



Standards
& Testing
Agency

KS1 and KS2 writing moderator training

**Conducting the professional discussion:
Guidance for local authority moderators**

2021

Contents

Slide 1	3
Slide 2: Purpose of this video	3
Slide 3: Purpose of this video	3
Slide 4: Overview of the moderation visit	4
Slide 5: The professional discussion step-by-step	5
Slide 6: A successful professional discussion	5
Slide 7: Professional discussion challenges	6
Slide 8: Scenario 1	7
Slide 9: Scenario 1 – strengths and areas for further development	7
Slide 10: Scenario 2	8
Slide 11: Scenario 2 – strengths and areas for further development	8
Slide 12: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?	9
Slide 13: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?	9
Slide 14: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?	9
Slide 15: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?	9
Slide 16: Reflection	10
Slide 17: Summary	10

Slide 1

Key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2) writing moderator training.

Conducting the professional discussion.

Guidance for local authority (LA) moderators.

Slide 2: Purpose of this video

This video has been developed by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) to support the training of LA moderators.

The information in this video draws on teacher assessment (TA) guidance from STA, which covers requirements for KS1 and KS2. For detailed information on the moderation process, please refer to the TA guidance, which is updated annually. It may also be necessary to refer to KS1 and KS2 exemplification materials if further guidance is required when reviewing evidence.

The video also refers to the TA frameworks.

These documents and other guidance from STA are available on the gov.uk website.

Slide 3: Purpose of this video

This video gives an overview of the professional discussion conducted between LA moderators and teachers.

- It provides information about the process of LA moderation of writing at key stages 1 and 2 and demonstrates the central part that the professional discussion plays in this process.
- It clarifies the aims of the professional discussion and its key elements.
- Some of the features of a successful professional discussion are considered, along with some of the challenges, and there are opportunities to pause and reflect on examples of the professional discussion and how it might be conducted.

Slide 4: Overview of the moderation visit

External moderation is a collaborative process between the LA's moderators and the school. It provides an opportunity to discuss judgements on pupils' performance against the requirements of the TA frameworks, using evidence to support decisions.

Teachers should consider it a positive part of their professional development, as an opportunity to have their judgements validated by a trained moderator and ensure they are consistent with national standards.

The moderation visit consists of several stages.

- **Arrival:** when the moderator arrives, the roles and responsibilities of those taking part are outlined. The school needs to ensure that the samples of pupils' day-to-day classwork are available in the space set aside for the visit.
- **Reviewing evidence:** the moderator reviews evidence for each pupil in the sample based on the standard the teacher has judged them to be working at, referring to the relevant 'pupil can' statements from the framework.
- **Professional discussion:** the moderator meets with the relevant year 2 or year 6 teacher to conduct the professional discussion. They seek to understand how each teacher has drawn on evidence of the different standards within the pupil work and how far this reflects an understanding of the framework.
- **Feedback:** the moderator concludes the visit with feedback to the headteacher (or a representative nominated to receive feedback) and completes an agreed outcomes form. This records the agreed, validated judgements, including any revised judgements. It also includes next steps, such as re-moderation of pupils who have the potential to meet the next standard before the deadline for data submission. The form also records any decisions that the school intends to appeal. LA should make schools aware of the appeals process.

Slide 5: The professional discussion step-by-step

While each moderation discussion will not follow a precise sequence, there are some key steps that the moderator and teacher complete.

- Having had an opportunity to read through some of the pieces in the pupil sample, the moderator invites the teacher to present evidence of each 'pupil can' statement in the standard they have awarded.
- The moderator discusses the evidence with the teacher, offering observations and advice around the assessment criteria, where necessary. This should be achieved through the facilitation of dialogue. They also clarify with the teacher how much support pupils received while producing the writing included in the sample, to establish independence.
- The teacher and moderator could read aloud sections of a pupil's writing to illustrate how it meets or does not meet a particular statement, developing a shared understanding of the different standards and of how judgements have been reached. This is also an opportunity to discuss any gaps in evidence against the TA frameworks.
- If the moderator is concerned about the evidence being presented or about the accuracy of judgements, they might seek additional evidence by requesting to see further pupil work, for example, from other areas of the curriculum.
- If any of the teacher's judgements need to be revised, the moderator and teacher consider if there are any implications for similar pupil judgements awarded, and expand the sample, if necessary.

Slide 6: A successful professional discussion

We will now consider some features of a successful professional discussion.

- A successful professional discussion is a balanced two-way process, with teacher and moderator working together throughout, in a systematic review of evidence.
- As part of this, moderators empower teachers to articulate their understanding of the standards. This helps the teacher to feel that the discussion is a vital part of their professional development entitlement, supporting their knowledge and understanding of assessing writing.
- A successful discussion incorporates close engagement with pupil writing; the teacher and moderator refer to specific examples and relate these to 'pupil can' statements, discussing whether the statements have or have not been met. This promotes their shared understanding of the framework standards.
- Where teachers are unsure about the meaning of a particular statement or whether or not it has been met, moderators offer prompts to help teachers reach an accurate conclusion. The moderator might need to discuss what is intended by a 'pupil can' statement if the teacher is unsure about it or has misunderstood it.

They might also need to refer to the national exemplification materials to provide additional illustration.

- A successful professional discussion will result in a clear set of conclusions about the school's teacher assessment judgements, expressed in a way that the teacher and headteacher understand and accept.

Slide 7: Professional discussion challenges

What are the challenges involved in conducting the professional discussion?

