

Year 1 Writing Policy

Introduction

In Year 1, students are at the emergent stage of writing development. The writing programme is designed to nurture early literacy skills through integrated, creative, and scaffolded approaches, encouraging all pupils to express themselves using both pictures and words.

Frequency and Organisation

- Writing lessons in English and Maltese shall be conducted on an alternating, fortnightly basis.
- Each writing session shall last approximately 45 minutes, followed by an Author's Chair session.
- Work is to be presented in narrow-lined copybooks (red line, blue line copybook) with:
 - A red cover for Maltese writing
 - A blue cover for English writing

Prewriting Stage

Prewriting activities provide thematic context, vocabulary enrichment, and engagement opportunities prior to the writing task. Teachers are to guide prewriting through:

- Shared reading
- Circle time discussions

- Thematic activities (informed by pupil interests)
- Oracy-based vocabulary elicitation

Examples of prompts include:

- Video clips (e.g., "Continue the story" or "Suggest a title")
- Drawing with labelling or captioning
- Pictures or photographs
- Lists
- Word banks (developed during brainstorming or journaling discussions)

Writing Development by Term

The writing expectations are progressive across the three terms, and teachers should adjust support based on pupil readiness.

By the end of Term 1

- Pupils respond to prompts through drawing.
- Depending on ability, pupils may:
 - Write the initial letter of the object drawn
 - Label the drawing
 - Write phrases or simple sentences

By the end of Term 2

- Pupils continue responding to prompts with drawings.

- They begin writing words, phrases, or simple sentences, according to their individual ability.
- Time is allocated as follows:
 - Minimum 5 minutes for drawing
 - Minimum 5 minutes for writing
- Emphasis is placed on developing the writing component.

All pupils are expected to write to the best of their ability. Pupils with significant literacy difficulties may receive tailored support but should still participate in writing activities.

By the end of Term 3

- Pupils are expected to write guided sentences and begin to use a checklist before submitting their work.
- Support strategies include:
 - Shared writing
 - Modelled writing
 - Sentence starters

Checklist for Self-Editing

Pupils are introduced to a simple checklist to review their work. The checklist includes:

- Use of capital letters
- Full stops

- Spaces between words

Correction Procedures

- If work includes errors in capitalisation, punctuation, or spacing, the teacher corrects it in collaboration with the pupil.
- Spelling of tricky words and *kliem magiku* is addressed explicitly and corrected.
- For other spelling mistakes, the teacher should:
 - Correct only one spelling error per pupil to avoid discouragement.
 - Use the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check method for corrections.
 - Invite pupils individually to review and discuss their work with praise and encouragement.

For struggling pupils, no spelling errors are to be corrected to maintain motivation and self-esteem. The teacher's focus should be on positive reinforcement and active engagement.

This correction strategy is explained to parents during the Year 1 Literacy Information Session held in January, to ensure understanding of the pedagogical rationale behind selective correction.

Drawings as Writing

- If a pupil submits a drawing in place of written text, the teacher is to engage in discussion with the pupil and transcribe a short description based on the pupil's verbal expression.

Note: Numbers are not permitted at the beginning of written sentences.

Journaling

- Journal writing is carried out at least once a week.
- Each session should last approximately 15 minutes.
- Prompts may include:
 - Video clips
 - Stories
 - Story starters
 - Pictures or picture sequences
- The teacher participates by writing their own journal entry, serving as a model for the students.

Sharing and Feedback

- Following journal writing, pupils share their work during the Author's Chair session.
- Peer feedback may be modelled using phrases such as:
 - *"I really liked..."*
 - *"I have a question..."*
- Journals are a space for self-expression and are therefore not corrected by the teacher.
- Journals are presented in a fancy decorated copybook.