

Key stage 2 English writing standardisation exercise commentaries

Pupil A – working towards the expected standard

This collection includes:

- A) a newspaper report
- B) a discussion
- C) a mythical narrative
- D) a non-chronological report
- E) an adventure narrative

All the statements for ‘working towards the expected standard’ are met.

The pupil can write for a range of purposes

Across the collection, Pupil A demonstrates the ability to adapt their writing to purpose, following some of the conventions of their chosen text type and selecting some language structures and vocabulary appropriate to their writing intent. Their collection includes a newspaper report based on David Wiesner’s wordless picture book ‘Tuesday’, a discussion around home-schooling, and a non-chronological report on sloths. There are two narrative pieces: a retelling of a myth, Orpheus in the Underworld, and a description of a plane crash inspired by Katherine Rundell’s book, ‘The Explorer’.

Piece A, the newspaper report, includes a simple headline (*Mysterious Tuesday*) and a brief introduction to the ‘mystery’ to attract attention and hook the reader in. The ‘strange happenings’ the writer selects from the source material are engagingly ‘fishy’ and reported simply in the simple past and progressive past tenses. Adverbial phrases explain the chronology of the night’s events (*at 9:00 pm sharp on Tuesday evening... between 9:00 - 9:20... at approximately 1:00 am*), and ongoing and current states are expressed in the present tense (*Eyewitness Tommy Jenner, 18, has independent ideas... This is a very unusual investigation, we urge...*). A quote from an eyewitness provides interest and a possible explanation for the ‘mystery’, and the piece concludes with an opinion and a caution (*This is a very unusual investigation, we urge people to remain vigilant at all times and to report any incident to our local police.*).

While the writer adopts an informal register for the eyewitness (*“I was gettin a late-night snack...”*), an appropriate formal register is largely sustained across the rest of the piece through some use of the passive voice (*were found... were reported*) and some formal phrasing (*Police received the first report...in the Berry street area of the town*) and vocabulary (*independently... incident... investigation... vigilant*). Noun phrases provide some detail (*the first report of fishy activity... the strange tapping on the window... A middle aged woman... a problem with her tv... green figures speeding across the sky*).

The subject under discussion in piece B is set out in its title, 'Should children be home-schooled?'. The writer opens the piece with a definition of home-schooling, contrasting it to 'state' and 'public school' education, to support reader understanding. They demonstrate awareness of the conventions of the discursive form in their inclusion of both the pros and cons of home-schooling and in their attempt to present a concluding opinion. The content is relevant to the topic and subject-specific vocabulary provides detail (*attend a school funded by the government... isolated... social skills... majority of children*).

Language typical of formal discussion texts is used to introduce the different views on home-schooling (*Firstly, it is clear that... However,... On the other hand,... In conclusion,*), and some use of the passive form supports the formal tone (*when a child is taught... children will be protected... children will be isolated*). The present tense is used to describe how things are (*it is clear that... children are home-schooled... parents know their children... parents aren't teachers*), and modal verbs are deployed to suggest possible futures, although only sometimes successfully (*Children won't find it as challenging ... Children can spend more time... children wouldn't be forced to do things*). There are a few successful attempts to expand discussion points using multi-clause sentences, and these sometimes include non-finite clauses (*Children won't find it as challenging to learn simple subjects*).

The final non-fiction piece in the collection, piece D, the non-chronological report on sloths, follows a conventional structure. An introduction is followed by sections on appearance, habitat, diet and additional points of interest. The introduction to the piece attempts to engage the reader with some salient points (*unique animals that sleep for 15 hours a day... only coming down one time per week to relieve themselves... critically endangered*) and direct address (*If you want to find out more about our furry friends read on.*). The information provided in the body of the report is relevant and interesting, although not always presented under the correct heading. The vocabulary selected is appropriate and often precise (*species, solitary, habitat, located, diet, predators, nutritious, threatened*), and noun and adverbial phrases provide detail (*unique animals... furry friends ... majority of their time... tropical rainforest... critically endangered... threatened by habitat loss... in the canopy... one baby per year*). A few choices are less successful (*a very impressive passion in swimming*) or inaccurate (*the maned sloth is venerable... for their lifecycle*). Information is presented simply using some accurate structures, including relative clauses (*Sloths are unique animals that sleep for 15 hours a day!*) and non-finite clauses (*They live in trees to protect themselves from predators.*).

