grammar is not a matter of rule-collecting but of gaining insight into how syntax guides thought, emphasis and interpretation. It includes elements of semantics and pragmatics, since meaning depends not only on how sentences are built but on how they are understood in context. At heart, grammar teaches pupils to ask three crucial questions: *What options were available? Why was this one chosen? What impact does it have on the reader or audience?* When pupils learn to pose and answer these questions, they begin to see grammar not as a constraint but as a repertoire of choices through which meaning is made.

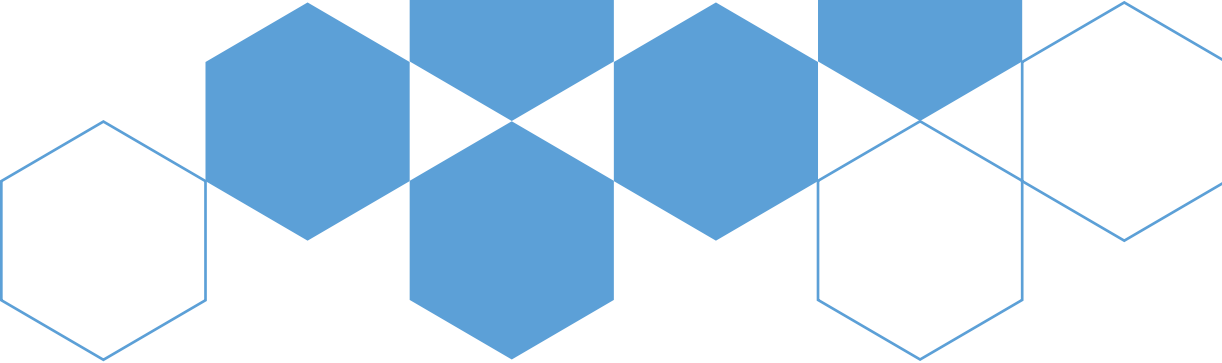
## Context

Context broadens pupils' sense of how texts arise from, and speak into, particular worlds. When handled with care, the study of context helps pupils understand that meaning is shaped by the assumptions, constraints and conversations of its time. It includes the deep narrative traditions that writers draw upon: fairy tales, biblical stories and their satires, classical and world mythologies. Context also encompasses the historical, social and literary background that informs a text, as well as the critical frameworks that reveal how different readers make sense of it. Through purposeful analysis, pupils learn to embed contextual understanding into their interpretations, not as a bolt-on, but as part of the reasoning that explains why a text means what it does.

This table shows where some of the knowledge specified in the English curriculum fits into these six categories:

Pattern	Story
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• phonics</li> <li>• vowels and consonants</li> <li>• sound patterning (alliteration, assonance)</li> <li>• metre and scansion (including caesura and enjambment)</li> <li>• rhyme and rhythm</li> <li>• repetition and variation</li> <li>• motif and recurrence</li> <li>• parallelism and contrast</li> <li>• beginnings, changes and endings</li> <li>• structural analysis (narrative, poetic and dramatic structures)</li> <li>• handwriting</li> <li>• spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mythology and the development of shared stories</li> <li>• theme and motif</li> <li>• literary forms (poetry, novels and plays)</li> <li>• plot and genre (tragedy, comedy, epic and others)</li> <li>• narrative causality, conflict and consequence</li> <li>• time and sequencing (order, pace and duration)</li> <li>• character and characterisation (voice, speech and thought)</li> <li>• narrative perspective and narratology</li> <li>• intertextuality and retelling</li> </ul>

Argument	Metaphor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constructing and sustaining a line of argument</li> <li>• claim, reason and conclusion</li> <li>• using evidence and examples</li> <li>• audience and purpose</li> <li>• counterargument and rebuttal</li> <li>• rhetoric (persuasion)</li> <li>• discussion and debate</li> <li>• summarising and synthesising viewpoints</li> <li>• evaluative language and degrees of certainty (modality)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• metaphorical analysis (tenor, vehicle and ground)</li> <li>• language devices (simile, metaphor, personification, symbol and motif)</li> <li>• conceptual metaphor and metaphor as a way of thinking</li> <li>• extended and sustained metaphor</li> <li>• metaphor clusters and semantic fields</li> <li>• literal and figurative meaning</li> <li>• connotation and abstraction</li> <li>• etymology and metaphorical roots of words</li> <li>• allusion (see context)</li> <li>• identifying and analysing language choices</li> </ul>
Grammar	Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• morphology (roots, prefixes and suffixes)</li> <li>• syntax – sentence structures including subordination, coordination and embedding</li> <li>• agreement and reference (tense, number and pronouns)</li> <li>• voice and agency (active and passive constructions)</li> <li>• modality and stance (expressing certainty, obligation and possibility)</li> <li>• punctuation</li> <li>• paragraphing and cohesion</li> <li>• grammatical cohesion (connectives, substitution and ellipsis)</li> <li>• metalinguistic knowledge as a tool for noticing and describing choices (parts of speech and grammatical functions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a ‘canon’ and the idea of cultural inheritance</li> <li>• foundational story traditions (fairy stories, Greek myth, Biblical narratives, Irish myth)</li> <li>• literary periods and movements (Early Modern, Romantic, Victorian, twentieth century and beyond)</li> <li>• specific background knowledge (literary, social and historical)</li> <li>• authorial position, constraint and intention</li> <li>• reception and reinterpretation across time</li> <li>• literary theory as a lens for interpretation</li> <li>• embedding contextual knowledge into literary analysis</li> </ul>



# Foundation Stage

In Foundation Stage, pupils develop the core knowledge and habits that underpin later success in English. Building on their early experiences, pupils come to understand English as a shared system for making meaning and for communicating with others. They become attuned to patterns in spoken and written language. Immersed in talk, they learn to listen attentively and respond appropriately, participating with growing confidence in conversations with peers and adults. Encountering a rich range of texts, including stories, poetry, picture books, information books and multimodal texts, pupils internalise their structure, language and rhythms. Through enjoyment of varied cultural texts, foundations are laid for understanding that language and literature are shared within communities and across generations.

A priority in the Foundation Stage is systematic, synthetic phonics teaching, through which pupils start to read and spell words with increasing accuracy. They learn to articulate and structure their ideas in speech (oral composition) and master the fine-motor control required for the physical act of writing (transcription). They learn to use sentences as units of meaning, first in presentational talk and then in early writing. They learn that sentences help organise ideas so that others can understand what they mean.

Across the Foundation Stage, pupils encounter imaginative language through play and shared texts. They notice how words can be used creatively to describe feelings, characters and experiences, and they begin to enjoy the surprising or playful comparisons that appear in stories, rhymes and songs. Drawing on these encounters, they experiment with creating their own pictures, early writing and simple statements. Pupils also gain the foundations of language as argument. They learn that others can have different points of view and they acquire the language conventions to express their own.

## Pattern

### Sound and spoken language patterns

*Across the whole of Foundation Stage, pupils deepen their awareness of sound patterns in spoken language. To that end, pupils should:*

- listen attentively to and copy sounds in words
- recognise sound patterns, including rhyme, alliteration and repeated phrases, in stories, poems and songs (e.g. sound patterns in traditional tales such as *Enormous Turnip*; in *Where's my Teddy?* by Jez Alborough; the rhymes and alliterations in *Each Peach Pear Plum* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg)

- join in with rhyming patterns in stories, poems and songs (e.g. 'hares sit on chairs' in the story *Oi Frog!* by Kes Grey and Jim Field; 'know it' and 'show it' in the song *Happy and you know it*)
- segment spoken words into sounds

### **Word reading and transcription**

The precise distribution of word reading content across Primary 1 and 2 will depend on the phonics programme adopted. The sequence and style of letter formation will depend on the handwriting scheme adopted.

*Across the Foundation Stage, pupils should learn:*

- the most common sound-spelling correspondences as set out in the chosen phonics programme
- to blend sounds together to read (decode) words
- to segment sounds and apply code knowledge to spell (encode) words
- that sounds (phonemes) can be represented by one or more letters
- that a spelling (grapheme) may contain one, two, three or four letters (e.g. in high and sight)
- that one sound may have more than one spelling, and one spelling may represent different sounds
- that some common words include spellings they have not yet learned
- to sit using a stable writing position and use an efficient and comfortable pencil grip
- to form upper and lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- to space letters within and between words appropriately, with appropriate grounding, height and depth
- to rehearse words orally before writing them
- to hear, identify, say and write grapheme-phoneme correspondences concurrently
- to write words which can be read without mediation and with increasing fluency

## **Text patterns and early meaning**

### **Primary 1**

*Pupils should:*

- read texts which they can decode, making use of their developing phonics knowledge
- notice and talk about simple structural patterns in stories, including beginnings and endings (e.g. *Goldilocks and The Three Bears* by Lauren Child, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, *Jack and the Beanstalk* by Richard Walker; traditional tales such as *The Three Little Pigs* or *The Runaway Chapati*)

*Pupils should learn:*

- that print carries meaning and flows in a direction from left to right and top to bottom
- to use common print concepts (e.g. that reading in English texts starts at the top left of the page; that at the end of the line eyes ‘sweep’ to the beginning of the next one) in order to navigate texts correctly and smoothly

### **Primary 2**

*Pupils should learn:*

- that stories involve changes
- to talk about problems, disruptions or complications which alter the direction of a narrative (e.g. in *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak, the transformation of Max’s bedroom shifts the story from a realistic domestic setting to a fantasy adventure; in *Beegu* by Alexis Deacon, Beegu tries to connect with humans but repeatedly experiences rejection; in *The Dark* by Lemony Snicket, fear of the dark shifts from anxiety and avoidance to encounter and ultimately understanding)

