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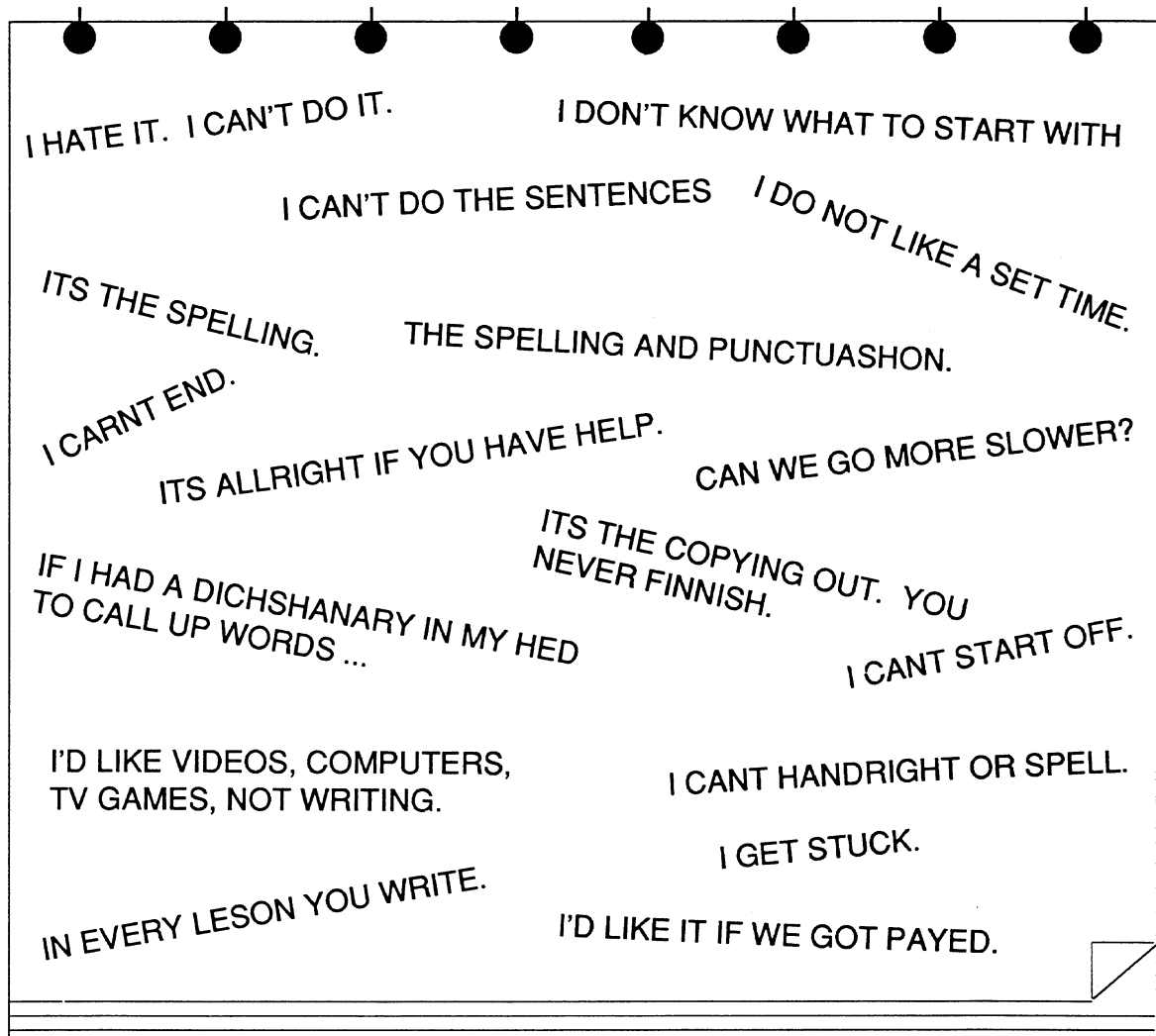
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'Pupils with Special Educational Needs thrive best in a supportive language environment which is anxiety free; stimulating and rich in the varied experiences it presents.'

A Curriculum for All. National Curriculum Council 1989

This book is about writing. It arose out of concern that pupils with special educational needs do not like to write. Here are some genuine statements written by secondary school pupils about writing.



There is a great deal of writing for pupils to do at secondary school, and for children having difficulties with written language the amount of writing becomes a real problem; their written work is the visible evidence of failure and low standard. Such pupils will avoid writing, or produce very little. However, even the most reluctant pupil has something to say, and something to write. The main task is to put pen to paper, get started, and produce some work; at first, any written work is better than none.

'Written work' must be taught; only rarely does it happen incidentally. What follows, in this book, are some tried and tested strategies and subjects to help teachers and pupils start improving written work. Strategies for good writing arise from speaking, listening, and looking - these skills are all part of the National Curriculum's programme of study, and form the basis of much of the work in this book.