In piece C, the retelling of an Ancient Greek myth, Pupil A demonstrates their ability to adapt their writing to the narrative form, opening the piece with descriptions of the spooky setting and Orpheus' experiences which aim to hook the reader and build tension. These are followed by an account of the hero's arrival in the underworld and the plot is explained and advanced through the subsequent dialogue between Orpheus and the gods. A variety of structures is used to narrate, including multi-clause sentences

(Orpheus was getting closer and closer to somewhere as cold as a snow storm; he was freezing... When Orpheus finally got to the underworld, he begged the Gods to let his girlfriend go free from Hades.) and noun and adverbial phrases *(something or someone behind him... the most terrifying thing ever... a quick glance... closer and closer... in the land of living for eternity)*. There are some attempts to use storytelling language *(On hearing this wonderful news...)*, although this is not always successful *(Sooner or later he was told that he can have...)*, and the end of the story lacks clarity.

In the second narrative, piece E, the opening to an adventure story based on Katherine Rundell's book 'The Explorer', Pupil A demonstrates an understanding of the adventure genre. The scene is set, and the beautiful view from the plane and the characters within it are described in detail before the mood of the piece shifts from excitement to fear *(All of a sudden, the pilot started to make a sound... The plane went from side to side shifting it to disaster.)*. Longer descriptive sentences *(The view from the plane was amazing, it was mossy green and next to the grassy green trees was a waterfall as blue as the sky following the shivering river.)* give way to shorter ones expressing desperation and danger *(The pilot wasn't breathing.)*. Ellipses are used to build tension *(so he went to investigate...)*. The children's panic is evident in their brief dialogue, and Fred's frantic efforts to save the plane are well described using some punchy phrasing, including a simile *(Fred decided to do something and fast, and he had no choice. He grabbed the control panel but it was too late; the plane went straight down like a rock)*. The story ends on a cliffhanger *(It all went black.)*

Although some errors in punctuation and tense reduce the effectiveness of a few otherwise engaging sentences *(The little boy is about five or four, he has dirty blonde hair and cries when he doesn't get his way clinging to his sister who looked about ten and had brown hair.)*, this is one of the more coherent pieces in this collection. Narrative coherence is achieved through repeated references to the plane's movement which describe the gradual loss of control as it moves from shaking 'like a cold polar bear', to lurching 'from side to side' and 'shaking aggressively' before falling 'straight down like a rock'. Reader understanding and engagement is further enhanced through regular insights into the thoughts and feelings of the main protagonist, Fred.

The pupil can use paragraphs to organise ideas

Pupil A can organise ideas, events and information logically into paragraphs in both the fiction and non-fiction writing in this collection, although the information in piece D, the report on sloths, is not as well-organised as the information in the other pieces.

In the newspaper report, piece A, information is grouped appropriately into paragraphs, each with a distinct purpose, and this supports overall coherence. Paragraph one introduces the mystery and paragraph two reports the events. A third paragraph elaborates through a quote from an eyewitness, and the final paragraph offers an opinion and concludes with a caution *(we urge the public to remain vigilant...)*.

Following an introduction, the ideas in the home-schooling discussion piece, piece B, are grouped into paragraphs focusing on different aspects of the issue: the benefits to children, the position of parents and the impact of home-schooling on children's social skills and well-being. The final paragraph contains the writer's concluding point. The ideas contained within each of the first three paragraphs are logically grouped. However, the pupil is not able to manipulate language to successfully communicate their ideas as clearly in the last three paragraphs (*children will be isolated at home following along with no freinds*), and the piece is less coherent overall as a result.