## **Story**

### **Primary 1**

*Pupils should:*

- listen to stories, information texts, rhymes and songs
- join in with, and rehearse, repeated phrases and actions
- retell and adapt familiar literary texts through play, performance, images or writing (e.g. traditional tales such as *Three Billy Goats Gruff*; *Little Red Riding Hood* by Helen Oxenbury; *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* by Judith Kerr)

- respond to stories, rhymes and song through discussing feelings and thoughts about their events and characters (e.g. in *Joy* by Yasmeen Ismail, discuss why the character does not feel joyful when others do; in *The Storm Whale* by Benji Davies, comment on loneliness and friendship; in *Leaf* by Sandra Diekmann, notice the fear of difference and belonging)
- share ideas about stories, poems and images in literature, reflecting on experiences that are similar or different to their own by engaging with texts by wide-ranging local and world authors and illustrators (e.g. *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad; *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña)

## **Primary 2**

*Pupils should:*

- listen to and look at different types of literary text, noticing differences between imaginative and informative texts (e.g. contrasts between fictional stories about bugs, frogs or sea creatures and informative texts such as *The Big Book of Bugs* by Yuval Zommer; *Fabulous Frogs* by Martin Jenkins and *A First Book of the Sea* by Nicola Davies)
- discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently

*Pupils should learn:*

- to identify features in texts including events, characters and descriptions
- a basic vocabulary for talking about structures in texts, including 'beginning' and 'ending'

## **Argument**

### **Primary 1**

*Pupils should learn:*

- to interact in informal and structured situations by listening while others speak
- different ways of using language to express preferences, likes and dislikes (e.g. 'I liked \_\_\_ because it was \_\_\_'; 'My favourite part was when \_\_\_'; 'I liked \_\_\_ but I did not like \_\_\_'.)
- vocabulary used in familiar contexts related to everyday experiences, personal interests and topics taught at school
- to give simple reasons for choices using the conjunction 'because'
- to express ideas and feelings about own experiences using full sentences in presentational talk

## **Primary 2**

*Pupils should:*

- use spoken language in structured, intentional ways, including:
  - reporting on past and present experiences, describing and elaborating events and sequences
  - working through problems, organising their thinking and planning activities clearly
  - explaining how things work and why they happen, using logical reasoning to clarify cause and effect
  - explaining the emotions and reactions of others, including in imagined or hypothetical situations

*In order to do this effectively, pupils should learn to use:*

- prepositions and adverbials that show where something happened, including: in, above, below, under, beside, beneath, between, through
- time connectives that clarify sequence and duration, including: before, after, during, then, next, while, later, once
- causal and conditional language that explains why something happens or might happen, including: because, so, but, if

## **Metaphor**

### **Primary 1**

*Pupils should:*

- encounter playful and imaginative language (e.g. *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson; *The Naughty Bus* by Jan Oke)
- have opportunities to respond to and think about playful and imaginative language through discussion and play

### **Primary 2**

*Pupils should:*

- use descriptive words drawn from stories and experience (e.g. try out powerful verb choices from *Traction Man is Here* by Mini Grey, such as zoomed, battled, rescued, defeated, soared, clutched, tackled, leapt; explore adjectives in *Bog Baby* by Jeanne Willis, such as tiny, delicate, bright, dark, muddy, shallow, crowded)
- learn how words, phrases and ideas can suggest ideas and feelings (e.g. the imagery of the string in *Invisible String* by Patrice Karst; the imagery conveying love and security in *If All the World Were* by Joseph Coelho)

## **Grammar**

### **Primary 1**

*Pupils should learn:*

- the difference between words and sentences
- to use simple sentences accurately in presentational speech
- to use past, present and future tense accurately in speech
- to rehearse sentences orally before writing them
- to orally expand sentences using who, what, where, when and why
- about stop marks, including full stops and question marks

### **Primary 2**

*Pupils should learn:*

- that punctuation is a feature of written text which is different from letters
- the difference between sentences and fragments
- that capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters also signal the beginning of sentences while punctuation marks signal the end

*Pupils should learn to:*

- convert fragments into sentences
- use sentence expansion in writing (e.g. when, where, why)
- use basic conjunctions in writing (e.g. because, but)
- shape sentences with a subject (someone or something) and a predicate (doing something)
- maintain a consistent tense
- write statements and questions

*Pupils should:*

- create and participate in shared editing of short written texts to record and report ideas and events using some learnt vocabulary, basic sentence boundary punctuation and spelling words correctly using phonic knowledge

## **Context**

### **Primary 1**

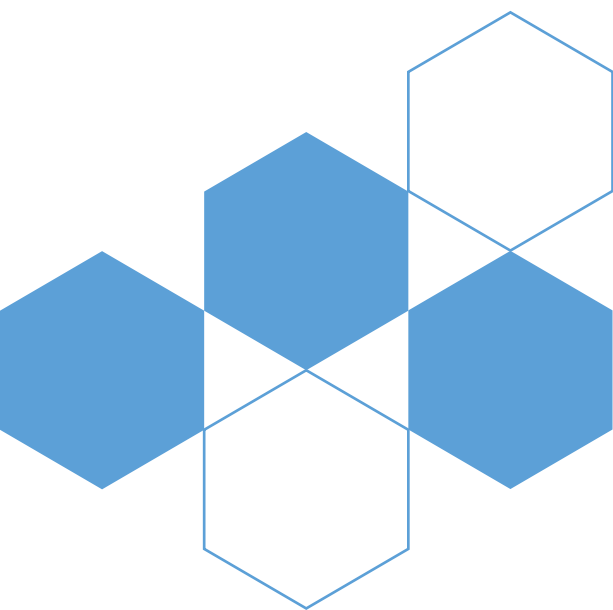
*Pupils should learn:*

- stories from local culture and familiar community tradition (e.g. *The Story of The Giant's Causeway* by Ann Carroll, *The Children of Lir* by Laura Ruth Maher)
- that stories are told and retold
- that stories can come from long ago or from other parts of the world

### **Primary 2**

*Pupils should learn:*

- that stories belong to communities and are shared across families, cultures and places
- some traditional tales from distant places
- the conventions of print and screen, including how books and simple digital texts are usually organised





# Key Stage 1

Pupils build upon secure foundations in decoding and encoding, gaining secure control of the alphabetic code while noticing how words, sounds and stories work together to create meaning. During Key Stage 1, core elements introduced in the Foundation Stage, including phonics, handwriting and sentence formation, should be practised to automaticity. Pupils build fluency by recognising and accurately applying patterns in sound, symbol and structure.

Pupils learn how words are formed, how sentences are structured, and how grammatical choices shape meaning. They learn about prefixes and suffixes, construct clear sentences, and use basic punctuation. They begin to use grammatical terms, choose precise vocabulary, and connect ideas using conjunctions to form compound and simple complex sentences.

They consolidate and extend awareness of sound patterns in spoken language in progressively more challenging contexts. They recognise how narratives sequence events, develop characters and shape outcomes, and begin to use these patterns when retelling and creating their own stories. Pupils begin to express preferences and give reasons for their views, participating in both exploratory and presentational talk. They learn to state simple opinions about texts and experiences and to support them with relevant examples or explanations. Pupils encounter figurative language through stories, talk and shared texts, meeting increasingly varied and challenging examples over time. They encounter shared story traditions and texts from beyond their immediate experience and begin to recognise that stories, poems and other texts come from different times, places and cultures.

## Pattern

### Sound and spoken language patterns

#### Primary 3

*Pupils should:*

- read aloud with increasing accuracy and prosody
- encounter, recognise and respond to patterns in sounds, including rhyme, alliteration and repeated phrases (e.g. 'lazy lions lounging' in *Animalia* by Graeme Base) in prose and poetry

## **Primary 4**

*Pupils should learn to:*

- use sound patterning, such as onomatopoeia and alliteration, in their own talk and writing, imitating or taking inspiration from patterns in stories and poems (e.g. dramatic sounds of crash, clank, grind in *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes; drip, drop, trickle, rush in *The Rhythm of the Rain* by Grahame Baker-Smith)

## **Word reading and transcription**

### **Primary 3 and 4**

*Within a systematic phonics sequence, pupils should learn to:*

- decode polysyllabic words and words that include less usual vowel sounds
- apply learned phonics knowledge when attempting to spell words
- read and write familiar patterns with increasing speed, accuracy and prosody
- increase the legibility, consistency and speed of handwriting towards greater fluency

## **Text patterns and early meaning**

### **Primary 3 and 4**

*Pupils should:*

- notice repeated words, phrases or events in texts and recognise that they help the reader follow the story (e.g. noticing different perspectives on the same events in *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne; the repeated structure with each crayon writing a letter in *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt)
- talk about why a text might begin or end in a particular way
- use simple text structures to help retell or sequence events

## **Story**

### **Primary 3**

*Pupils should learn:*

- a range of familiar stories, fairy tales and traditional tales
- to retell a short story coherently, using increasingly precise language and varied sentence structures to clarify when events happen, how characters and settings are described, and why actions occur. This should include:
  - time connectives to signal sequence and duration (e.g. after, earlier, meanwhile, eventually, just at that moment, without warning)

