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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF CONTENT AND STRUCTURAL SUPPORT IN WRITING TASKS

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Note
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Abstract
A study of the effects of content and/or structural support in writing tasks

This paper will report on a study to investigate the impact of guidance given in writing tasks on pupil performance. By changing the level of scaffolding within a task, the demand of the task may be affected. The support given to the writer can be guidance on the content to be included in the writing and/or the way in which the writing should be structured. Support may facilitate better writing, however, the nature and extent of that support whether structural or content related, may have differing effects. Writing tasks, with varying support, will be completed by six hundred eleven year olds. Their writing will be analysed to explore the impact of the support provided in the stimulus. General issues will be considered, such as purpose, organisation and style. Writing will also be analysed for spelling, clause structure, word class, paragraphing and punctuation.

Introduction

The aim of the Writing Support Project was to investigate the impact of guidance given in writing tasks on pupil performance in fiction and non-fiction contexts. Reports on performance in KS2 English national tests have highlighted the fact that the improvements in English results reflect increased scores in reading rather than writing. Such concerns have led to an increasing interest in writing in the primary phase, especially at the end of key stage two. The QCA Standards Report on the 2000 national curriculum assessments for 11 year olds highlighted the fact that, 'Performance in reading (83% level 4 and above) is much better than in writing (55% level 4 and above.) Girls continue to outperform boys, particularly at level 5, with a much greater difference in writing than in reading.' An evaluation of the Literacy Strategy from Ofsted (1999) reported that the results of writing tests were worrying. The difference in progress between reading and writing is reflected in the evidence of inspection which consistently showed that the teaching of writing was a weakness in too many schools in the sample with insufficient emphasis given to the teaching of writing. In a report on the implementation and impact of the National Literacy Strategy (2000) Her Majesty's Inspectors commented on the need to place much more emphasis on the teaching of writing. At national, local and school level the need to target the teaching of writing, particularly for boys, was highlighted.

Differences in pupil performance between the two writing tasks in the study are also investigated according to the demands of the narrative and persuasive genres. The impact of genre-related task demands may lead to different emphases in the quality of the writing. Gender differences are considered in the light of the gap between boys' and girls' writing scores at the end of key stage two. In reading the gap is small with 86% of girls and 80% of boys reaching level 4, whereas is writing 63% of girls and only 48% of boys reach that level. This gender gap is currently a matter of debate and concern in the drive to raise standards of literacy.

The results from the end of key stage two tests have become increasingly important because of the way results are reported and used in league tables. The pressure on teachers to improve test results turns a spotlight on the way in which children's attainment is measured, with validity and reliability of comparisons between writing tasks becoming increasingly important. The writing tasks within one year's test and between years vary not only according to topic, purpose, genre and presentation, but also according to the type and level of support provided for the writer. By changing the level of support, the demand of the task may be affected. The 'topic' will also have an effect on the difficulty of the task, since a lack of 'content knowledge' may impede the child's ability to write on that subject. Variations in genre and in the type and extent of support may make it difficult to compare performance between tasks, both within a paper and between years. Increased support may facilitate better writing, however the nature of the support, whether structural or content related, may have different effects. More able writers may feel restricted by increased support and this could make it more difficult for them to demonstrate their ability. Pupils less able in reading and writing may

find the support difficult to access and this may increase the demand of the task, impeding their performance.

The effects of support within the task may have differential effects according to the genre of the writing task. As suggested by Bereiter and Scardmalia (1987),

> *It may be that the memory schema for a story episode is so strong that as a child thinks of story ideas they are promptly encoded into long-term memory in a story framework. (p.152)*

Bereiter and Scardmalia also discuss the increasing demands which ensue when the nature of the text requires critical analysis and synthesis of ideas. By changing these processing demands the writing may become less automatic and may lead children to rely more heavily on the support provided within the task. Rentel and King (1983) report that the basic structural requirements of narrative appear to be met by most children by their second year in school. This suggests that such requirements may be firmly internalised at an earlier stage than the requirements for non-narrative texts. Another issue considered by Bereiter and Scardmalia (1987) is the effect on a reader's judgement of their own internalised narrative schema which may enable them to

> *form a coherent macro-structure out of much more disconnected material than they are able to comprehend in other genres. (p.152)*

In the light of such research it is arguable that the need for guidance, and the use made of it, may vary between narrative and non-narrative genres. If the narrative task is in fact less demanding because of its familiarity and because of the linear, non-reflective processes involved, children may depend less on the task scaffolding and more on their internalised narrative schema. If this is the case then the impact of task support may be less marked in the narrative than in the non-narrative genre. In the Standards Report on the 2000 national writing tests for 11 year olds it was found that 'boys were slightly more inclined than girls to choose a non-narrative task.' (p.11)

In their work on 'Procedural Facilitation' Bereiter and Scardmalia (1987) suggest that by introducing 'self-regulatory mechanisms', such as planning and evaluation, into the task then the processing overload increases. This type of interference could also be caused by the inclusion of prompts within the writing task and consequently by increasing the support within the writing stimulus the quality of the writing may be adversely affected.
These two areas are investigated to explore the extent to which the impact of the support varies between the narrative and non-narrative genre, and whether an 'overload' of task support impedes performance.