- The school or teacher might see the professional discussion as being focused on the school's outcomes rather than on the teacher's understanding and evidencing of the different standards.
- The moderator might take the lead in the discussion in a way that hampers the teacher's participation. The moderator's main role in the discussion is to support or prompt the teacher to articulate their understanding of the standards.
- The work provided by the school, and the teacher's discussion of this, might reveal an incorrect interpretation of what constitutes independent writing.
- The teacher and moderator might have different interpretations of particular 'pupil can' statements. This could require significant discussion and exemplification on the part of the moderator.
- It might be unclear if a particular weakness in a pupil's writing is an exception to their overall attainment, and if they have, or have not met the standard awarded. Teachers must be able to justify their decisions with evidence.
- The teacher might have provided some evidence to support their judgement but not enough to secure assessment at the stated standard. The moderator would need to ask for additional evidence to validate the judgement.
- The discussion might uncover some gaps in or issues with the teacher's subject knowledge, which will need addressing through professional development – this might or might not be achievable by the moderator in their discussion.
- If relevant staff are not available when needed, this can severely hamper the moderator's ability to complete the discussion.
- This also applies in cases where a school has not provided an adequate area for the moderator and teacher to meet.
- You will encounter challenges during the professional discussion. The following scenarios illustrate some possible issues. Think about what you would do in each case.

Slide 8: Scenario 1

Take a moment to read and consider Scenario 1. Focus on the roles of the moderator and teacher.

1. What strengths would you highlight in this professional discussion?
2. What areas would you highlight for further development?

Pause the video to consider these questions.

Slide 9: Scenario 1 – strengths and areas for further development

Considering Scenario 1, you might have noted some of the following strengths.

- The moderator gives the teacher the opportunity to present the pupil writing and the teacher refers to the framework when doing this.
- The moderator spends time reading the pupil writing, to help inform their understanding of the evidence.
- They also present their conclusions verbally to the teacher within the discussion.

What areas for further development did you identify? You might have noted some of the following points.

- While the moderator ultimately agrees with the teacher's judgements, the teacher's knowledge and application of the 'pupil can' statements is not demonstrated.
- Dialogue is not used to establish a shared understanding of the evidence. The moderator could have asked questions to draw out more specific references from the teacher; they could also have demonstrated the process of considering evidence systematically, by reflecting aloud while looking at the pupil writing.

We have highlighted some strengths and areas for development in this scenario – not all are listed here.

Slide 10: Scenario 2

Take a moment to read and consider Scenario 2. It features a situation where moderation by a team of two LA moderators has been agreed with the school.

1. What strengths would you highlight in this professional discussion?
2. What areas would you highlight for further development?

Pause the video to consider these questions.

Slide 11: Scenario 2 – strengths and areas for further development

Considering Scenario 2, you might have noted some of the following positive features.

- The moderators take time to read the pupil writing and use the ‘pupil can’ statements when considering evidence. Before beginning their discussion with the teacher, they reach agreement and are clear about who will be in the lead role.
- The lead moderator explains the issue that has arisen around the ‘greater depth’ standard.
- They also present their conclusions verbally to the teacher within the discussion.

What areas for further development did you identify? You might have noted some of the following points.

- While the moderator ultimately agrees with the teacher’s judgements, the teacher’s knowledge and application of the ‘pupil can’ statements is not demonstrated.
- Dialogue is not used to establish a shared understanding of the evidence. The moderator could have asked questions to draw out more specific references from the teacher, such as: “Could you talk me through the evidence for this ‘pupil can’ statement in this pupil’s work sample?” The moderator could also have demonstrated the process of considering evidence systematically, by reflecting aloud while looking at the pupil writing; for example, “In the pieces I’ve looked at so far, I’ve noticed that adverbials of time are used to build cohesion, but I want to find evidence that some other devices are used as well.”
- The moderator could have clarified that re-moderation would apply only to those pupils that the moderator and teacher both agree have the potential to achieve the next standard before the teacher assessment data submission deadline.

We have highlighted some strengths and areas for development in this scenario – not all are listed here.

Slide 12: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?

We are now going to take a closer look at a difficult moment in a discussion.

Look at Scenario 3.

What could the moderator do next?

How would you respond in this situation? What would you say?

Pause the video to consider these questions

Slide 13: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?

What next steps did you identify?

You might have considered some of the following approaches.

You could model how to look for evidence systematically in the work sample, taking each ‘pupil can’ statement in turn; for example, you could read aloud sections of the writing that highlight occasions when the pupil has not exercised a conscious control over the levels of formality.

You could also ask about gaps, where the teacher might have focused on evidence in some pieces of writing, but not others; for example, they might have found evidence in narrative writing but not non-fiction.

Slide 14: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?

You could use questioning to help the teacher to fully explain their understanding of the standards set out in the TA frameworks; for example, you could ask them to explain which greater depth statements it was difficult to find evidence for and explore this in discussion.

You could then take time to ascertain why the teacher has not considered the standard below, further exploring their understanding of the TA framework.

Slide 15: Scenario 3 – how would you respond?

You could also use question prompts to draw out the teacher’s understanding, focusing on the ‘pupil can’ statements – in this case, for ‘working at greater depth’. If needed, you could refer to the STA exemplification material for this standard.

Slide 16: Reflection

Having watched this video, reflect on the following questions.

- Which aspects of the professional discussion do you feel most confident about?
- What questions do you have and what areas do you want to explore further?

Further support on conducting the professional discussion is available in training materials produced by STA, available through the primary assessment gateway, in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 training materials.

Slide 17: Summary

In summary, the professional discussion needs to focus on establishing a shared understanding of the TA frameworks and 'pupil can' statements, through the discussion of supporting evidence presented by teachers.

It should involve the systematic review of 'pupil can' statements and there should be opportunities to discuss judgements, including any gaps in evidence or instances of particular weakness.

It gives teachers the opportunity to show that the pupils' work consistently demonstrates attainment in line with TA frameworks.

This supports the moderation process of ensuring that TA are accurate and consistent for all pupils and in line with national standards.



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