- expanded noun phrases to describe characters and settings (e.g. the very old grandmother; the brave woodcutter; the long, winding path)
- adjectives chosen deliberately to create atmosphere (e.g. gloomy, towering, mysterious, gleaming)
- conjunctions to explain cause, contrast and consequence (e.g. because, so, but, yet, and)
- pronouns used accurately to avoid unnecessary repetition
- dialogue used to reveal a character's thoughts, feelings or reactions rather than simply stating them
- simple and compound sentences
- to recognise recurring narrative patterns such as journey, problem and resolution

#### **Primary 4**

*Pupils should learn:*

- to talk about characters' actions, feelings and motives
- that events in a story are connected
- to use plot points in their own storytelling, including problem or dilemma, build-up, climax and resolution
- about chapters in stories and stanzas in poetry
- to plan and write simple stories that are organised into clear paragraphs, establishing a setting, introducing characters and sequencing events logically from beginning to end. This should include:
  - adverbial phrases to show where and when events occur (e.g. on the edge of the forest, in the distance, under the cupboard, after he had stolen the eggs in *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* by Andy Shepherd)
  - adverbials to show how actions take place (e.g. creeping slowly, shaking with fear, carefully watching in *Varjak Paw* by S F Said)
  - varied sentence forms used deliberately for effect including statements, commands, questions and exclamations (e.g. commands: 'Don't be fooled!'; exclamations: 'What a ghastly pair!'; questions: rhetorical author voice in *The Twits* by Roald Dahl)
- about plot points in stories that they listen to or read, including problem or dilemma, build-up, climax and resolution (e.g. *The Hodgeheg* by Dick King-Smith, *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* by Andy Shepherd)
- to recognise similarities between different types of story by identifying shared features (e.g. character roles, settings, narrative patterns and recurring themes)

## **Argument**

### **Primary 3**

*Pupils should learn to:*

- give simple reasons for opinions about stories and characters, drawing on information from the text, using a range of conjunctions (e.g. because, but, so, while, although)
- read their own sentences aloud using a clear presentational voice
- listen and respond to others' ideas in discussion
- identify openings, elaboration points and conclusions in simple non-fiction texts

### **Primary 4**

*Pupils should learn to:*

- write non-fiction texts with a clear introduction, elaborated points and a conclusion
- structure writing so that ideas build logically from one point to the next, rather than appearing as disconnected facts
- use headings and subheadings to organise content
- recognise the main features of simple reports, recounts and instructions
- plan and write simple reports, recounts and sets of instructions that explain how things work and why events occur, using clear logical reasoning (e.g. explain cause and effect)
- describe and elaborate sequences of events. Explanations should:
  - connect ideas clearly using prepositions and adverbials (e.g. in, above, below, under, beside, outside and through)
  - use time connectives to clarify sequence and duration (e.g. before, after, during, then, next, while, later, once and at the same time)
  - use causal language to explain why something happens (e.g. because, so, therefore, as a result, since and consequently)
- notice and begin to use simple persuasive techniques such as rhetorical questions and repetition

## **Metaphor**

### **Primary 3**

*Pupils should learn:*

- words with more than one related meaning, and that the intended meaning depends on context (e.g. *bright* can mean giving out a lot of light or intelligent; *field* can refer to a grassy area, an area of study or a playing surface; *light* can mean not heavy or not dark)
- that writers choose words deliberately to have an effect on a reader
- how words can make a reader feel or imagine something more clearly when a writer compares one thing to another to help the reader understand it (e.g. *The Tin Forest* by Helen Ward uses the junkyard to illustrate wasted life and forest growth to illustrate renewal; *Fog* by Carl Sandburg uses the metaphor of a cat to illustrate fog)
- to experiment with playful language in talk, including describing people, places or objects in imaginative ways

### **Primary 4**

*Pupils should learn:*

- to notice and use simple similes for comparison
- to use descriptive vocabulary to extend meaning, including expanded noun phrases

## **Grammar**

### **Primary 3**

*Pupils should learn:*

- about prefixes and suffixes and how they change word meaning
- to recognise and construct simple sentences with clear meaning
- to use basic punctuation to mark sentences, including full stops, question marks and exclamation marks
- some commonly used synonyms and antonyms
- a range of speech verbs
- to use conjunctions to add, explain, contrast and sequence ideas
- to identify and write statements, questions, commands and exclamations
- to write compound and simple complex sentences using conjunctions (e.g. and, but, or,

because, if and when)

- to maintain a consistent, appropriate tense in writing
- about pronouns and to notice who they refer to
- to use commas in lists
- to identify and use inverted commas for speech by a single character
- to practise sentence structures until they can be used fluently and accurately

#### **Primary 4**

*Pupils should learn to:*

- use commas after simple adverbial openers
- identify and start to use apostrophes for possession and contraction
- make purposeful grammatical choices in their own writing
- use grammatical terms such as noun and sentence to talk about language
- recognise and explain an independent clause
- use speech punctuation accurately
- choose between sentence types to make meaning clearer

## **Context**

#### **Primary 3 and 4**

*Pupils should learn:*

- some traditional stories from different cultures (e.g. Aesop's Fables, Grimm's Fairy Tales) including stories from Northern Ireland
- that traditional stories are passed on and retold
- that stories reflect different places, times and communities, to learn examples of these (e.g. Arabian Nights, Greek myths, the Giant's Causeway story of Finn McCool) and to learn about their contexts
- to learn by heart and recite poems
- to share and perform stories and poems for an audience



## Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2, pupils consolidate fluency and begin to exercise greater control as readers, speakers and writers, building on what they have learned in earlier key stages. Pupils learn to recognise, analyse and exploit patterns across sound, structure and form in progressively more challenging contexts. Pupils consolidate word-level accuracy and fluency so that decoding and transcription support, rather than hinder, comprehension and composition.

While continuing to apply and practise code knowledge, the emphasis on pattern expands to learning how pattern operates within and across texts to shape meaning. Pupils encounter longer, more demanding texts and are expected to sustain attention, infer meaning and notice how language shapes ideas. Pupils learn that stories shape meaning through form, purpose and development over time. They learn how narrative structures, genres and character construction are used deliberately by writers to explore ideas, themes and consequences. In their own writing, they produce more extended pieces with clear paragraphing and logical organisation. Narrative structure becomes intentional rather than incidental. Openings establish context, events develop coherently, and endings resolve or reflect. Argument develops through a clear progression: from stating claims, to supporting them with evidence and explanation, to structuring extended arguments and considering alternative viewpoints.

Pupils begin to notice that language often works by comparison and association. They discover that writers choose images and figurative expressions carefully to shape meaning, create mood and develop theme. They move beyond spotting techniques to understanding how and why they are used. With guidance and practice, they start to experiment with figurative language themselves, using it thoughtfully and purposefully across sentences and whole texts. Drawing on their widening experience of texts and knowledge of grammar, pupils write more varied and purposeful sentences. Pupils learn to use coordination and subordination to clarify relationships, to manipulate clause order for emphasis, and to select precise vocabulary to shape tone and meaning.

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils will have developed the ability to organise ideas, sustain a line of thought and make deliberate grammatical and structural choices to achieve a particular effect. Their increasingly wide reading from particular historical, cultural and literary traditions enhances their enjoyment of reading and their intentional playfulness in writing. They use contextual knowledge to interpret meaning, perspective and purpose, and to make sense of increasing textual complexity.

## Pattern

### Sound and spoken language patterns

*Pupils should learn:*

- to recognise rhythmic and sound patterning in poetry, including repetition, variation and contrast (e.g. the strong steady beat mirroring flowing water in *The River* by Valerie Bloom)
- to notice how sound patterning (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, onomatopoeia, rhythm through sentence structure) contributes to mood, emphasis and effect
- how sound patterning can mark key moments or shifts within a poem or text
- how sound patterning can contribute to a speaker's or narrator's voice (e.g. how repetition creates emphasis and evokes voice in *Windrush Child* by John Agard)
- to select and use sound patterning deliberately to emphasise ideas or feelings in their own writing
- that sound patterning can also be used in prose for emphasis or effect

### Word reading and transcription

*Pupils should learn to:*

- apply spelling patterns accurately, including morphology, etymology and homophones
- read unfamiliar words accurately and fluently by consolidating decoding strategies, including syllabification and morphological analysis
- apply knowledge of morphology and etymology to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words
- sustain handwriting with consistent letter size, spacing and increasing fluency so that transcription does not impede composition
- read texts with sufficient fluency (automaticity, accuracy and prosody) to support comprehension and interpretation (e.g. when reading texts appropriate for Key Stage 2, show appropriate phrasing and expression which may be further developed in subsequent readings)

### Text patterns and meaning

*Pupils should learn:*

- to identify structural patterns within texts, including paragraphing, topic sentences and the development of supporting detail

- how key words, pronouns and connectives signal relationships between ideas and support inference
- to analyse narrative structure, including shifts in pace, viewpoint and focus (e.g. shifts in viewpoint between storyteller and immediate third-person narrative in *Podkin One-Ear* by Kieran Larwood; the story-within-story structure helps pupils identify framing devices and narrative interruptions in *Clockwork* by Philip Pullman)
- how text structure supports coherence and retrieval of information
- to recognise patterns across texts, including recurring structures, techniques and conventions (e.g. the survival narrative with recurring problem-solving structure in *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell; the quest structure with repeated tests and symbolic encounters in the *Firework-Maker's Daughter* by Philip Pullman)
- how authors use varieties of English, including dialect and register, to shape character and meaning
- to write multi-paragraph texts with logical sequencing, clear topic sentences and coherent links between ideas