Methodology
Two writing stimuli were designed, narrative and persuasive, each with four versions.
Version 1:   Minimal Support
Version 2:   Content Support
Version 3:   Structural Support
Version 4:   Content and Structural Support
Each version was completed by 130 -150 year 6 pupils. 12 schools were involved in the trials and random groups were selected by serial allocation with the full range of ability included. Each of the four groups completed a version of the writing activity. Teacher assessment levels for writing were collected as a concurrent achievement measure to check the efficacy of matching between groups. Before beginning to write, pupils discussed the topic in small groups according to a group discussion sheet which was common to all versions. By providing the opportunity to write on a common topic and by including an initial group discussion activity, the aim was to limit the impact of varying 'content knowledge' on writing performance.

Marking – Stage One
The marking was carried out in two stages. The first stage involved marking the scripts according to the key stage two national test mark schemes for writing, amended to suit the

tasks designed for the study. Each band within the mark scheme corresponded to a level of the national curriculum and to a mark awarded for that level, (see appendix A, p.). In the first stage of marking, 567 narrative and 526 persuasive scripts were marked and the data entered into an SPSS database for analysis. Two experienced key stage two markers carried out the first stage of the marking after a co-ordination exercise in which they each marked common scripts and discussed their judgements.

The national mark schemes can be aligned with the work of Canale & Swain (1980) who concluded that there are four elements within 'communicative competence':

grammatical competence	the ability to use the linguistic code of language, the lexis and rules of sentence formation, to understand and produce text
discourse competence	the ability to combine the forms and meanings of language so as to understand or produce a unified text
sociolinguistic competence	the ability to judge what is appropriate language in a particular context
strategic competence	the ability to use such strategies as will allow the avoidance of breakdown in communication or enhance its rhetorical effectiveness

(from 'The English Language Skills Profile' (TELS), Godfrey Thomson Unit, 1987)

The definitions above reflect the wide range of skills to be assessed as part of 'communicative competence'. It may be difficult to assess such skills separately when they are integrated within a writing task, however, tasks which assess isolated skills out of context lack authenticity. The elements identified by Canale and Swain can be used to analyse writing and to judge the ability to communicate effectively. Since the skills required to produce a piece of writing will inevitably vary according to the purpose and text type, assessment tasks need to make clear the purpose, audience and type of text required. It is also important that the skills required are clarified in the marking guidance for a particular type of task. TELS Profile assesses writing against three components based on those identified by Canale and Swain.

appropriacy	of register, structure and style to the defined task and audience;
ideas	the selection and organisation of information in a way which best meets the requirements of the task and the needs of the audience;
expression	in terms of structuring, paragraphing, and syntax, punctuation and spelling.

These components can be identified within the criteria used to assess levels of performance on the key stage two writing test where children's writing is assessed with reference to two broad categories: purpose and organisation; grammar (sub-divided into style and punctuation). The mark scheme allows for the fact that children's writing does not always develop uniformly across the strands by allowing separate judgements to be made in each of the categories. In the writing support project purpose and organisation, style and punctuation were marked on a five point scale with each point representing a level in the key stage two writing test mark scheme. Each of the five bands were further divided into 'high', 'medium' and 'low', thus creating 15 categories altogether.

Having identified the skills which are integral to the task, it is important that differences in performance should be clearly described so that sound judgements can be made. Biggs and Collis (1982) suggest five levels of performance in a framework which attempts to highlight 'real differences' between writing at different levels. Their SOLO (Structure of Observed Language Outcomes) taxonomy is described in TELS Profile User's Guide.

SOLO Taxonomy (Biggs and Collis (1982)

At a *prestructural level*,	responses are irrelevant to the task in hand.
At a *unistructural level*,	the response is relevant but over-simple, with little recognition of the problem.

A *multistructural response*	might address two or more aspects of the problem, but without acknowledging the possible relationship between them.
Relational responses	recognise such relationships and will typically attempt to resolve conflict between them, achieving 'closure'.
Extended abstract responses	will provide explanations and develop these into generalised statements, drawing a wide range of information and theoretical ideas.

These general descriptions can be applied to any type of task or text and can be compared to the national curriculum level descriptions for writing. In the TELS Profile the three components (appropriacy, ideas and expression) are each graded according to task-specific performance descriptors which give more details about the context of the task. The TELS framework for marking has a similar structure to the key stage 2 mark schemes reflecting the theoretical frameworks of Canale and Swain as well as Biggs and Collis in the way the specific task descriptions are developed and qualitative descriptions are graded. By providing descriptions of the type of performance required to complete a specific task across a range of levels and by basing the marking on generic components of literacy, it is more likely that performance would be similar on another task requiring the same skills.

Marking – Stage Two

During the second stage of marking the analysis of writing was further enhanced by using amended coding frameworks from the error analysis project designed for QCA. These frameworks allowed more detailed analyses of writing according to: spelling; punctuation; clause analysis; word class and paragraphing. The paragraphing coding was based on the whole text while the other frames were based on a 100 word extract from each text. By using the coding frameworks as well as the national test mark schemes it was possible to analyse children's responses to the different versions of the tasks for various linguistic and organisational features. 315 of the narrative and 306 of the persuasive scripts were randomly selected and were analysed using the frameworks to allow quantitative measurement of various features. The second stage of marking was carried out by the two markers from the first stage and by three researchers working on the project. During a co-ordination day the five markers each coded common scripts according to the coding frameworks and judgements were discussed and moderated. The data contained in the frameworks were then entered into an SPSS database for analysis.

Spelling (100 word extract)
The framework included the total number of errors as well as a category for 'range and sophistication of vocabulary' for which coders made a judgement, assigning a score of 1 – 3.

Punctuation (100 word extract)
The framework included: correct and omitted capital letters to begin sentences; correct, incorrect and omitted full stops to end sentences; the number of comma splices (commas used to demarcate sentences); commas to separate items in a list or to separate a list of clauses; commas used parenthetically, to demarcate clauses or to indicate a discourse marker.