In the retelling of the Orpheus myth, piece C, the events of the narrative are organised chronologically in paragraphs. The first describes Orpheus' approach to the underworld, and the second his arrival and interaction with the gods. In the third paragraph, Orpheus sets out to return to the 'land of the living', and the mistake which leads to the loss of Eurydice is described in the final paragraph.

In the non-chronological report, piece D, appropriate sub-headings indicate the intended content of each paragraph: 'Appearance', 'Diet' and 'Habitat'. However, the information is not always correctly organised across the report, making paragraphing less successful in this piece. For example, details related to appearance are included in the introduction (*They have long legs, stumpy tails and round heads...*), and more general information about the species is recorded in the 'Appearance' section (*Sloths are adorable animals that live in tree tops ...They're a few different species...*).

In the final piece in the collection, piece E, the writer splits the opening of the adventure story into two paragraphs at the editing stage, separating the description of the plane from the description of the characters. The pilot's sudden collapse and the children's attempts to rouse him are detailed in a third paragraph, and Fred's desperate attempts to take the control in a fourth and final paragraph.

The pupil can, in narratives, describe settings and characters

In the two narrative pieces, Pupil A demonstrates an awareness of the reader in their detailed descriptions of settings and characters. These include a variety of descriptive techniques including the use of expanded noun phrases and similes, and using the senses to describe. Dialogue is also included, but not always successfully handled.

In their description of the underworld in the Orpheus myth, piece C, Pupil A attempts to give the reader a sense of place and, by describing the hero's response to it, to build tension. Hades is described through noun phrases and similes (*the gloomy dark hall way... as cold as a snow storm... all grey like he was at a funeral*). Orpheus' senses are assailed (*his heart was pounding... he was freezing... He thought he heard something or someone behind him but he didn't dare turn around or move... [he] couldn't believe his eyes...*). What it is that Orpheus eventually sees is revealed slowly through deliberately fragmentary sentences containing some apt vocabulary (*gruesome... spirt flowing...*) and separated by ellipses. The effectiveness of this description is, however, reduced by a few

poor choices. Nevertheless, some elements of character, such as Orpheus' brave and loving nature and the gods' power and empathy, are communicated through the descriptions of their interaction (*The gods were touched by that sentence how Orpheus was willing to risk his life to save his girlfriend...*).

In the second narrative, piece E, the writer opens with a description of the plane and the view below. Figurative language, including alliteration, similes and personification, contrasts the peaceful external setting with the inside of the plane (*grassy green trees... a waterfall as blue as the sky... shivering river... The engine was gasping for air... shook like a cold polar bear*) in an attempt to foreshadow the drama to come. Fred's mixed feelings of excitement and fear are also described (*anxious like a soldier scared for war*), and further insights into his character are provided across the piece as he reacts to unfolding events. The other characters are introduced in the second paragraph, and noun and adverbial phrases are used to add interest (*dirty blonde hair... blonde bleached hair with pink highlights... clinging to his sister... glued to her phone*). Although details of the children's ages and appearance dominate these descriptions, the writer is sometimes successful at revealing character through behaviour (*cries when he doesn't get his way... glued to her phone*). The overall effectiveness of this second paragraph is, however, reduced by errors in tense and punctuation (*The little boy is... Lastly, the picky teen girl who was defenitly 15!, Who had blonde bleached hair with pink highlights and was glued to her phone.*).

The writer demonstrates elements of the standard above in their handling of the shift in atmosphere which results from the pilot's collapse, and they make good attempts to build tension (*All of a sudden, It souded like he couldn't breathe... The plane went from side to side*). The children's terror is evident in their brief frantic dialogue (*"Grab the controls!" shouted lila, "If you don't you're gonna get us killed!" con shericked.*) and Fred's bravery is clear from his actions (*Fred decided to do something and fast... He grabed the control pannel*).