## Story

*Pupils should:*

- read and discuss myths, legends and longer narratives (e.g. episodes from *The Odyssey*, the legend of King Arthur, Maui, tales from *The Arabian Nights*, or the story of Cú Chulainn)
- read stories with varied plot types, narrative structures (including non-linear), themes and settings, including historical and geographical settings studied in history and geography

*Pupils should learn:*

- that stories are shaped by form and purpose, not just events
- about narrative perspective, setting and mood, including recognising whether a story is told in first or third person (e.g. a first-person narration such as *Diary of a Killer Cat* by Anne Fine; the mysterious, magical, slightly unsettling setting of *Leon and the Place Between* by Angela McAllister)
- to make deliberate choices about first or third person when writing
- that some stories use non-linear structures and to discuss the effects of such choices in familiar stories that have been read in full (e.g. *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce blends past and present; *Holes* by Louis Sachar has interwoven timelines, delayed revelation)

- to identify and discuss narrative structure, including opening, conflict, complication, climax and resolution, and to explain how structure shapes meaning
- about the role of foreshadowing in narrative structure (e.g. the mysterious locked garden and references to illness at the start of *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett; the early hints about Stanley's 'family curse' in *Holes*; the warnings about Dust and prophecy in *Northern Lights* by Philip Pullman; the unsettling clues about the narrator's guilt in *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe) and how such details prepare the reader for later revelations, shape expectations and build tension across the narrative
- about common plot types, including quest, rags to riches, coming of age and overcoming the monster
- about themes as underlying ideas developed through narrative rather than explicitly stated
- to analyse character as a constructed element, shaped through description, action, speech and thought
- to explain how characters change over the course of a narrative
- to compare and contrast characters, settings or events using specific evidence from the text
- to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish narrative writing
- to make deliberate choices about setting, character and structure for specific purposes
- about genres and their conventions and how these shape reader expectations
- about the structure and features of playscripts and how they differ from narrative texts

## **Argument**

*Pupils should learn:*

- to make clear claims supported by reasons
- how to use material from a text as evidence to support a claim, showing the link between quotation and argument rather than simply describing what happens
- to construct paragraphs that develop an argument, including a clear point, supporting evidence and explanation
- to organise arguments using logical structure, including introductions, sequenced paragraphs and conclusions

- to summarise key ideas from texts, by selecting the most important information and clearly identifying:
    - *what* happens
    - *who* is involved
    - *when* and *where* events take place
    - *why* they occur
    - *how* they unfold
  - to participate in structured discussion and debate by listening, responding and justifying ideas with evidence
  - to consider audience and purpose when choosing content, structure and language (e.g. adjusting tone for a formal speech, organising information clearly in a report, or creating suspense in a narrative opening)
  - to write short analytical and persuasive texts using appropriate tone and formality
  - that viewpoints are expressed through evidence and reasoning, not personal assertion or emotion
  - to use rhetorical devices selectively and purposefully to shape a reader's response, introduced through models and examples, using some of the following:
    - imperative verbs to convey urgency
    - rhetorical questions (e.g. Have you ever considered the impact of...?)
    - facts or statistics
    - emotive language to elicit sympathy, anger or concern (e.g. fragile habitats destroyed, families left devastated)
    - hyperbole
    - the second person to address the audience directly
    - the passive voice to highlight actions (e.g. beaches have been spoilt by plastic pollution; disabled people have been ignored and marginalised by inaccessible buildings)
  - to compare texts by purpose and structure, explaining how authors organise ideas to achieve effects
  - to consider the implications of source, purpose and perspective in a text (e.g. distinguishing between a balanced news report, a campaigning article or a sponsored post)
  - that information comes from different sources and that some sources are more trustworthy than others
-

- to distinguish between statements of fact and opinion
- to construct counterarguments by acknowledging and responding to alternative viewpoints
- to build cohesion within and across paragraphs by using deliberate repetition of key terms, appropriate conjunctions to link clauses, and conjunctive adverbs such as however, therefore and meanwhile to clarify relationships between ideas and guide the reader through an argument
- to proofread and redraft writing to improve clarity, accuracy and effectiveness
- to explain and justify choices made in their own writing

## Metaphor

*Pupils should learn:*

- to identify and use simile and metaphor to create comparison
- to recognise personification (e.g. in phrases such as ‘the wind whispered through the trees’ or ‘the city never sleeps’) and to understand anthropomorphism as an extended form of this (e.g. when animals think and speak as humans do in stories such as *Charlotte’s Web* by E B White or *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame)
- how figurative language shapes meaning and influences a reader (e.g. how describing war as ‘a monster devouring its young’ creates fear and condemnation, or how calling hope ‘a fragile flame’ suggests both comfort and vulnerability)
- to identify and use hyperbole and idiom as forms of figurative language
- to identify an extended metaphor across sentences or paragraphs
- how writers use setting, including weather and place, metaphorically to reflect mood or ideas
- that symbols carry shared or culturally recognised meanings (e.g. a dove representing peace, a crown symbolising authority, a storm suggesting conflict, or light and darkness evoking hope and danger)
- that motifs are recurrent symbols or images that appear repeatedly across a text, drawing attention to important themes (e.g. the repeated image of the locked garden and growing plants in *The Secret Garden* to reflect healing and renewal; the constant references to digging and buried treasure in *Holes* to explore fate and justice; the motif of dreams and aspiration in Martin Luther King Jr’s speech *I Have a Dream* to reinforce hope and equality; or the recurring descriptions of the sea in *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson to evoke danger, freedom and adventure)

## Grammar

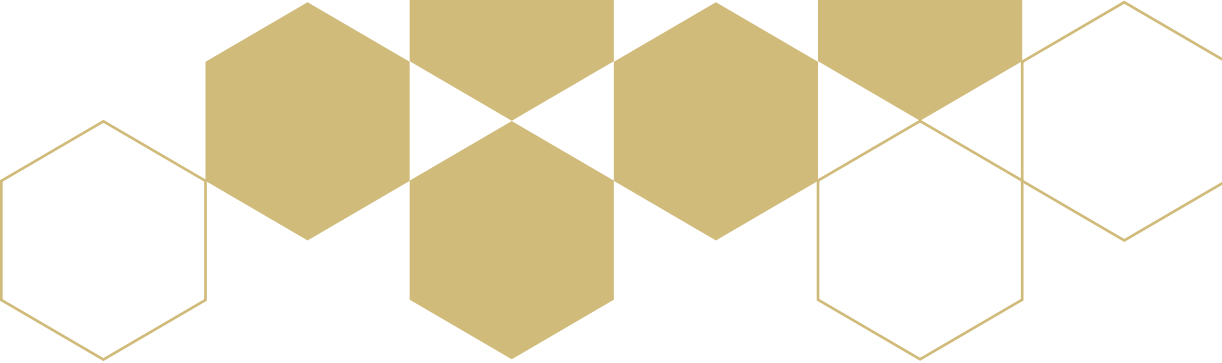
*Pupils should learn to:*

- recognise and correct sentence fragments and run-ons
- combine sentences using coordination and subordination to shape meaning (e.g. 'Stanley dug all day, but he still found nothing' to show contrast; 'Although the garden was locked, Mary felt drawn to it' to foreground tension; 'When the bell rang, the boys ran towards the beach' to clarify time and sequence)
- write and manipulate simple, compound and complex sentences with control
- vary sentence openings, including independent clause and dependent clause openers, for effect
- use relative clauses to add detail within sentences (e.g. 'The boy who found the key kept it hidden'; 'The island, which lay shrouded in mist, seemed unreachable'; 'The speech that inspired the crowd still echoes today')
- use appositive phrases and embedded clauses to clarify or expand meaning (e.g. 'Mary Lennox, a lonely and neglected child, arrives at Misselthwaite Manor'; 'Jim Hawkins, the innkeeper's son, overhears a dangerous secret'; 'Stanley, who believes he is cursed, begins to question his fate')
- control tense consistently across a text and to change tense deliberately for purpose
- choose pronouns carefully to maintain reference and avoid repetition
- use modality to soften, intensify or qualify meaning (e.g. 'The garden might be unlocked' to suggest possibility; 'He must return before nightfall' to convey obligation; 'The island could be dangerous' to signal uncertainty; 'We should act now' to express recommendation)
- create expanded noun phrases using adjectives, nouns and prepositional phrases
- use punctuation to clarify relationships between ideas, including commas, colons, semicolons and hyphens
- punctuate dialogue accurately in texts with multiple speakers, including flexible placement of reporting clauses
- use apostrophes accurately for possession and contraction, including singular and plural forms
- indicate parenthesis using commas, dashes or brackets
- build cohesion within and across paragraphs using conjunctions, discourse markers and repetition
- use grammatical terminology accurately to explain choices and effects

## Context

*Pupils should learn:*

- about the cultural and historical settings, traditions, values and circumstances in which texts were produced (e.g. Ireland at the height of the Great Famine in *Under the Hawthorn Tree* by Marita Conlon-McKenna; the First World War in poems such as *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae)
- examples of ways in which historical and cultural context influence viewpoint, perspective and representation within texts (e.g. how the experience of famine shapes the children's perspective in *Under the Hawthorn Tree*; how early twentieth-century imperial attitudes inform ideas about adventure in *Treasure Island*; or how the struggle for civil rights shapes the voice and urgency of *I Have a Dream*)
- about the purposes of texts and how this affects their form, language and structure
- that different text types convey meaning in different ways, for example myth, legend, historical narrative and explanatory texts
- about features of texts that increase complexity, including archaic language, non-linear structures, complex narrators and resistant texts
- to link texts through shared themes, stories and ideas across time and cultures (e.g. comparing different journeys in *Treasure Island* and *The Odyssey*; exploring themes of injustice in *Under the Hawthorn Tree* and *I Have a Dream*; or tracing ideas about loyalty and betrayal in *Treasure Island* and *The Outsiders* by S E Hinton)
- to compare texts from different periods or cultures, explaining similarities and differences in perspective and purpose
- to write factual and historical texts that demonstrate understanding of context, audience and purpose



## Key Stage 3

In Key Stage 3, building on what they have learned in the primary phase, pupils deepen their understanding of English as a living discipline. They explore meanings, trace patterns, viewpoints and consequences across whole texts. They understand how language maps ideas and shapes worldviews through the way meaning is conveyed by writers. With guidance and practice, they learn to analyse texts with growing confidence and conceptual clarity. Pupils learn to reason with precision, structuring claims and weighing alternatives. They treat sentence structure as a repertoire of choices, shaping emphasis and coherence deliberately. They notice how repetition and variation generate significance across texts. Pupils recognise how time, place and tradition influence representation and interpretation.