Clause Analysis (100 word extract)
Coders recorded the number of sentences (defined by grammatical structure rather than punctuation), the number of finite verbs and the number of co-ordinating and subordinating devices (giving a judgement as to their effectiveness on a scale of 1 to 4).
Word Class Analysis (100 word extract)
Coders recorded the number of abstract nouns, other nouns (excluding proper nouns), adjectives and adverbs.

Paragraphing (whole text)
Coders recorded the number of paragraphs used with a judgement on appropriacy on a three point scale. The paragraphing of dialogue was also coded in narrative. The number of links

between paragraphs were recorded by: conjuncts (ordering); adverbials (time and place) and discourse markers in narrative and by: conjuncts for listing, ordering, contrasting and re-focusing in persuaive. The presence of linguistic patterning was noted and evidence of structural patterning was judged on a three point scale.

The Data

A sample of 12 schools included a balanced selection of schools of different sizes and locations. 567 eleven year olds each completed one of the versions of the narrative activity and 526 completed one of the persuasive versions. In each school spiral allocation within gender groups was used to form quasi-random 'equivalent groups' of boys and girls allocated to the four versions of the activity. Teachers supplied teacher assessment levels for writing, with each level of the national curriculum subdivided into high, medium and low. This provided data about the writing ability of the pupils in each group so that the validity of comparisons between groups could be checked. Tables 1 and 2 show the number of children involved and the distributions of teacher assessment levels for writing for the groups assigned to the four versions for each genre.

Table 1   Narrative   Mean teacher assessment levels for writing by version

	N	Mean TA	SD	Boys N	Mean TA	SD	Girls N	Mean TA	SD
Version 1	156	3.98	.67	79	3.92	.67	77	4.04	.67
Version 2	149	4.00	.74	75	3.97	.79	74	4.04	.69
Version 3	133	3.99	.68	65	3.90	.65	68	4.08	.70
Version 4	129	3.95	.74	62	3.87	.77	67	4.03	.71
	567			281			286		

Mean TA: mean teacher assessment level for writing
ANOVA sig. 951

Table 2   Persuasive   Mean teacher assessment levels for writing by version

	N	Mean TA	SD	Boys N	Mean TA	SD	Girls N	Mean TA	SD
Version 1	144	4.00	.73	70	3.96	.72	74	4.04	.73
Version 2	131	4.12	.72	63	4.10	.67	68	4.21	.77
Version 3	127	4.11	.69	61	4.03	.72	66	4.19	.66
Version 4	124	4.06	.73	60	4.05	.84	64	4.07	.61
	526			254			272		

Mean TA: mean teacher assessment level for writing
ANOVA   sig. .302

The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there were no significant differences in writing ability between the groups for each genre. Therefore the groups were well-matched and the comparisons of results between versions were valid.

Version Effects

Mark Schemes

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Tables B1 and B2 (Appendix B, p.) show the results from the first stage of marking for the four versions in each genre. The mean mark and standard deviation for each strand on each version are given and expressed as a percentage of the total marks available for that strand and overall. TA levels (teacher assessment levels for writing) are included to indicate the ability of the groups. As in the national test mark schemes purpose and organisation were marked out of a total of 21 marks, style and punctuation were each marked out of 7, with the total mark out of 35. Statistically speaking the differences between versions in each genre were not significant, apart from in style where there was a significant difference at the 5% level in the persuasive genre, so caution should be exercised in interpreting them. The mean TA levels are higher for girls in all groups with little difference between the versions. The overall pattern of results indicates that in narrative the scores are lower in version 4 which provided structural and content support within the stimulus. In persuasive writing, for the whole sample and for girls, the pattern tended to be the same, with lower scores in version 4 (full support). For boys there was no clear pattern in the results by version. The evidence suggests that the variations in task support do not significantly affect performance. The pattern of differences suggests a tendency for the full support in version 4 to lead to lower scores, especially in narrative, although differences were only significant for style in persuasive writing at the 5% level.

The hypotheses that extra support could enhance performance by scaffolding the writing or that it could impede performance as a result of processing overload are not supported by the data in narrative or persuasive writing.

Coding Frames

The narrative scripts of 315 pupils and the persuasive scripts of 306 pupils were analysed using frameworks that covered spelling, punctuation, clause analysis, word class and paragraphing. An analysis of variance (ANOVA), using teacher assessment level for writing as a control for variations in ability, indicated that there was no significant difference between the groups completing each version for each genre and that they were well-matched in terms of writing ability. The aim of the frameworks was to allow quantitative measurement of various linguistic features. The first four frameworks (spelling, punctuation and clause and word class analysis) were based on a sample of 100 words from each text. The paragraphing framework was based on the entire text.

As in the results from the mark schemes, the results from the coding frames did not indicate statistically significant differences between versions and so caution should be exercised in interpreting them. However, in two areas there was consistency in the pattern of results in both genres. The evidence from the coding for the use of conjuncts suggests that a higher proportion of pupils used conjuncts in version 4 with full support. In the use of structural patterning there was strongest evidence in both genres in version 4. In these areas the increased support within the stimuli may have led to greater coherence and cohesion in writing.

Task scaffolding has increased in key stage two writing tests in recent years, with the use of more detailed stimuli, pictures, diagrams and planning sheets. The aim has been to provide pupils with more content and structural information to facilitate their writing. At the same time topics have covered a wider range of genres and have not focussed so heavily on narrative writing. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy Framework (NLSF) has led to pedagogical change with new teaching methods in both reading and writing and a greater emphasis on grammar. As a result children in the primary phase are becoming more aware of genre and of the demands of variations in purpose and audience.