The pupil can, in non-narrative writing, use simple devices to structure the writing and support the reader (for example headings, subheadings, bullet points)

Pupil A uses a combination of linguistic and graphic devices to structure their non-fiction writing to support the reader. Time adverbials provide effective structure to the newspaper report, piece A, and support reader understanding of the chronology of events (*Yesterday morning ...on Teusday evening... at 9:00pm sharp... approximately 1:00 am*). Adverbial phrases are also generally successfully used to guide the reader through the arguments for and against home-schooling in piece B (*Firstly...However... Although...*), with occasional imprecise use (*On the other hand, state schools...*).

Piece A includes a newspaper headline (*Mysterious Tuesday*) and the discussion piece, Piece B, a heading in the form of a question (*Should children be home-schooled?*). Following the main heading, 'Sloths', subheadings are used to direct the reader to the

different sections of the non-chronological report, piece D, (*Appearance... Habitat... Diet*) and additional facts are included as bullet points under the subheading 'Did you know?'. The bullet points are not, however, always correctly punctuated.

The pupil can use capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas for lists and apostrophes for contraction mostly correctly

Evidence across the collection meets the standard, for example:

- **capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences**
 - *An old lady reported her washing was missing between 9:00-9:20.* (piece A)
 - *Should children be home-schooled?* (piece B)
 - *"Grab the controls!"* (piece E)
 - *"If you don't you're gonna get us killed!"* (piece E)
- **commas for lists**
 - *they have long legs, stumpy tails and round heads...* (piece D)
 - *They eat leaves, twigs and bugs.* (piece D)
- **apostrophes for contraction and possession**
 - *aren't... don't... wouldn't* (piece B)
 - *couldn't... she's... didn't... wasn't... there's* (piece C)
 - *Eurydice's spirt* (piece C)

The pupil can spell correctly most words from the year 3/year 4 spelling list and some words from the year 5/year 6 spelling lists

Spelling of the year 3/year 4 words included in Pupil A's writing is mostly accurate across the collection, and some of the year 5/year 6 words used are also correct.

Evidence for the correct spelling of the year 3/year 4 words meets the standard.

For example:

- *strange... woman* (piece A)
- *although... learn... importantly [important]* (piece B)
- *through... disappear... thought... heard... continuing [continue]... believe* (piece C)
- *although* (piece D)
- *breathe... decided... straight* (piece E)

Evidence for the correct spelling of the year 5/year 6 words meets the standard.

For example:

- *government* (piece B)
- *bruises... soldier... disaster [disastrous]* (piece E)

The pupil can write legibly

Across the collection, the handwriting is legible. The handwriting in piece A is sometimes joined and it is legible. It is more consistently joined in piece B, and again generally legible, although it is a little small, and capital letters are not always distinct from lower case letters. In pieces C, D and E, the handwriting is joined and legible, if still small, and capital letters are more consistently sized and can be more easily distinguished from lower case letters.

Why is the collection not awarded the higher standard?

The collection is not awarded the higher standard as there is insufficient evidence to support the statements which describe the expected standard.

The pupil can write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader (for example the use of the first person in a diary; direct address in instructions and persuasive writing)

Pupil A can adapt their writing to purpose and follow some of the conventions of the different forms of writing included in this collection. Some language choices demonstrate an awareness of the audience. The appeal to the reader in the newspaper report, piece A, is a good example of this (*we urge the public to remain vigilant at all times and to report any incident to our local police...*). However, choices are not always appropriate for purpose or accurately deployed, and these lapses impact reader understanding and engagement and undermine the overall effectiveness of the writing. For example, in piece C, errors in word use fail to convey the writer's intended meaning to their audience and weaken the narrative (*she makes me raidant... Orpheus cheered all because he showed the symbol of love... so he carried on continuing his journey*). In piece B, the discussion text, some lapses in formality reduce the intended authority of the piece (*millions of reasons... their kids... wouldn't... aren't... don't*), and reader understanding is impacted by imprecise word choices (*On the other hand, children will be isolated at home following along with no freinds or other relaships.*).

