



Key stage 1 English writing training exercise 1 commentary

Pupil A – working at greater depth

This collection includes:

- A) a story
- B) a letter
- C) a diary

All of the statements for ‘working at the expected standard’ and ‘working at greater depth’ are met.

For the purposes of this training, this commentary is for one ‘pupil can’ statement.

The pupil can, after discussion with the teacher, write effectively and coherently for different purposes, drawing on their reading to inform the vocabulary and grammar of their writing

Across the collection, the pupil writes effectively for different purposes, drawing on their reading to inform the vocabulary and grammar of their writing. Following a reading of ‘The Kapok Tree’ by Lynne Cherry, a story (piece A) was created from the perspective of the tree. A letter to the author (piece B) identifies the pupil’s favourite parts of a book and asks questions. Inspired by reading ‘Vlad and the Great Fire of London’ by Kate Cunningham and ‘The Baker’s Boy and the Great Fire of London’ by Tom Bradman, a diary entry (piece C) describes an escape from London.

In each of the pieces, coherence is supported by a range of organisational devices and other features of coherence for clarity.

In the story (piece A), the writing opens with a description of the setting and the 2 main characters before the storyline moves to a different setting, which includes dialogue. This provides variety and clarity for the reader, for example, statements (*Both boys hit the ground in a very different wood*), commands (*“Hey watch where you’re going.”*) questions (*“Ow can you stop hurting me?”*). This extended piece maintains coherence, making effective use of co-ordination to link ideas (*He was sometimes nervous but very brave... “Don’t cut down my home and don’t make the other animals homeless or we’ll all become dinner instead and I don’t want to become dinner”*). Subordination is used to provide additional detail of events and reasons (*HELP!! They cried as they wizzed through a green portal... “If you cut me down most of the animals won’t have a home.”... When he was at the bottom he went over... don’t cut down the amazing Kapok tree because it’s my home*).

The pupil also uses a range of tenses. The story is told using the past tense, both simple and progressive forms (*it looked like a pebble but it was glowing*) and the pupil successfully shifts to the present tense for dialogue.

The letter (piece B) also has an appropriate greeting and sign off. The pupil moves effectively between the past and present tense to explain to the author of the book the reason for writing the letter (*I am writing to you because your book tells us some amazing facts about the rainforest... I never knew that if you cut down the trees*) and what they like about the book (*My favourite part of the story was... I love how you think animals depend on each other*). Modal forms – not a key stage 1 (KS1) requirement – are used to explain what the writer will do as a result of reading it (*I will try my best to tell people not to cut down trees but first I should learn how to keep rainforests safe*).

The diary entry (piece C) is structured with the date and ‘Dear Diary’ and ends with a description of personal feelings, appropriate to a diary. The pupil uses tenses correctly. The simple past tense is used principally to describe the events experienced by the boy and his family (*I tumbled out of bed... HEL! I thought*). At the end of the piece, the writing shifts appropriately into the present tense as the writer explains his current location and his thoughts (*I wonder what London looks like now?... I’m at my friend’s house now. I hope the fire isn’t coming this way*).

Across the collection, the pupil draws on their reading to inform the vocabulary and grammar of their writing.

In the story (piece A), the pupil successfully draws on the original tale of the Kapok tree, initially setting the scene and then writing from the tree’s perspective. The contrast between ‘the woods’ at home and the alternative reality of the Kapok tree is made clear (*WHAM!!! Both boys hit the ground in a very different wood*) Vocabulary is used effectively to paint a picture of the jungle (*silent silky boa constrictor that sneaks silently through my leaves... The sneaky jaguar hangs lazily in my long branches*) and reflect the language of the original text (*lulled to sleep... Chop, Chop “Ow, OW, OW... was now slithering*). Other story-telling language drawn from the pupil’s wider reading is used (*In a tiny village... One bright summer’s day... Spider monkeys climb up, up, UP right up to the top of me.... And soon enough he was fast asleep... Suddenly the man opened one eye, then the other*).

In the letter to Lynne Cherry (piece B), the pupil uses the author’s words (*the roots will wither and die... dry and dusty desert*) and refers to her ideas (*when the sloth was talking in a sssllllloooooowwwwww, deep and lazy voice... how you think animals depend on each other*). The pupil also provides reasons for their thinking using subordination (*because it is funny and clever because a sloth is a lazy animal... because I have learnt about food chains and habitats at school*). Questions are used to engage the reader and expand on the writer’s reason for asking (*Have you written any more books? If you have I’d like to read them... I can’t decide between a magnificent poster or a terrific powerpoint. Can you help me choose?*).

In the diary (piece C), the opening sentence sets the tone for the piece (*Today was dreadful!*) This is followed by additional detail about the anxiety and emotion felt by the writer which is presented through the use of well-chosen vocabulary (*I tumbled out of bed to see a thick grey cloud of smoke and the terrified maid shouting FIRE!... We caught a boat just in time as the flames rose up... I hope the fire isn’t coming this way*). Noun phrases provide specific detail about the events (*thick, grey cloud of smoke... steep stairs... enormous fire...hot and boiling flames*) bringing the reader closer to the action. Co-ordinating conjunctions link events (*he quickly grabbed me onto the other roof and then the rest of my scared family... lots of other people helping but it didn’t work*).