In the current phase of the project verbal protocols and semi-structured interviews have been carried out with year 6 children using the 4 versions of each task to plan their writing. Early indications suggest that the language of the literacy framework for teaching is predominant in their thoughts as they approach the writing task. Pre- NLSF the writing stimulus may have

been the main means of support, the impact of 'framework teaching' may be more influential in providing guidance for the writer. Further verbal protocol and interview analyses is planned to look more closely at children's thinking and the strategies they use during their writing.

Another factor affecting performance and the way children approach a writing task may be the time spent on test preparation. Year 6 children complete past papers and are increasingly coached in test technique, an inevitable consequence of the high stakes reporting of key stage 2 results. Such practice and coaching may mean that children are 'programmed' for writing in test conditions and are prepared for particular 'genre writing' before they see the stimulus. Certain key words such as *persuade, article, story, letter* etc. may trigger schema which have been internalised during teaching and practice and which are automatically dominant, irrespective of the detailed support provided within the task. The interview data currently being analysed probe the recognition of key words and their impact and will hopefully add to the debate.

Achieved and intended weightings
The achieved and intended weightings recorded in Tables 3 and 4 below show the comparative impact of marks from the three strands on the overall scores.

Table 3   *Narrative*   *achieved weightings and intended weightings*

	purpose and organisation			style			punctuation		
intended weightings		60			20			20	
achieved weightings	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls
Version 1	57.4	57.3	58.3	16.3	15.8	17.3	26	26.8	24.6
Version 2	56.6	54.2	59.4	18.4	19.3	17.5	24.8	26.1	23.1
Version 3	54	50	58.9	17.9	20.3	15.5	26	26.3	26.2
Version 4	52.9	52.1	55.2	18.8	18.7	19	26.4	26.7	25.8

In narrative writing boys' scores on punctuation were over-weighted to a greater extent than girls'. Standard deviations for punctuation indicate greater discrimination in this strand of the marking. Punctuation is over-weighted at the expense of style and purpose and organisation in all four versions. The evidence suggests that markers may need to make better use of the range of marks available for style and purpose and organisation and that they seem to feel able to use the range of marks more confidently for punctuation.

Table 4   *Persuasive*   *achieved weightings v. intended weightings*

	purpose and organisation			style			punctuation		
intended weightings		60			20			20	
achieved weightings	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls
Version 1	63	62	65.7	17.9	17.3	20.8	19	20.8	17.7
Version 2	62.5	60.3	65.2	16.7	18.1	15.1	20.8	21.6	19.4
Version 3	63.2	61.7	65.7	16.8	16.7	17.4	20.4	21.8	17.6
Version 4	59.1	58.3	60.9	17.6	17.9	17.2	23.2	24	22

In persuasive writing achieved weightings were closer to intended weightings than in narrative writing. In narrative writing punctuation was over-weighted by 5% - 6% in all versions,

whereas in persuasive the weightings were similar to those intended apart from version 4 where there is 3% over-weighting at the expense of style.

Over-weighting for purpose and organisation are similar in versions 1, 2 and 3 and as intended in version 4. Style is the strand which is under-weighted to the greatest extent in all versions. Over-weighting was greater for girls than boys in purpose and organisation in all versions. Punctuation was over-weighted for boys in all versions, especially in version 4, while for girls it was under-weighted in versions 1, 2 and 3 and over-weighted in version 4. The intended weightings for purpose and organisation are almost achieved in version 4 with over-weighting in the other versions especially for girls. The over-weighting in other strands is at the expense of style in almost all cases. There is a clear gender difference in punctuation with boys' marks over-weighted and girls' marks under-weighted in versions 1, 2 and 3 and with boys' and girls' marks over-weighted in version 4.

The picture is more complicated for persuasive than for narrative writing. Punctuation is over-weighted for boys in persuasive writing which again suggests that the mark scheme is being used more confidently. However the results are closer to the intended weightings in the persuasive writing task. Under-weighting is greater for style in the persuasive writing marks which suggests that the full mark range is not being used, perhaps because markers feel less confident in applying the marking criteria for this strand. The differences in achieved weightings between the genres raise the question of validity in the mark schemes. Should we have the same intended weightings for different types of writing? Different genres require variations in aspects of writing such as form, structure, register and punctuation. It could be argued that weightings for the strands of the mark schemes should vary according to the genre of the task. In persuasive writing, for example, purpose and organisation could be considered more important with a more generally recognised structure. Whereas in narrative writing 'correct structure' is more difficult to define. However there is a need to maintain generic, underlying definitions of literacy which are transferable from one task to another so that reliable judgements can be made from task to task.

Style is the strand which is under-weighted in both genres and this suggests that the criteria may be difficult to apply and that consequently markers feel less confident in using the full mark range. It could be argued that the style component needs to be more specific, with clearer guidance so that markers feel able to use the full mark range. A case could be made for style being given greater weight in narrative writing given the need to entertain and to catch the imagination.

In punctuation over-weighting was greater in narrative which could be a consequence of the use of dialogue. Speech requires a range of 'dense' punctuation which may have a greater impact on markers' judgements. Punctuation marking tends to be more objective than the other strands with criteria which are more clearly defined and applicable. Markers may therefore feel more confident in using the full mark range than in the other strands where more subjective judgement is required and where criteria are less clearly defined.