Crucially, pupils encounter texts that stretch them. They read works that demand sustained attention, introduce unfamiliar language and challenge assumptions. These texts are not chosen to intimidate, but to invite curiosity and reward effort. As pupils rise to that challenge, they discover the satisfaction of understanding something complex and the pleasure of recognising themselves as capable readers. At the same time, their writing becomes more precise, more coherent and more independent. Their handwriting is secure, ensuring that fluent writing is possible. They develop the tools to express their thinking with greater control and assurance, moving steadily towards disciplined, confident participation in the subject.

### Pattern

Pupils explore how pattern operates across texts, noticing recurring structures, images and stylistic choices. They learn to recognise these patterns, apply them thoughtfully in their own work, and refine or adapt them as their understanding deepens. As their understanding grows, pupils move beyond identification. They consider why a writer sustains a particular pattern and what happens when it shifts or breaks. They test these insights in their own writing, applying patterned choices deliberately and refining them as they gain greater control. Pattern becomes something which they analyse, use and adapt, rather than simply experience.

*Pupils should learn:*

- the key sound devices of poetry, including rhyme, metre, stress, alliteration, assonance and consonance
- how iambic pentameter mirrors spoken English and how variation from it creates emphasis, tension or emotional intensity

- how metrical variation, including trochaic substitution, creates emphasis by disrupting established rhythmic expectations (e.g. the opening of *Macbeth's* 'If it were done when 'tis done' beginning with a stressed syllable, or 'Now is the winter of our discontent' in *Richard III*, where the initial trochaic inversion foregrounds a key word and shifts the tone)
- how line length, stanza form, enjambment and caesura contribute to rhythm
- about motifs and how they differ from symbols and themes (e.g. in *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, the recurring references to fire function as a motif; the conch operates as a symbol of order and authority; and the theme of civilisation versus savagery emerges through the patterned development of these elements across the novel)
- how repetition, recurrence and contrast function structurally (e.g. the repeated visits of the Ghost in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* structuring Scrooge's moral transformation; the repeated return to the witches in *Macbeth* reinforcing inevitability)
- how juxtaposition highlights contrasts and parallels
- about traditional poetic forms (e.g. sonnet, ballad, dramatic monologue)
- how patterns operate at different scales, including sentence, stanza, scene, chapter and whole text
- how beginnings establish norms and expectations, and orient the reader
- how endings resolve, invert or disrupt established patterns
- that variation and deviation depend on an established norm (e.g. the regular rhythm of iambic pentameter in *Romeo and Juliet* makes a disrupted line feel urgent or emotionally charged; the steady narrative voice in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* makes moments of direct address more striking; the controlled structure of a dramatic monologue in Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess' makes a sudden tonal shift feel unsettling)
- how structural pacing is created through the distribution of action, reflection and pause, and how pacing affects tension and expectation
- how parallelism and symmetry operate grammatically and structurally (e.g. the repeated commandment structure in *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, whose balanced phrasing makes later corrupt revisions more shocking; the mirrored social divisions in *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman, where structural parallels between families expose injustice; the calm, repetitive civic language in Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery*, whose orderly symmetry intensifies the horror of the ending)
- how pattern operates differently in poetry, prose and drama

## Story

Pupils come to see narrative not simply as something that happens, but as a system of meaning. They learn that stories are shaped through pattern, perspective, structure and consequence. Events are arranged, information is withheld or revealed, characters are positioned for us to admire, distrust or question. As their understanding deepens, pupils begin to notice how openings establish expectations, how conflicts are constructed, how turning points alter direction and how endings invite judgement. They explore how viewpoint shapes sympathy, how time can be manipulated, and how recurring images or situations reinforce theme. In doing so, they move from following a plot to analysing how and why it has been designed. Story becomes not just entertainment, but a crafted structure through which writers think about power, justice, loyalty, identity and change.

*Pupils should learn:*

- that tragedy and comedy are common structural plot types, with tragedy typically moving from order to chaos and comedy from chaos to order (e.g. the descent into violence in *Romeo and Juliet* compared with the movement towards reconciliation in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)
- about plot, genre and narrative causality
- how conflict generates narrative meaning (e.g. the tension between civilisation and savagery in *Lord of the Flies* driving the boys' descent into chaos)
- how narrative conventions shape reader expectations (e.g. the Gothic setting in Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* preparing the reader for isolation and fear)
- how time is manipulated through sequencing, flashback and delay
- how narrative viewpoint controls access to knowledge and judgement (e.g. the third-person perspective in *Lord of the Flies*, which limits us to what the boys perceive and misunderstand; the use of child perspectives in Dennis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills*, where adult actors expose the gap between innocence and cruelty; the framed narration in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, where Lockwood and Nelly filter events, complicating sympathy and reliability)
- how narrative voice conveys attitude, distance and reliability (e.g. the spare, parable-like voice in *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, which creates moral distance and a sense of inevitability; the reflective, confessional tone in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, which shapes sympathy while limiting what we can fully trust; or the self-conscious storytelling in *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, where the narrator openly questions which version of events should be believed)
- how character is revealed through choice, action, speech and consequence
- that characters are constructed representations rather than real people, and that they function as tenors through which ideas, values and conflicts are explored

- how characterisation operates through choice, action, consequence and pattern by analysing how characters are shaped across a text
- how characters can operate symbolically or allegorically by analysing how figures embody ideas, tensions or social roles
- how setting operates symbolically as well as descriptively by analysing how place reflects conflict or theme (e.g. the island in *Lord of the Flies* shifting from paradise to a symbol of moral collapse)
- how stories encode moral, psychological and social ideas by analysing how values are implied rather than stated (e.g. *Animal Farm* exposing the corruption of power through the pigs' gradual takeover)
- how intertextuality and retelling operate across traditions by analysing how texts adapt earlier narratives (e.g. *Across the Barricades* by Joan Lingard reworking *Romeo and Juliet* to explore conflict in a modern urban setting; Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* retelling *The Odyssey* from Penelope's perspective)
- how motifs operate as recurring narrative elements by tracking images, actions or situations across a whole text (e.g. the repeated imagery of fragmentation and punctuation in the poem 'Belfast Confetti' by Ciaran Carson to reflect disorientation and conflict; the persistent references to patterns, bars and creeping figures in *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman to symbolise confinement and psychological decline; or the recurring misunderstandings, duplications and false identities in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which sustain both its comedy and its satire of social convention)
- how variation in a motif signals change in character, mood or theme by analysing how recurrence develops rather than repeats (e.g. the shifting references to the wallpaper in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, which move from irritation to obsession to identification; the evolving image of Manderley in *Rebecca*, from romanticised memory to a site of secrecy and threat; or the changing symbolic weight of the conch in *Lord of the Flies*, from order and authority to fragility and loss)
- how themes emerge through pattern rather than statement by analysing how ideas are implied through repeated narrative choices (e.g. the tension between private integrity and public duty in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee shaping the theme of courage)
- that themes are unstated tenors by analysing how plot, character, motif and structure repeatedly point towards the same underlying idea or argument
- to identify tropes, generic conventions and parody
- about various types and purposes of irony within stories/plays e.g. satire
- how stories encode moral, psychological and social ideas by analysing how themes are embodied in plot, character and motif

## Argument

Pupils learn to reason rigorously with language. They come to see argument not as opinion, but as disciplined thinking made visible. Claims must be clear, evidence must be relevant, and reasoning must connect the two. They learn to define terms, qualify assertions and anticipate counterarguments. They learn that effective argument depends on structure: a focused claim, logically ordered points and precise conclusions. They practise weighing alternatives, refining positions and distinguishing between assertion and proof. Over time, pupils develop the confidence to enter existing debates with clarity and control. They recognise that arguments respond to other arguments, and that persuasive writing depends not on volume or certainty, but on coherence, proportion and judgement.