Opportunities to develop description or information for the reader are also sometimes missed in the non-fiction writing in this collection. For example, in piece A, the newspaper report, while the key events of the night are recorded, there is little further elaboration (*An old lady reported her washing was missing between 9:00 - 9:20.*). In piece B, the discussion, the writer does not always expand the points raised, thus missing opportunities to extend reader understanding (*However, parents have to give up their jobs to teach their kids. Parents aren't teachers so it will be hard to pass exams. Parents don't know what to do on a daily basics.*).

The pupil can, in narratives, describe settings, characters and atmosphere

Pupil A can write in detail when writing descriptive narratives. However, imprecise language choices, a tendency to overwrite and lapses in control of content prevent their good efforts from attaining the expected standard. In the Greek myth, piece C, for example, some attempts to use figurative language are unsuited to the cold and spooky atmosphere aimed for (*His heart was pounding like a hopping bunny on a summer day*) or are imprecise (*a spirt flowing around like a phantom*). A tendency to overwrite also reduces the intended effect (*until he saw the most terrerfing thing ever... it was only the most gruesome... there was a spirt flowing around like a phantom.*). In piece E, the shift in atmosphere from excitement to terror is quite well-handled through the use of some appropriately short sentences (*All of a sudden, the pilot started to make a sound.*). However, lapses in control in longer sentences reduce the effect of this otherwise atmospheric piece (*Making the children fly, across the plane and hit the wall hard making them have bruises all over there body.*).

The pupil can integrate dialogue in narratives to convey character and advance the action

Pupil A makes good efforts to integrate dialogue in the Orpheus myth (piece C) and it is often accurately punctuated, although there are errors in the reporting clauses (*climed [claimed]*). Orpheus's love and bravery and the gods' power and empathy are conveyed. However, imprecise word choices reduce the overall effectiveness of the dialogue (*she makes me raidant... impolite actions... what-ever... Orpheus cheered all*). Moreover, a crucial part of the story, namely the gods' stipulation that the hero must not look back when leaving Hades, is not successfully communicated, making the end of the story confusing. The simple dialogue in piece E, the adventure story, conveys the children's panic and advances the plot (*"Are you alive?"... "Grab the controls!"... "If you don't, you're gonna get us killed!"*). The writer does not, however, use this dialogue to expand earlier character descriptions.

The pupil can select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately (for example using contracted forms in dialogues in narrative; using passive verbs to affect how information is presented; using modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility)

Pupil A often uses vocabulary and grammatical structures appropriate to the forms of writing in this collection. For example, there is some use of the passive voice in the formal report, piece A, (*were found... were reported*) and modal verbs in the discussion text, piece B, (*children wouldn't be forced to do things they don't want to.*). However, their ability to use vocabulary and structures appropriately and with control is inconsistent. This means they are not always able to manipulate language to convey ideas and information successfully, especially in longer sentences. For example, in the discussion,

piece B, the writer's attempt to use subordination in their concluding summary is unsuccessful (...*the marjoraty of children attend school to have an reputation even if it provoks strong opinions to other peers.*). In piece D, the report on sloths, vocabulary and tense choices in a relative clause reduce the clarity of the explanation (*Their leaf deit isn't very nutritious, so they don't get much energy from it, which will be a reason for their lifecycle. [which explains their lifestyle]*).

The pupil can use a range of devices to build cohesion (for example conjunctions, adverbials of time and place, pronouns, synonyms) within and across paragraphs

While there is some evidence that Pupil A is beginning to use cohesive devices, opportunities to build cohesion are often missed. For example, in the argument piece, piece B, cohesion across paragraphs is supported by the use of adverbs presenting different views (*Firstly... However*), but a lack of pronouns and synonyms results in list-like passages (*children are... Children won't... Children can... parents have... Parents aren't... Parents don't*). The repetition of 'they', 'they're', 'their', and errors with these homophones, also impacts flow in piece D, the report on sloths. Pronouns are used more successfully in the narrative writing, for example, in piece , (*Orpheus grabed his things and carried on his journey. Sooner or later he was told that he can have his...*), and in piece E, (*Fred decided to do something and fast, and he had no choice. He grabed the control pannel...*). However, the use of pronouns is inconsistent in these pieces (*Fred went... Fred was shaking... Fred kept trying...*).