Genre and gender
Having considered the achieved and intended weightings further analyses were carried out to compare genre and the gender differences. The databases for narrative and persuasive writing were merged so that the significance of the genre and gender differences could be explored. Only children who had completed both of the writing tasks were included in the new database, as there were some children who had only completed one task, possibly as a result of absence. The merged database contained 942 cases (471 children). An analysis of variance showed that the difference in ability of the two 'genre groups' were not statistically significant and therefore the groups were well-matched and comparisons were valid. Tables C1 - C 4 (appendix C, p.) show the mean marks and standard deviations in each genre and for boys, girls and the whole sample. Table C5 shows the statistical significance of genre and gender differences.

Marks were higher for persuasive writing than for narrative with differences significant at the 1% level for purpose and organisation (.000) and for total marks (.003). Standard deviations were higher for narrative writing in all strands, for boys and girls. Girls out-performed boys

with differences significant at the 1% level for punctuation (.000) and for total marks (.002) and at the 5% level for purpose and organisation and for style (.045). In all strands standard deviations were higher for boys indicating that boys' scores were more spread across the mark range. Interaction effects for gender and genre were not statistically significant.

Differences between the genres were found in the coding framework data
(tables D1 – D7, appendix D, p...)

In persuasive writing:-
- girls out-performed boys overall in range and sophistication of vocabulary with differences significant at the 1 % level (5% level for narrative).
- full stops were used to demarcate sentences more successfully than in narrative (table D1)
- fewer comma splices (the incorrect use of a comma to separate sentences) were used (table D2)
- commas in lists or to demarcate lists of clauses were used more successfully (table D3)
- longer sentences were used with more finite verbs per sentence (table D4).
- there was less co-ordination and more subordination (table D5)
- subordination was more effective (table D6).
- more nouns and adjectives and fewer adverbs were used. (Table D7).
- paragraphing was used more successfully (table ??)
  61.3% used paragraphs in narrative with 46.8% of those using them appropriately (29% of the whole sample).
  69.8% used paragraphs in persuasive with 51.9% of those using them appropriately (36.3% of the whole sample).
- the proportion of pupils using structural patterning was higher overall (table ??)

The coding allowed qualitative measurement of clearly defined linguistic features. The results suggest that the quality of persuasive writing is better than narrative in a number of areas. This is reflected to an extent in the marks achieved on the mark schemes. However, the use of the coding frameworks allowed a more detailed count of specific linguistic features, whereas the mark schemes were based on level descriptions used in a 'best-fit, holistic' process where human judgement was more influential in balancing the merit of one aspect of writing against another. It could be argued that in marking children's writing more definitive guidance is needed to enable markers to make better informed judgements and that mark schemes should be designed to reflect more accurately the criteria required in a given genre. However, the lack of the underlying generic criteria of the level descriptions could compromise reliability between one task and another. The underlying definitions of literacy are necessary alongside the more task specific guidelines to underpin the marking process.

The results of this study suggest that increasing support within a task has little impact on performance, possibly as a consequence of national literacy framework teaching as well as increased test preparation. However the results raise marking issues to be considered at a time when the assessment of key stage 2 writing is high on the educational agenda. Changes in the tests and in the taught curriculum in recent years may need to be reflected more closely in mark schemes to ensure that children are rewarded fairly for positive achievement in their writing.

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	PURPOSE AND ORGANISATION	STYLE	PUNCTUATION
1	The writing communicates meaning through the narration of real or imagined events. Some basic elements of story structure are present, including an opening, more than one character or participant and two or more events in chronological sequence. Where appropriate, story language such as O*ne day, suddenly* .may be used.	Ideas are often linked with *and/and then/so,* showing the influence of spoken language structures. Vocabulary is close to speech in the use of words such as *make, do, have, get, thing,* although some variation may be evident.	Ideas and sentences are sometimes demarcated by capital letters and full stops.
2	The main features of story structure are used to organise events; e.g., the writing has a beginning, a middle, and a simple ending. Events are related to one another, though not necessarily well paced. Imagination is shown by inclusion of some details (e.g. direct speech or in the description of setting, characters' feelings or motives) intended to create interest, humour or suspense.	Evidence of the beginnings of a written style is shown in the way e.g, connectives (*but, when, so, because)* are used to clarify the relation between ideas (contrast, connection in time, explanation), and in the use of simple noun phrases or adverbs to create variety and add interest. Within sentences, subjects and verbs generally agree.	At least half the sentences are correctly demarcated, showing an understanding of sentence structure. Where they are used, full stops, capital letters and question marks are used accurately. Inverted commas may be used to demarcate direct speech.
3	Writing is coherent and well paced, with the beginning, middle and end of the story suitably distinguished and events logically related. Characters are created and there is some significant interaction between them. Characterisation is evident, e.g. through direct or reported speech. Writing is lively and seeks to interest the reader through, e.g. the ways in which characters/ events are developed / commented on.	Meaning is extended through the use of grammatically complex sentences, showing for example, different types of sentence connectives(*if, when, rather than, although, however*), and expansion of phrases before or after the noun. Well-chosen phrases or attempts to use adventurous vocabulary contribute to the effectiveness of the writing. Pronouns and tenses are generally consistent throughout.	Most sentences are correctly demarcated by full stops, capital letters and question marks. Within sentences, there is some evidence of the correct use of commas to separate elements of a sentence such as short phrases, clauses, or items in a list. Inverted commas are used to clarify where direct speech begins and ends.
4	Writing is well structured and shows a secure grasp of the chosen form for example, realistic narrative, fantasy, adventure. Elements of dialogue, action and description are interwoven. The reader's interest may be engaged through the use of different narrative technique, such as opening with action or dialogue, or moving between times or places. The writer may show control of the narrative by commenting on the action or indicating the thoughts and feelings of characters. Paragraphing is used to mark the main divisions of the narrative such as the opening, main events, and ending.	The style gives shape and interest to the writing overall, with a variety of simple and complex sentences used effectively. Vocabulary choices are imaginative. Language is used precisely and conveys effectively the writer's intended meaning. Appropriate choices are made between standard English, colloquialism or dialect according to the formality of the writing.	Almost all sentences are correctly demarcated and show the appropriate use of commas and speech marks to introduce and conclude direct speech, and capitalisation of proper nouns. A range of punctuation, such as brackets or dashes, is appropriately used (e.g.to add humour or enhance descriptions).
5	The story is well constructed in an appropriately chosen form and shows the development of a theme (a controlling idea), as well as plot (the train of events). Detail and sequence are confidently managed to engage and sustain the reader's interest, for example through the management of surprise, use of devices such as flashbacks or time shifts, the inclusion of conflict or relationship between characters, reflection on characters and actions. Ideas, including any dialogue, are organised appropriately into paragraphs.	A range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary are used to create specific effects, appropriate to the type of story. For example, the writing may show the development of literary features such as patterning of words and phrases (for example, alliteration), the use of figurative language (her words felt like sharp knives) or deliberate use or dialect for characterisation	A range of punctuation is used correctly to vary pace and clarify meaning in narration and direct speech. Within sentences, commas are used where necessary to avoid ambiguity in relating elements or to show divisions between clauses. There may be some evidence of the effective use of colons or dashes to structure long sentences.