*Pupils should learn:*

- the difference between assertion, explanation and argument
- to construct sustained lines of argument rather than collections of points
- how claims are developed, qualified and refined cumulatively across paragraphs
- to use evidence selectively and analytically in support of claims
- to embed evidence and explain its relevance and significance
- to make counterarguments and rebuttals that strengthen rather than derail an argument
- to use evaluative language and appropriate modality to express judgement and certainty
- how introductions frame arguments and conclusions resolve, extend or complicate them
- how academic verbs signal stance, judgement and interpretation (e.g. recognising the difference between saying a writer *describes* an event and arguing that they *critique*, *expose*, *undermine* or *satirise* it; understanding how verbs such as *suggests*, *implies*, *constructs*, *foregrounds* or *challenges* position the reader to see a text in a particular way)
- how comparative arguments balance similarity and difference in service of a claim
- to write structured analytical essays that include:
  - a thesis statement that establishes a clear, arguable interpretation in response to the question
  - a controlling idea that governs the essay's focus and introduces a clear line of argument
  - topic sentences that translate the thesis into a focused line of argument for each paragraph
  - carefully selected and evidenced textual evidence
  - analysis of the effect of linguistic and structural devices

- evaluation of the writer's intent
  - comparison between or within texts
  - contextual information that supports the line of argument
  - recognition of different arguments and alternative points of view
- how rhetorical choices shape persuasion, including appeals to reason, credibility and emotion (e.g. using statistics and evidence to appeal to reason; establishing expertise or moral authority to build credibility; employing emotive language, vivid imagery or personal anecdote to stir emotion in speeches, opinion articles or campaign materials)
  - how audience, purpose and context shape argument structure, emphasis and language
  - how framing an issue shapes assumptions, values and judgements, influencing what counts as reasonable or persuasive (e.g. describing a school policy as a 'reform' rather than a 'change' to suggest improvement; referring to a character's actions as 'ambitious' rather than 'ruthless' to shift moral judgement; or labelling an event a 'tradition' instead of a 'habit' to imply legitimacy and continuity)
  - how tone influences credibility and effectiveness (e.g. a measured, formal tone in a speech can enhance authority; a sarcastic tone can undermine a target but risk alienating an audience; an impassioned tone can convey urgency but may reduce perceived objectivity if overused)
  - that arguments are dialogic, responding to and anticipating other viewpoints (e.g. acknowledging a counterargument before refuting it; qualifying a claim with *while some may argue...*; or incorporating alternative interpretations in order to strengthen and refine a central position)
  - how arguments position themselves in relation to existing ideas, debates and traditions (e.g. aligning with established interpretations, challenging dominant readings, or reframing familiar questions in order to offer a fresh perspective within an ongoing conversation)
  - how argument operates differently in written essays, spoken discussion and formal debate
  - how spoken argument differs structurally from written argument (e.g. spoken argument often relies on repetition, rhetorical questions and vocal emphasis to guide listeners in real time, whereas written argument depends more on explicit signposting, carefully sequenced paragraphs and cohesive devices to ensure clarity without the support of tone or gesture)
  - to participate in formal discussion and debate using shared norms
  - the ethical norms of argument, including accurate representation of opposing views, responsible use of evidence and proportional certainty
  - to critically evaluate arguments recognising how language is manipulated for purpose
  - to recognise bias and different points of view

## Metaphor

Pupils study metaphor as a way of thinking, not merely a stylistic device. They learn that a metaphor has two distinct elements: the linguistic expression on the page, the vehicle, and the underlying concept or idea being understood through it, the tenor. They explore how metaphor works by mapping qualities from the vehicle onto the tenor, with meaning arising from the relationship between them rather than from either element alone. In *time is a thief*, for example, the idea of stealing is mapped onto time, shaping how we understand loss. Over time, pupils move beyond identifying metaphors to explaining how they shape meaning and using them deliberately in their own writing.

*Pupils should learn:*

- the difference between literal and figurative meaning
- that connotation refers to the associations, implications and emotional colouring a word carries beyond its literal meaning, and that these implied meanings influence tone, mood and interpretation
- about the following forms of figurative language:
  - metaphor
  - extended metaphor
  - motif
  - symbolism
  - allegory
  - semantic fields
- that metaphorical language has three components:
  - the image or expression used (the vehicle)
  - the underlying idea or concept being described (the tenor)
  - the shared qualities that link the two (the ground)
- that although the tenor may sometimes be explicitly stated (e.g. 'Juliet is the sun') in most metaphors it is suppressed and must be inferred (e.g. in '*Out, out, brief candle!*', life is never explicitly referred to but is understood through the fragility of the candle)
- that authors use metaphor to influence the reader's evaluation, judgement and viewpoint and to shape tone and world view (e.g. describing the city as a jungle to suggest danger and lawlessness; presenting memory as a ghost to evoke persistence and unease)
- that in literary texts metaphor invites interpretation and ambiguity; in nonliterary texts it typically clarifies, persuades or evaluates

- to use metaphor and connotation deliberately in their own writing
- how metaphors shape evaluation, judgement and viewpoint (e.g. describing a policy as a 'burden' to signal criticism, framing change as 'progress' to imply approval, or labelling opponents as 'parasites' to dehumanise and condemn)
- to trace extended metaphors by following how the shared qualities between tenor and vehicle are developed, refined or complicated across a text (e.g. tracking how a journey metaphor shifts from optimism to disillusionment as obstacles accumulate, or how a disease metaphor intensifies to suggest moral decay)
- that motifs are recurring elements whose meaning develops through patterned repetition and change (e.g. blood in *Macbeth*; light and darkness in *Romeo and Juliet*; the green light in F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*)
- that symbols are metaphors with stable meanings across times or cultures (e.g. the dove as peace, the scales as justice, light as hope or goodness)
- how allegory constructs meaning systematically across characters, events and settings (e.g. how the farm, animals and political slogans in *Animal Farm* operate together to represent a wider historical and ideological argument, or how the journey and survival narrative in *Life of Pi* invites symbolic interpretation beyond the literal story)
- to identify semantic fields that sustain metaphorical coherence (e.g. recognising clusters of sea-related lexis such as 'drift', 'currents', 'tide', 'anchor' to show how a journey or struggle is framed as navigation)
- that a conceptual metaphor is an underlying cognitive mapping in which one domain of experience is understood in terms of another (e.g. argument as war, time as money, life as a journey), shaping how ideas are structured and interpreted
- that etymology reveals the metaphorical roots of abstract language (e.g. *comprehend* from Latin *comprehendere*, 'to grasp'; *influence* from Latin *influere*, 'to flow into'; *consider* from Latin *considerare*, 'to observe the stars'), showing how physical experience underpins abstract thought)

## Grammar

Pupils use grammar as a tool for making meaning rather than as a set of isolated rules. They learn that every grammatical choice shapes emphasis, clarity and tone. Instead of asking simply whether a sentence is correct, they ask what it does. They have the tools to consider what choices are available to them and which are most appropriate for a given purpose. As their confidence grows, they experiment deliberately: varying sentence length to control pace, selecting active or passive constructions to shift focus, embedding clauses to add nuance, or simplifying structure to sharpen force. Grammar becomes a repertoire of options. The emphasis is not on naming forms for their own sake, but on using them consciously to achieve particular effects.

*Pupils should learn:*

- to manipulate meaning by altering syntax, including sentence structure and word order (e.g. placing a subordinate clause first to foreground context, using inversion to create emphasis, or ending with a short, final sentence to deliver impact)
- that sentences are tools for connecting ideas and establishing relationships between concepts enabling writers to signal cause and effect, contrast, sequence, emphasis or qualification through deliberate structural choices
- to construct and control dependent clauses, including adverbial, relative and noun clauses, to express cause, condition, contrast, time and concession
- to construct and control non-finite clauses, including past participle, present participle and infinitive clauses, particularly in fronted sentence positions
- to maintain clear subject–verb relationships, including avoiding dangling participles and maintaining agreement across expanded sentences
- to manipulate sentence openings deliberately, including fronted adverbials, prepositional phrases and delayed main clauses, to control emphasis and pacing
- to use voice and agency, including active and passive constructions, to assign responsibility and shape emphasis
- how to control modality through modal verbs, adverbs and evaluative language to express certainty, doubt and judgement
- to construct parallel grammatical structures to build rhythm, escalation and rhetorical force (e.g. repeating a clause pattern to intensify a point, stacking similarly structured phrases to create momentum, or arranging balanced contrasts to sharpen an argument)
- to use coordination and subordination together to accumulate, contrast and qualify ideas
- to construct comparative and correlative structures, including ‘the more...the more’ and contrastive comparative forms
- to use inversion and non-standard word order for rhetorical emphasis, including negative adverbial inversion
- how to use relative clauses and appositive noun phrases to add precision, evaluation and layered meaning without disrupting sentence coherence
- to deploy repetition deliberately for cohesion and emphasis (e.g. using lexical echo to repeat key terms across sentences to reinforce an idea, or anadiplosis, where the final word of one clause begins the next, to create continuity and momentum)
- to use punctuation rhetorically, including commas to mark clause boundaries, colons to clarify or reveal, semicolons to link related main clauses, and dashes or brackets for authorial asides

- to construct grammatically secure thesis statements using subordinating conjunctions to establish contrast or causality (e.g. 'Although Macbeth appears loyal, his ambition ultimately destroys him'; 'Because the society prizes status above justice, inequality becomes inevitable')
- to construct topic sentences using abstract nouns derived from adjectives to sustain paragraph focus (e.g. 'Macbeth's ambition drives his moral decline'; 'The cruelty of the regime exposes its insecurity'; 'The fragility of trust becomes central to the relationship')
- to embed quotations grammatically within sentences to preserve syntactic flow and analytical control
- to sustain paragraph cohesion through reference chains, consistent tense, viewpoint and grammatical person (e.g. introducing *Ralph* and then maintaining clarity through *he* and *his* without ambiguity; keeping literary analysis in the present tense to avoid shifts such as *the writer shows* rather than *showed*; or sustaining third-person perspective throughout a paragraph rather than moving unpredictably between *you*, *we* and *they*)
- to use discourse markers and sentence-level transitions to signal logical relationships between ideas (e.g. using *however* to introduce contrast, *therefore* to signal consequence, *for example* to clarify, or *in contrast* to position ideas against one another)
- to align sentence structure with paragraph purpose, including build-up, pivot and resolution (e.g. beginning with a clear topic sentence to establish focus, developing with layered or cumulative clauses to build complexity, then using a shorter or more emphatic sentence to signal a shift or sharpen the concluding point)
- to sustain whole-text cohesion by maintaining controlling ideas through consistent grammatical choices
- to adapt grammatical choices to genre, purpose and audience in both literary and non-literary writing

## Context

Pupils learn that texts are shaped by the time, place and traditions in which they are written. Writers draw on inherited forms, prevailing beliefs and contemporary concerns, whether consciously or not. No text exists in isolation; each emerges from a particular historical moment and cultural conversation. As pupils deepen their study, they begin to see how context influences viewpoint, characterisation and theme. They recognise that attitudes to class, gender, faith, nation or authority may differ across periods, and that these differences shape both what is represented and how it is represented. Context is a tool for interpretation. Pupils use contextual knowledge to refine, test and sometimes challenge their readings. They learn to ask how a text might have been understood at the time of its publication and how it might be read differently now. In doing so, they develop more informed, balanced and historically aware interpretations.

