

# Explanation



*Sharing Aspirations Inspiring Learners*

## **Purpose**

To explain how or why, e.g. to explain the processes involved in natural/social phenomena or to explain why something is the way it is.

## **Common examples of the text type**

- Explaining electricity, forces, food chains etc. in science
- Explaining the causes of historic events such as wars and revolutions.
- Explaining the role of the Nile in determining the seasons in Ancient Egypt
- Explaining phenomena such as the water cycle or how a volcano erupts in geography
- Explaining religious traditions and practices in RE
- Encyclopaedia entries
- Technical manuals

## **Generic Text Structure**

Structure often includes:

- A title which should be a question and begin 'how' or 'why'  
An introduction/introductory paragraph to introduce the topic
- Main body - a list of logical steps (paragraphs in KS2) to explain why or how something happens. Can be extended later in KS2 with additional, specific information.
- Conclusion - paragraph to relate the subject to the reader.

## **Planning and Preparation**

- This is probably one of the most challenging of text types as you have to be able to understand something very well to be able to explain it. Explanation texts are also easily confused with instructions. Instructions tell you how to make or do something. An explanation tells you why something happens or how it works.
- If planning a factual explanation, it is probably best to link it to another curriculum area e.g. science to give the children the opportunity to explain a process that they have learnt about e.g. pollination. Further opportunities for independent research during the literacy lesson, linked to the writing outcome, would also be advisable.
- Another good idea is to allow children to write creatively and explain a fictional phenomenon e.g. why dragons are extinct. This 'frees' the writer from having to know the factual elements linked to the writing. However, sufficient class time must be given learning the features of explanation writing so that the children are able to use them in an independent piece of writing.

<u>Progression in skills</u>	
<b>EYFS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/a</li> </ul>
<b>KS1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions and question marks</li> <li>• Time connectives</li> <li>• Simple cause and effect connectives e.g. because, if.</li> <li>• Present tense</li> <li>• Some technical vocabulary</li> <li>• Add extra, additional information.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Possible text layout:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Introduction</u></b> Title as a question e.g. How do bees make honey? (can be given by the teacher) A sentence to introduce the topic</p> <p><b><u>Main body</u></b> Sentences to explain how the parts work/process.</p> <p><b><u>Conclusion</u></b> A simple concluding sentence(s) to end the piece</p>
<b>LKS2</b> <b>As for KS1 plus:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More complex time adverbials e.g. firstly, soon afterwards,</li> <li>• Cause and effect connectives e.g. therefore, consequently etc.</li> <li>• Precise, technical vocabulary</li> <li>• Express time, place and cause using: Conjunctions e.g. so, because</li> <li>• Prepositions e.g. before, after....</li> <li>• Use of paragraphs to organise ideas.</li> <li>• (Y4) Use of fronted adverbials e.g. During the night, nocturnal animals....</li> <li>• (Y4) Create cohesion and avoid repetition through the use of nouns and pronouns e.g. Foxes are mammals... <u>They</u> feed their young... <u>These</u> amazing hunters are.....</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Possible text layout:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Introduction</u></b> A title which should be a question and begin 'how' or 'why'. A sentence to introduce the topic</p> <p><b><u>Main body</u></b> A list of logical steps (in paragraphs) explaining why or how</p>

	<p>something happens with additional specific information.</p> <p><b><u>Conclusion</u></b> A paragraph to relate the subject to the reader.</p>
<p><b>UKS2</b> <b>As for LKS2 plus:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate degrees of possibility using adverbs e.g. Perhaps.... surely or modal verbs e.g. might, should, will....</li> <li>• Use layout devices to provide additional information and guide the reader e.g. subheadings, fact boxes, bullet points etc.</li> <li>• Create cohesion within paragraphs using adverbials e.g. therefore, however</li> <li>• Relative clauses can be used to add further information e.g. Hedgehogs, which are mammals...</li> <li>• Parenthesis can be used to add clarification of technical words e.g. oxygen (a gas found in air).</li> <li>• (Y6) Adapt degrees of formality and informality to suit the form of the explanation. An informal tone can sometimes be appropriate e.g. You'll be surprised to know that...Have you ever thought about the way that...? Or a formal authoritative tone can also be adopted e.g. oxygen is constantly replaced in the bloodstream....</li> <li>• (Y6) The passive voice can also be used e.g. gases are carried.</li> <li>• (Y6) Brackets, dashes and commas can be used to add extra information e.g. photosynthesis, a process whereby a plant makes its own food, can never take place without sunlight....</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Possible text layout:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Introduction</u></b> A title which should be a question and begin 'how' or 'why' A sentence to introduce the topic</p> <p><b><u>Main body</u></b> Selects and elaborates upon appropriate information to explain why or how something happens with additional specific information.</p> <p><b><u>Conclusion</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A paragraph to relate the subject to the reader.</li> </ul>