Appendix A   Persuasive Mark Scheme

	PURPOSE AND ORGANISATION	STYLE	PUNCTUATION
1	The writing communicates meaning through a series of statements, some of which may be elaborated. Some appropriate rudimentary organisational features may be present, such as an introductory or concluding phrase. The writing shows some awareness of the reader, although the purpose of the piece may be unclear.	The writing shows the influence of simple spoken language structures and vocabulary. For example, many sentences may start in the same way (for example, with *It* or *There is)* and connectives may be absent or very simple (*and, then, but).*	Ideas and sentences are sometimes demarcated by capital letters and full stops.
2	Basic features appropriate to an article are used, such as an introductory statement, and a series of points related to the topic. Points are dealt with in a sensible order although coverage of individual aspects may be unnecessarily detailed or very brief, and overall coverage uneven. There is some attempt to convey information and to persuade, and some inclusion of details (such as traffic problems, peoples' opinions) intended to clarify information and create interest.	The beginnings of a writing style are evident in the way, for example, the reader is addressed directly or there is some attempt at impersonal constructions (*The factory has*…). Connectives such as *also, as well, but, because* may be used to link ideas logically. Use of simple adjectives or adverbs (*a busy road)* or choice of vocabulary (*employment)* adds interest to the writing. Within sentences, subjects and verbs generally agree.	At least half the sentences are correctly demarcated, showing an understanding of sentence structure. Where they are used, full stops, capital letters and question marks are used accurately.
3	The writing is coherent and balanced, with adequate coverage of a range of aspects of the subject matter. The writer seeks to inform the reader by presenting information clearly, and there is some attempt to persuade by, for example, referring to disadvantages of the plan. Ideas are sustained and developed in a logical way. The piece is structured appropriately for an article, including elements such as a relevant introduction, series of relevant points and suitable concluding phrase or sentence.	he use of some complex sentences helps to extend meaning. For example, there may be expansion (*shopping centre with large car park)* or use of subordinate clauses (*and the school entrance, where the …)* to express information accurately. There is some attempt to convey a persuasive tone, (*these are just some of the dangers to be taken into account)* and control an appropriate style, although this may not be sustained. Connectives give order and emphasis (*if. then,[so as] to).* Some words or phrases are particularly well chosen for interest or precision (*job prospects, business opportunities).* Pronouns and tenses are generally consistent throughout.	Most sentences are correctly demarcated by full stops, capital letters and question marks. Within sentences, there is some evidence of the correct use of commas to separate elements of a sentence such as short phrases, clauses, or items in a list.
4	The writing is well-structured and convincing. There is good coverage of the main points supporting the writer's point of view with information for the reader. Awareness of the reader is evident in, for example, an introduction which establishes a point of view and attempts to persuade the reader (for example by emphasising the disadvantages of the plan; a series of points linking back to the purpose of the writing (to persuade the reader to a point of view); a fitting ending. Organisation is supported by paragraphing.	Variety in the use of sentence structure gives shape to the writing. An impersonal style may be used, or passive constructions to alter the focus of attention. Features such as grouping of subjects before a main verb, or referring back or forward (for example by using *that, there, these, it)* are used to avoid repetition. Vocabulary is varied and appropriate, including use of technical and specific words (*hazardous, environmental, road safety)* to enhance precision and economy. The chosen level of formality is generally appropriate and sustained.	Almost all sentences are correctly demarcated and show the appropriate use of commas, apostrophes and capitalisation of proper nouns where relevant. A range of punctuation, such as brackets or dashes, is appropriately used.
5	The piece is well written. Detail and sequence are confidently managed throughout to engage and sustain the reader's interest, in that points are well chosen and well ordered, and the range of information supporting a point of view is covered in appropriate detail. Sustained awareness of the reader is shown through such features as an introduction which establishes the writer's point of view and a final paragraph which may offer an appropriate summary and/or persuasion to the reader. Ideas are organised appropriately using paragraphs.	The style of the piece is appropriate and demonstrates the writer's control over language. An impersonal style may be used, and the chosen level of formality is sustained throughout. A range of sentence lengths and structures, and a varied vocabulary, are used confidently to create effects appropriate to the form and purpose of the writing. Word order may be altered to develop themes and sustain reader interest.	A range of punctuation is used correctly to vary pace and clarify meaning. Within sentences, commas are used where necessary to avoid ambiguity in relating elements or to show divisions between clauses. There may be some evidence of the effective use of colons or dashes to structure long sentences.