*Pupils should learn:*

- about major literary periods and movements studied at KS3 (e.g. Early Modern, Victorian and Modern writing)
- how historical and social contexts influence what writers write about and how texts are received
- to use contextual knowledge to explain meanings in texts, rather than add background information
- that texts belong to wider cultural and literary traditions
- how English literature draws on earlier storytelling traditions, including classical Greek and Roman myths, epic and tragedy
- how Biblical stories and imagery influence themes, symbols and moral ideas in literature (e.g. Cain and Abel shaping ideas of jealousy and fratricide in Steinbeck's *East of Eden*; the Fall influencing presentations of temptation and guilt in *Macbeth*; flood imagery in dystopian fiction symbolising judgement or renewal; sacrificial figures in texts such as Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* drawing on Christ-like redemption)
- how folk tales and oral storytelling traditions shape narrative patterns, characters and motifs (e.g. the quest structure and magical helper in *The Hobbit* by Tolkien; the wicked stepmother and transformation motif in *Cinderella* retellings; the trickster figure in Anansi stories influencing later comic characters; the 'three trials' pattern shaping adventure narratives)
- how myths and archetypal stories, such as creation stories, flood myths and heroic journeys, recur across cultures
- how writers adapt, retell and reinterpret stories for new audiences and new times
- how adaptations and reinterpretations can change meaning rather than simply repeat it (e.g. *West Side Story* transforming *Romeo and Juliet* into a commentary on race and identity; *The Lion King* reshaping *Hamlet* for a family audience; contemporary retellings of *Frankenstein* shifting the focus from scientific ambition to ethical responsibility)
- that texts can take on new meanings when read in different historical and cultural contexts
- that literature can explore contested histories and social conflict, including writing about the Troubles and post-conflict Northern Ireland



## Vision statement for Drama

Drama considers how stories are created, shared and understood, and how meaning is made in the space between performers and audience. Pupils who study drama learn not only how to make theatre but how to watch it with knowledge and discernment. They become attentive audience members and developing critics able to recognise the forms and genres that shape the art. Understanding audience is central. Theatre depends on shared attention, trust and mutual respect between performers and those who watch. Pupils learn how to behave in a theatre and why it matters. Pupils also become informed audience members able to engage confidently with performance throughout their lives. Pupils learn to form and justify judgements about what makes theatre effective.

At its heart, drama is the study of storytelling. This may be as simple as a story read aloud, or as complex as large-scale theatre, film or streaming productions. Storytelling helps individuals and communities make sense of experience, explore conflict and imagine alternatives. Drama gives pupils access to this cultural inheritance and its practices.

In schools, the building blocks of drama are developed primarily through the study and making of theatre. Pupils learn through acting, directing, devising and designing. They explore how stories are shaped in rehearsal and realised in performance. Drama also includes screen-based forms such as film and television, which share principles of character, narrative and audience engagement while adapting them to different media.

Making theatre is collaborative. Pupils learn to work positively and reliably in groups, contributing creatively to shared outcomes. These habits require explicit teaching and high expectations. Discipline is not opposed to creativity; it makes risk-taking possible. A well-run drama space is structured, purposeful and safe.

As pupils progress through the primary years, they move from spontaneous play towards deliberate construction. They make purposeful choices about character, space and action. They begin to recognise theatrical conventions and to use language to describe what they have made and seen.

In post-primary education, pupils encounter drama as a distinct discipline. Practical work becomes more precise and reflective. Pupils develop technique and interpretive awareness, working as performers, directors, designers and technicians. They learn that performance is not mere self-expression, but crafted work shaped by form, genre and audience. Alongside practical skill, they acquire the vocabulary and conceptual tools to analyse performance and play texts, and to understand theatre as a cultural practice with a history and tradition, including those rooted in Ireland and the British Isles.

A drama curriculum should ensure continuity and progression. Vocabulary, conventions and background knowledge are taught cumulatively so that all pupils can participate fully. Practical skill, theoretical understanding and critical judgement develop together, fostering competence, confidence and insight.

The study of drama should entitle pupils to:

- the craft knowledge needed to make stories live in space
- the interpretive knowledge needed to understand and judge performance
- the cultural knowledge needed to place theatre within a wider human tradition
- the habits of attention, collaboration and reflection that sustain shared meaning

In this way, drama prepares pupils not only for further study, but for participation in one of humanity's oldest and most powerful acts: the telling and receiving of stories, together, in the presence of others.



# Subject-specific categories

Although drama draws on many kinds of knowledge, the subject becomes easier to teach and learn when its complexity is organised into two practical domains:

- making drama and developing as a practitioner
- studying, understanding and working in a range of different forms and genres

And two theoretical domains:

- how drama communicates with an audience
- dramaturgy (with a focus on cultural, historical and social contexts)

Each category describes a distinct way in which meaning is created, shaped and shared within the discipline of drama. Each category explores a different strand of disciplinary knowledge, yet each depends on the others. Practical making is informed by theoretical understanding; interpretation sharpens practice; knowledge of forms and traditions deepens creative choice. Together, they allow teachers to specify what must be taught and enable pupils to build the conceptual frameworks that make drama meaningful. Most importantly, they orient the curriculum towards meaning-making: not as unstructured activity, but as a cumulative journey into how stories are created, communicated and shared in the empty space.

## Making drama

This category focuses on developing pupils' knowledge and skill in the various aspects of making theatre. Central to this are the physical and emotional aspects of the art. Pupils should learn how to use their bodies and voices to communicate to an audience, and how to control and access a range of emotions in a way that can hold an audience. Physical, vocal and emotional health should also be encouraged and developed. Pupils also learn how to work in groups, how to collaborate creatively to produce new work and new understanding and to develop an aesthetic eye and ear enabling them to ask, and begin to answer, the question of how we know whether something is any good.

## Different forms and genres

Pupils need to learn how to perform in a wide range of performance styles. There is a range of forms and genres pupils need to know about not just in theory but in the understanding of these forms through their engagement in the art. For example, they should know the Stanislavski system and be able to use it as well as being able to access the approaches of Pina Bausch and the Ancient Greeks.

Drama pupils are expected to understand not only the work of performers, but also the associated arts of theatre design and technical theatre and to be able to engage with theatre production more broadly, including the everyday roles that sustain a venue such as stage management, front of house and box office.

## **Audience**

Drama exists in relation to an audience. This category positions pupils as informed audience members and developing critics, learning how drama communicates meaning and how that meaning is interpreted, questioned and judged. Pupils explore how signs and symbols operate on stage; they learn about different cultural and social contexts and how they can shape response. They learn to articulate their interpretations, moving from immediate reaction to reasoned judgement. The movement from stage to page becomes explicit as pupils learn to describe, analyse and evaluate theatre using shared critical language.

## **Dramaturgy**

Drama belongs to a shared cultural inheritance. This category focuses on the knowledge pupils need to understand how theatre has been shaped across time, place and tradition. Pupils study forms, genres and styles, and encounter play texts as blueprints for performance rather than finished artefacts. They learn how stories move from page to stage, how theatrical conventions develop, and how theatre connects with literature and other subjects. Attention is given to traditions that have influenced contemporary practice, including those rooted in Northern Ireland. Theatre is understood as a living practice in which inherited forms are adapted, challenged and renewed.

Practical domains	
Making drama	Different forms and genres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The developing theatre artist</li> <li>• Mainly as actors, directors and members of a 'troupe'</li> <li>• Working physically developing knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Physical and vocal skills, emotional intelligence and resilience, performance and aesthetic awareness, critical judgement</li> <li>• Interpretation, judgement and dramatic creation</li> <li>• Group, pair and solo work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical study of the form</li> <li>• Devising and improvisation</li> <li>• Understanding the work of, or working as, a designer or technician</li> <li>• Learning about a wide range of forms, styles and genres and practitioners and being able to work practically within their theatrical and dramatic conventions</li> <li>• Understand and be able to work in TV, film, and other associated artforms, such as music, dance, performance art etc.</li> </ul>
Theoretical domains	
Audience	Dramaturgy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience as informed member</li> <li>• The critic</li> <li>• Developing opinions, aesthetic awareness and taste</li> <li>• Semiotics</li> <li>• How theatre communicates meaning</li> <li>• Audience, context and purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic knowledge about theatre</li> <li>• Theatre history at a school-appropriate level</li> <li>• Genre, form and style</li> <li>• Reading and writing play texts</li> <li>• Links to literature and other subjects</li> <li>• Dramatic forms, structures and traditions</li> <li>• Page to stage</li> <li>• Storytelling as a cultural practice</li> <li>• Cultural, social and historical understanding of a range of texts, settings and possible interpretations</li> </ul>



# Foundation Stage

Drama begins with play, attention and shared meaning. Children learn that drama happens when someone does something and someone else watches. This simple relationship lays the groundwork for all later theatrical understanding. Pupils learn that drama follows simple conventions that organise action in space and time.