However, there is one overriding principle and it is one which many pupils do not know, or even believe.

It is not essential to have the ideas before you write. Ideas will come as the pen moves across the page.

DO NOT

- ✗ Insist that all work is neat, accurate and fully planned
- ✗ Throw away the work
- ✗ Have long periods of silent writing
- ✗ Give vague starter ideas
- ✗ Ask for "copying out"
- ✗ Correct all errors
- ✗ Have writing every lesson
- ✗ Stick to the same type of format and style

DO

- ✓ Prepare the work
- ✓ Encourage daily writing
- ✓ Talk about writing, in groups and with partners
- ✓ Play games to encourage talking
- ✓ Free writing
- ✓ Write with and for the students
- ✓ Look at "good" writing
- ✓ Use different formats
- ✓ Use different styles
- ✓ Keep the work
- ✓ Discuss different ways to present it
- ✓ Make multiple copies to use as resources for students to consult
- ✓ Use as display
- ✓ Look at each other's work
- ✓ Proof-read, assess, use questionnaire to evaluate and improve
- ✓ Use different types of paper
- ✓ Use different types of pens
- ✓ Use word processors

USEFUL REFERENCE BOOKS

- Encouraging Writing** - Robert Protherough. *Methuen (1983)*
- Big Book of Optical Illusions** - Gyles Brandreth. *Carousel (1979)*
- Through Your Own Eyes** - David and Kenneth Agar. *Oxford (1986)*
- Hippogriff Feathers** - Bob Stanish. *Good Apple Inc. Hamilton Press.*
- Words and Their Meanings** - Open University Language Development. *Block 3, Open University (1980).*
- Changing Stories** - English Centre, *ILEA (1984)*
- Making Stories** - B. Mellor, M. Raleigh and P. Ashton. *English Centre, ILEA (1984)*

I encourage pupils to write by looking at their writing as it is. We can plan how to improve it, by choosing one area at a time.

Strategies to do this should be used by all pupils not just those with special educational needs. Any strategy is better than none.

Producing written work is not only the final goal. The aim is for the pupil to be satisfied with the writing and to have enjoyed it. If that happens it must mean good teaching and good learning

'What is good practice in relation to special educational needs is good practice for all.'

NCC A Curriculum For All.

Your Writing

Fill in this sheet to show what writing you have done in the last week.

| What writing? | Who for? | Why? | Type of writing? | Good/ Bad/O.K. |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| School List | Teacher Myself | Homework Videos | Neat . Clean . Quick | Good Bad |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Are you satisfied with your written work? Please tick.

Yes No Sometimes

Which of these would you like to improve? Please tick:

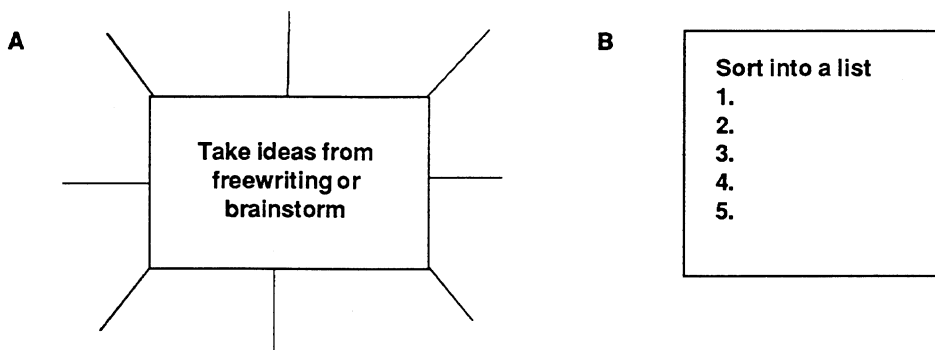
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Neatness | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Spelling | <input type="checkbox"/> | Starting off |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Speed | <input type="checkbox"/> | Grammar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Style of writing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> | Using a computer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Notes |



Encouraging Writing

BRAINSTORMS AND LISTING

- Brainstorming (Osborn 1963) is a method of producing a quantity of ideas in a short period of time.
- The listing technique is simply that of listing ideas associated in some way with the subject.
- Listing and brainstorming promote ideas and help written work. They can then be used with large or small groups, or with individual pupils.
- Follow these suggestions:
 - ✓ write anything which comes to mind
 - ✓ use a fixed amount of time
 - ✓ encourage different, varied, even outlandish ideas
 - ✓ go for quantity
 - ✓ develop ideas from other ideas
 - ✓ list after the brainstorm
 - ✓ use listing to sort out good ideas.
- Summary:



C

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Plan of writing: | 1 |
| 2 | 3 |