Appendix B   *Table B1*   *NARRATIVE*   *Teacher assessment levels and results from stage one marking for each version*

All pupils **Boys** *Girls*

Version	TA level		Purpose and Organisation		Style		Punctuation.		Total	
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
V1 **Minimal Support** n = 156 boys 79 girls 77	**3.98**	**.67**	**13.25(63.1%)**	**2.1 (10%)**	**4.46(63.7%)**	**0.73 (10.4%)**	**4.43 (61.9%)**	**1.12 (16%)**	**22.03 (62.9%)**	**3.44 (9.8%)**
	3.92	.67	13.1 (62.4%)	2.26(10.7%)	4.41 (63%)	.74 (10.5%)	4.20 (60%)	1.26 (18%)	21.71 (62%)	3.71 (10.6%)
	4.04	*.67*	*13.4 (63.8%)*	*1.92 (9.1%)*	*4.51 (64.4%)*	*.72 (10.2%)*	*4.45 (63.6%)*	*.94 (13.4%)*	*22.36 (63.9%)*	*3.13 (8.9%)*
V2 **Content Support** n = 149 boys 75 girls 74	**4.00**	**.74**	**13.17 (62.7%)**	**2.36 (11.2%)**	**4.52 (64.6%)**	**0.88 (12.5%)**	**4.32 (61.7%)**	**1.2 (17.1%)**	**22.01 (62.9%)**	**3.92 (11.2%)**
	3.97	.79	12.92 (61.6%)	2.36 (11.2%)	4.47 (63.9%)	.93 (13.2%)	4.16 (59.4%)	1.27 (18.1%)	21.55 (61.6%)	4.09 (11.6%)
	4.04	*.69*	*13.42 (63.9%)*	*2.34 (11.1%)*	*4.58 (65.4%)*	*.83 (11.8%)*	*4.47 (63.9%)*	*1.11 (15.8%)*	*22.47 (64.2%)*	*3.70 (10.5%)*
V3 **Structural Support** n = 132 boys 64 girls 68	**3.99**	**.68**	**13.04 (62.1%)**	**1.85 (8.8%)**	**4.44 (63.4%)**	**0.74 (10.5%)**	**4.38 (62.6%)**	**1.05 (15%)**	**21.83 (62.4%)**	**3.15 (9%)**
	3.90	.65	12.69. (60.4%)	1.82 (8.6%)	4.38 (62.6%)	.80 (11.4%)	4.27 (61%)	1.10 (15.7%)	21.28 (60.1%)	3.35 (9.5%)
	4.07	*.70*	*13.37 (63.7%)*	*1.83 (8.7%)*	*4.50 (64.3%)*	*.68 (9.7%)*	*4.49 (64.1%)*	*1.00 (14.2%)*	*22.35 (63.9%)*	*2.86 (8.1%)*
V4 **Total Support** n = 128 boys 61 girls 67	**3.95**	**.74**	**12.77 (60.1%)**	**2.03 (9.6%)**	**4.36 (62.3%)**	**0.82 (11.7%)**	**4.22 (60.3%)**	**1.15 (16.4%)**	**21.31 (60.9%)**	**3.53 (10%)**
	3.87	.77	12.63 (60.1%)	2.18 (10.3%)	4.24 (60%)	.88 (12.5%)	4.00 (57.1%)	1.29 (18.4%)	20.81 (59.5%)	3.81 (10.8%)
	4.03	*.71*	*12.90 (61.4%)*	*1.88 (8.9%)*	*4.46 (63.7%)*	*.75 (10.7%)*	*4.42 (63.1%)*	*.97 (13.8%)*	*21.78(62.23%)*	*3.20 (9.1%)*