## Making drama

*Pupils should learn how to:*

- take part in structured play and drama games with shared rules
- use body, voice and movement to represent people, animals and objects
- take on and sustain a simple role in play
- speak clearly enough to be heard by others
- listen to others and take turns in talk and action
- use talk to develop ideas and negotiate roles
- follow simple instructions to shape play into purposeful activity

## Different forms and genres

*Pupils should:*

- use dressing up and simple props to signal role and character
- explore familiar stories through role-play and improvisation
- retell stories using action, movement and speech
- repeat and adapt known stories through play

## **Audience**

*Pupils should learn:*

- to watch short performances attentively
- that drama involves performers and an audience
- to watch quietly, when appropriate
- when it is appropriate to respond or join in
- how to show appreciation for performances through simple audience behaviours (e.g. applause)
- that audience behaviour affects the performance

## **Dramaturgy**

*Pupils should learn:*

- when to speak during play and performance
- when to listen to others
- how to follow simple cues for action and movement
- that actions happen in an order



# Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, pupils move from playful exploration towards more purposeful dramatic activity. Pupils learn that drama involves both performing and watching. They begin to make deliberate choices about character, action and voice, and to understand that drama is created for an audience. Pupils learn that drama can take different forms and be created for different purposes. Practical work remains central, but it builds on the Foundation Stage by being increasingly shaped by simple conventions, shared stories and attentive reflection on what has been made and seen.

## Making drama

*Pupils should learn how to:*

- explore emotions and show how actions, facial expression and movement can communicate a character's feelings
- work collaboratively in small groups to create simple performances based on familiar stories
- vary voice, movement and expression to suit different characters and situations
- improvise in role, responding to others while maintaining character
- interpret simple scripts or story outlines through performance

## Different forms and genres

*Pupils should learn:*

- how to perform familiar genres such as fairy tales, fables and traditional stories
- how to explore drama using music, movement and dance
- that drama can be created and performed in different spaces, such as classrooms, halls or other familiar settings
- how simple props, costume, sound and lighting can support storytelling and performance
- that drama can be performed in different ways for different audiences and purposes

## **Audience**

*Pupils should learn:*

- how to watch and listen attentively to live and recorded performances
- that audiences respond to performances and can affect how they feel and unfold
- how to talk about what they liked or disliked in a performance and explain their preferences
- that different people may have different opinions about the same performance
- that what is seen and heard on stage or screen can represent meaning
- how to reflect on their own performances and those of others, identifying what worked well and what could be improved

## **Dramaturgy**

*Pupils should learn:*

- that drama is written to be performed, not simply read
- that stories and plays can be retold or adapted for different audiences
- that drama can communicate ideas and messages, including ideas about morality
- that stories and drama come from different times and places
- how to explore drama linked to their own lives, locality and community



## Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, pupils see drama more explicitly as a disciplined art form. Building on their Key Stage 1 knowledge of the purposes of drama, they now learn that drama is created through deliberate choices in performance, rehearsal and collaboration. They develop greater control, precision and intention in performance, alongside a growing understanding of established forms, structures and contexts. Practical work is increasingly shaped by rehearsal, reflection and interpretation, and pupils begin to use shared theatrical language to describe, analyse and evaluate drama.

### Making drama

*Pupils should learn how to:*

- devise drama using improvisation and scripting, shaping work through rehearsal, refinement and feedback
- communicate meaning through voice, movement, gesture, pause and mime, understanding that acting involves representing someone other than oneself
- inhabit roles in order to create characters, exploring motivation, purpose and change across a performance
- develop performance control through movement and voice work, using these skills to affect an audience
- use stage space, including entrances, exits, positioning and key stage areas (e.g. upstage, downstage, wings and apron)
- perform poetry individually and chorally, attending to rhythm, voice and collective meaning

*Pupils should learn:*

- that effective performance results from interpretation, rehearsal and collaboration

## **Different forms and genres**

*Pupils should learn:*

- to rehearse and perform scripted plays
- how to work effectively from a script, including following stage directions and understanding scripts as texts written for performance
- that plays are structured through scenes, acts, characters and dramatic development

## **Audience**

*Pupils should learn:*

- to perform for a range of audiences and in different contexts
- the conventions of being an audience in classrooms, schools and theatres
- how performance, design and technical elements communicate meaning
- to reflect on and respond to live and recorded performances

## **Dramaturgy**

*Pupils should learn:*

- that scripts function as blueprints for performance rather than finished products
- about the difference between live and recorded performance



## Key Stage 3

At Key Stage 3, pupils develop their understanding of drama as an art. Practical work, interpretation and theoretical understanding develop together. Pupils learn that theatre is created through disciplined collaboration, interpretation and technical craft. They learn that dramatic meaning is shaped by form, genre, medium and tradition, and that different theatrical approaches require different methods of making, performing and analysing drama. Pupils learn that meaning in drama is shaped through performance choices, space and audience interaction, and that these can be analysed and evaluated using shared theatrical language. They learn that dramaturgy draws on academic knowledge of theatre, text and context to understand how drama is constructed, interpreted and realised in performance for different audiences.

### Making drama

*Pupils should learn:*

- how to collaborate in creating theatre from scripts and improvisation, using a range of structured approaches to making and shaping dramatic work
- that meaning is communicated through voice, movement, gesture, use of space and mimetic skills, and how these choices affect an audience
- how to inhabit roles in order to create characters and dramatic situations, making purposeful choices about behaviour, status and relationships
- to respond to character development, including tracking a character's arc and representing change across a performance
- how to develop physical, vocal and emotional range through movement, voice and performance techniques, using these to communicate intention and impact
- that directors, designers and technicians contribute to theatre-making, and to work practically within these roles as part of a collaborative team
- how to develop personal artistry by refining performance choices, reflecting on process and adapting ways of working in response to feedback and intention

## Different forms and genres

*Pupils should learn:*

- about the arcs or journeys that characters follow across a play
- how form and genre shape performance choices and audience expectation
- that dramatic meaning is created through structure as well as action
- to devise, rehearse and refine dramatic work using structured processes drawn from a range of theatrical traditions and practitioner approaches
- the distinctive features of different forms, genres and styles, showing this understanding through the work they produce
- how to explore major theatrical traditions and practitioners, and how their ideas shape dramatic form, performance and audience relationship (e.g. Greek theatre, Shakespeare, Brecht and Stanislavski)
- how to adapt their practice by working across different dramatic roles, including performer, director, deviser, writer, designer, technician and critic
- how form, genre and medium influence choices about space, staging and the relationship between stage and page

## Audience

*Pupils should learn:*

- drama operates through shared codes and conventions, and these provide a common language for interpreting and evaluating performance

*Pupils should learn how:*

- to express and justify opinions about drama in speech and writing using shared theatrical language (e.g. pupils should be able to comment on characterisation, staging, dialogue, tension, audience response and dramatic effect, and support their views with specific reference to moments in the performance or script)
- different staging choices and theatre spaces affect audience experience
- meaning is communicated through performance, including acting, movement, voice, design and technical choices
- to use theatrical and dramatic language accurately and fluently in discussion and writing about drama
- to recognise, discuss and write about different forms, genres and styles of drama, including works that experiment with or disrupt established conventions

- space and staging shape audience experience, including the effects of different performance environments
- the relationship between stage and page influences interpretation, and how meaning changes when a text is realised in performance
- basic semiotic concepts, such as sign, symbol and convention, help explain the choices made by directors, performers, designers and technicians
- to apply shared critical language to evaluate the work of others and to critique their own dramatic work
- to develop as informed audience members, able to interpret, judge and respond thoughtfully to live and recorded performance

## **Dramaturgy**

*Pupils should learn about:*

- different historical, cultural and contemporary approaches to theatre

*Pupils should learn how:*

- plays relate to the contexts in which they were written and performed
- performances may be interpreted differently over time
- directors, performers and designers make choices to make drama meaningful for contemporary audiences
- design elements work together to produce dramatic meaning
- to develop secure academic knowledge of theatre, including dramatic texts, performance traditions and critical vocabulary
- dramatic texts are realised in performance, and how interpretive choices by directors, performers and designers shape meaning
- to analyse plays as both written texts and performed works, recognising given circumstances, characterisation, narrative arcs and staging decisions
- form, genre and style shape dramatic writing and performance, and how these can be adapted, subverted or reworked.
- to recognise and understand key theatrical forms, genres and approaches (e.g. naturalism, realism, expressionism, Epic theatre, absurdism and commedia dell'arte)
- drama and theatre connect with wider literary, artistic and cultural movements

- the cultural, social and historical contexts in which drama is written, staged and received, influence interpretation over time
- theatre makers make choices to make drama meaningful, relevant and engaging for contemporary audiences
- to research and evaluate productions across time, including how different audiences and critics have responded to the same work in different contexts
- to develop as informed audience members and critics, able to discuss and write about drama fluently, precisely and with judgement



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