

Use the writing framework to identify subject-specific writing knowledge and skills

These prompts are intended to be used by teachers of years 7– 8 to help them think about the subject-specific writing knowledge and skills their students will need to support their learning at secondary school.

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| **1.** | **The context** |
| A group of year 7– 8 teachers are evaluating their writing programmes at the end of the first term. Their students’ recent asTTle results show they have reasonable control over many skills required to write different kinds of texts. However the teachers know that their students will need to be able to create texts that are increasingly subject-specific, particularly when they move to secondary school. The science fair is coming up in the following term and the teachers decide that this will be a good opportunity to focus on ‘writing like scientists’.  |
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| **What to do …**  |  | **Record your answers** |
| In what ways do writing tasks become increasingly subject-specific? |  |  |

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| **2.** | **Turning to the writing framework** |
| The teachers use the writing framework to find examples of science-specific writing. They decide to look at two aspects: *writing meaningful text: vocabulary knowledge* and *using writing to think and organisefor learning*. They know that using subject-specific vocabulary in a science context will be quitechallenging for many of their students. They also decide that the kind of thinking, planning and presentation required for the science fair will be a good opportunity to focus on an aspect that previously they haven’t considered in their programmes.  |
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| **What to do …**  |  | **Record your answers** |
| What key vocabulary knowledge and skills do students need in order to create more subject-specific texts?In what ways should the students be able to use their writing to think, plan, and present their ideas and information? |  |  |

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| **3.** | **A closer look at two aspects** |
| The teachers read the descriptors for the fourth and fifth signpost for the aspect, *writing meaningful text: vocabulary knowledge* and decide that the fourth signpost is the best match for most of their students. Although the students are already using precise nouns, adjectives and verbs in their writing, the teachers know that they need a deeper knowledge of how words work so that they can use both academic and subject-specific vocabulary as they develop their ability to write like scientists. The teachers then look at the descriptors for the fourth and fifth signpost for the aspect, *using writing to think and organise for learning.* Theyrealise that although they have always taught ‘note-taking’ they haven’t focused sufficiently on the processes, strategies and questioning that students need in order to clarify their thinking and organise their ideas with increasing independence and flexibility. Instead, the teachers have tended to prepare simple graphic organisers which they then support the students to use.  |
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| **What to do …**  |  | **Record your answers** |
| What other aspects would be useful for the teachers to consider as they develop their students’ ability to write like scientists?  |  |  |

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| **4.** | **Using the aspects when designing rich learning tasks** |
| The teachers unpack the illustrations in the two aspects they are investigating, paying careful attention to the tasks and the way the student responses have been annotated. This helps them to identify the wide variety of writing purposes that the science fair presents.The teachers look at their literacy programmes and plan how they will introduce and teach the knowledge and skills that will support their students to think and write like scientists. They also discuss the opportunities throughout the school day for reinforcing the explicit teaching they are planning and make links to literacy-learning in other areas of the curriculum. |
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| **What to do …**  |  | **Record your answers** |
| How might the teachers introduce and teach the specific vocabulary knowledge the students will need as they work in science?What kinds of writing opportunities could they design so that the students can develop the comprehensive set of knowledge and skills that will enable them to write like scientists? |  |  |