All pupils   Boys   *Girls*

Version	TA level		Purpose and Organisation		Style		Punctuation.		Total	
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
V1 **Minimal** **Support**	**4.00**	**.73**	**13.60 (64.8%)**	**2.10 (10%)**	**4.61 (65.9%)**	**.69 (9.9%)**	**4.40 (62.9%)**	**.80 (11.4%)**	**22.62 (64.6%)**	**3.20 (9.1%)**
n = 156 boys 79	3.96	.72	13.16 (62.7%)	2.06 (9.8%)	4.51 (64.4%)	.70 (10%)	4.27 (61%)	.87 (12.4%)	21.94 (62.7%)	3.17 (9.1%)
girls 77	*4.04*	*.73*	*14.03 (66.8%)*	*2.05 (9.8%)*	*4.70 (67.1%)*	*.68 (9.7%)*	*4.53 (64.7%)*	*.73 (10.4%)*	*23.26 (66.5%)*	*3.11 (8.9%)*
V2 **Content** **Support**	**4.16**	**.72**	**13.79 (65.7%)**	**2.13 (10.1%)**	**4.56 (65.1%)**	**.69 (9.9%)**	**4.37 (62.4%)**	**.85 (12.1%)**	**22.72 (64.9%)**	**3.27 (9.3%)**
n = 149 boys 75	4.10	.67	13.67 (65.1%)	2.21 (10.5%)	4.48 (64%)	.74 (10%)	4.21 (60.1%)	.95 (13.6%)	22.35 (63.9%)	3.48 (10.9%)
girls 74	*4.21*	*.77*	*13.90 (66.2%)*	*2.07 (9.9%)*	*4.63 (66.1%)*	*.64 (9.1%)*	*4.53 (64.7%)*	*.72 (10.3%)*	*23.06 (65.9%)*	*3.05 (8.7%)*
V3 **Structur** **al** **Support**	**4.11**	**.69**	**13.82 (65.8%)**	**2.04 (9.7%)**	**4.61 (65.9%)**	**.62 (8.6%)**	**4.48 (64.0%)**	**.82 (11.7%)**	**22.91 (65.5%)**	**3.10 (8.6%)**
	4.03	.72	13.52 (64.4%)	1.95 (9.3%)	4.56 (65.1%)	.62 (8.9%)	4.25 (60.1%)	.87 (12.4%)	22.33 (63.8%)	3.00 (8.6%)
n = 132 boys 64 girls 68	*4.19*	*.66*	*14.09 (67.1%)*	*2.10 (10%)*	*4.67 (66.8%)*	*.62 (8.9%)*	*4.70 (67.1%)*	*.70 (10%)*	*23.45 (67%)*	*3.11 (8.9%)*
V4 **Total** **Support**	**4.06**	**.73**	**13.62 (64.9%)**	**2.00 (9.5%)**	**4.48 (64%)**	**.68 (9.7%)**	**4.35 (62.1%)**	**.91 (13%)**	**22.45 (64.1%)**	**3.25 (9.3%)**
n = 128 boys 61	4.05	.84	13.55 (64.5%)	2.03 (9.7%)	4.42 (63.1%)	.72 (10.3%)	4.25 (60.7%)	1.0 (14.3%)	22.22 (63.5%)	3.34 (9.4%)
girls 67	*4.07*	*.61*	*13.69 (65.2%)*	*1.99 (9.5%)*	*4.55 (65%)*	*.64 (9.1%)*	*4.44 (63.4%)*	*.81 (11.6%)*	*22.67 (64.8%)*	*3.17 (9.1%)*

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Appendix C   Mean marks and standard deviations by genre and gender. Genre-1: narrative   2: persuasive

Table C1 Purpose and Organisation

Dependent Variable: POMARK

GENRE	GENDER	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	boy	13.05	2.20	221
	girl	13.30	2.02	250
	Total	13.18	2.11	471
2	boy	13.49	2.08	221
	girl	13.97	2.05	250
	Total	13.75	2.07	471
Total	boy	13.27	2.15	442
	girl	13.63	2.06	500
	Total	13.46	2.11	942

Table C2 Style

Dependent Variable: STYLMARK

GENRE	GENDER	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	boy	4.41	.87	221
	girl	4.51	.74	250
	Total	4.46	.80	471
2	boy	4.49	.71	221
	girl	4.66	.65	250
	Total	4.58	.68	471
Total	boy	4.45	.79	442
	girl	4.58	.70	500
	Total	4.52	.75	942

Table C3   Punctuation

Dependent Variable: PUNCMARK

GENRE	GENDER	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	boy	4.23	1.21	220
	girl	4.44	1.01	250
	Total	4.34	1.11	470
2	boy	4.25	.94	221
	girl	4.56	.74	250
	Total	4.42	.86	471
Total	boy	4.24	1.08	441
	girl	4.50	.89	500
	Total	4.38	.99	941

Table C4   Total Mark

Dependent Variable: TOTLMARK

GENRE	GENDER	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	boy	21.67	3.78	221
	girl	22.24	3.25	250
	Total	21.97	3.52	471
2	boy	22.24	3.29	221
	girl	23.19	3.11	250
	Total	22.74	3.22	471
Total	boy	21.95	3.55	442
	girl	22.72	3.21	500
	Total	22.36	3.39	942

Table C5 Significance of genre and gender differences (results of analysis of covariance – ANCOVA)

	purp. and org.	style	punctuation	total mark
GENRE	.000	.122	.894	.003
GENDER	.052	.045	.000	.002

Appendix D   *Coding Framework Data*
N: Narrative   *P: Persuasive*

Table D1   *Use of full-stops to demarcate sentences*
          % of pupils demarcating <50%, 51% to 75% and 76% to 100% of sentences correctly

	<50% correct		51% - 75% correct		76% - 100% correct	
	N	P	N	P	N	P
V1	40.0	10.5	22.5	30.3	37.5	56.1
V2	27.4	12.0	32.9	12.0	39.7	65.3
V3	44.4	11.5	21.0	25.7	32.1	57.7
V4	37.5	19.7	23.8	18.5	38.7	61.8

Table D2   *Use of comma splice:*
          % of pupils by version using no comma splices, 1 to 3, or more than 3

NARRATIVE	0	1 - 3	>3
V1	77.5	21.4	1.3
V2	69.9	27.4	2.7
V3	71.6	28.5	2.5
V4	80.2	17.3	2.4
PERSUASIVE			
V1	86.8	13.1	0
V2	81.6	18.4	0
V3	74.4	25.6	0
V4	84.2	14.4	1.3

Table D3   *Use of commas in a lists*
          % of pupils who correctly used no list commas and those who used them correctly

NARRATIVE	% correct non-usage	% correct use
V1	68.8	60
V2	63	77.8
V3	80.2	62.5
V4	65.4	75
PERSUASIVE		
V1	88.2	88.9
V2	84.2	75
V3	70.5	87
V4	81.6	85.7