Adverbial phrases of time and place are successfully used to build cohesion across paragraphs in piece A, the newspaper report, and piece C, the myth, (*Yesterday morning... 9:00pm sharp on Tuesday evening... When Orpheus finally got to the underworld... Eventually, he had made it all the way to river styx.*). In piece E, the adventure story, thematic cohesion is achieved through repeated references to the movement of the plane and to Fred's emotions across the piece. However, a predominance of single clause sentences, for example in piece A, and run on sentences and missing conjunctions throughout the collection, including in pieces A and C, undermine cohesion within paragraphs and sentences (*A middle aged woman reported that there was a problem with her tv at approximately 1:00 am, apperantly it was turning on and off independently... The gods were touched by that sentense how Orpheus was willing to risk his life*).

The pupil can use verb tenses consistently and correctly throughout their writing

Pupil A can use present and past tenses and future forms, and sometimes successfully manage tense changes within a piece. The past tense is used successfully in piece A, the newspaper report, for example, and there is a well-managed transfer to the present tense when appropriate (*Police received... I was gettin a late night snack... This is a very*

unusual investigation...). However, there are several lapses in correct tense use across the collection and these often impact effectiveness and sense. In piece E, for example, inconsistent tenses detract from the descriptions of the children on the plane (*The little boy is about five or four, he has dirty blonde hair and cries when he doesn't get his way clinging to his sister who looked about ten and had brown hair.*). Attempts to use modal verbs to express future possibilities are inconsistent in the piece on home-schooling, piece B, (*Parents have to give up their jobs... Although children will be protected from bullying, children wouldn't be forced to do things... children will be extremely lonely and wouldn't know how to share.*). The unsuccessful manipulation of tenses at the end of the myth, piece C, reduces the clarity of the narrative and reader understanding (*He was going to see his Eurydice but he wasn't allowed to look at her or else she will disappear but he couldn't bare it he took a quick glance at her and thought nothing will happen but as soon as he looked at her, she faded away forever.*).

The pupil can use the range of punctuation taught at key stage 2 mostly correctly (for example inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech)

Pupil A uses the range of punctuation taught at key stage 2 and this punctuation is sometimes deployed accurately. However, run-on sentences and missing punctuation indicate that their ability to construct and punctuate multi-clause sentences is insecure, and these errors often impact sense. For this reason, the collection does not meet this statement in full.

Examples of lapses in punctuation which impact sense include the opening sentence in piece A, the newspaper report, (*Yesterday morning, lilly-pads were found all over the town of Wellsberry, strange happenings were reported on Teusday evening.*). There are further examples in the non-chronological report, piece D, (*Sloths are adorable animals that live in tree tops although their eye sight and hearing isn't the best they always mange to protect themselves... .. They're a few different species altogether there is 6 of sloths...*). In the myth, piece C, the lack of punctuation reduces the effectiveness of the denouement of the narrative (*He was going to see his Eurydice but he wasn't allowed to look at her or else she will disappear but he couldn't bare it he took a quick glance at her and thought nothing will happen but as soon as he looked at her, she faded away forever.*). Errors in punctuation also reduce the impact of the climax of the adventure story, piece E, (*He grabed the control pannel but it was too late: the plane went straight down like a rock. Making the children fly, across the plane and hit the wall hard making them have bruises all over there body.*).

The pupil can spell correctly most words from the year 5/year 6 spelling list, and use a dictionary to check the spelling of uncommon or more ambitious vocabulary

Spelling is inconsistent across the collection and the many errors include errors in common words such as the homophones 'there, they're and their' and in some year 5/year 6 words (*apperantly, defenitly*). While the writer often chooses ambitious vocabulary, only some of this is accurate, for example in piece A (*approximately, independently, investigation, vigilant*). Other errors (*activaty, incedent*) indicate that Pupil A is not consistently checking words in a dictionary.

The pupil can maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed

After piece A, the handwriting across the collection is usually joined and legible, if rather small.