

100 Literacy Homework Activities: Year 4

Using the books

The activities in each book are organised by term, then by word-, sentence- and text-level focus and, finally, by specific National Literacy Strategy objective. Each of the 100 homework activities is comprised of at least one photocopiable page to send home. Each sheet provides instructions for the child and a brief note to the helper (be that a parent, grandparent, neighbour or sibling), stating simply and clearly its purpose and suggesting support and/or a further challenge to offer the child. Every sheet is clearly marked with a W (word), S (sentence) or T (text) symbol to designate its main focus. (Please note that 'they', 'them', 'their' has sometimes been used in the helper and teachers' notes to refer to 'child'. This avoids the 'he or she' construction.)

Making the most of these resources

The best way to use these homework resources is to use them flexibly, integrating them with a sequence of literacy sessions over a number of days. Such an approach will also ensure that the needs of an individual, or groups of children, are met in different ways. Some of the homework sheets will be greatly enhanced by enlarging them to A3 size as this provides children with more space in which to write. Others, for example, the sets of story cards, lend themselves to being laminated for reuse.

Here are some ideas for different types of use:

Preparation

- Give a word- or sentence-level homework activity to prepare for a skills session later in the week. This allows the skill to be reviewed in less time, thus leaving more time for group activities.
- Give a text-level homework activity as a way of preparing for more detailed work on a particular type of text in a future literacy lesson.
- Give work on a particular short text as preparation for further work on that text, or a related text, in a future lesson.

Follow-up

- Give a word- or sentence-level homework activity as a follow-up to a literacy lesson to provide more practice in a particular skill.
- Give a text-level homework activity as a creative way of responding to work done in a literacy lesson.
- Use one of the many short texts as a follow-up to a study of a similar type of text in a lesson.

Reinforcement

- Give selected word- or sentence-level homework to specific children who need extra practice.
- Give a text-level homework activity to specific children to reinforce text-level work done in class.
- Use a short text with specific children to reinforce work done on similar texts.

Supporting your helpers

The importance of involving parents in homework is generally acknowledged. For this reason, as well as the 'Dear Helper' note on each homework sheet, there is also a homework diary sheet on page 128 which can be photocopied and sent home with the homework. Multiple copies of these can be filed or stapled together to make a longer-term homework record. For each activity, there is space to record its title, the date on which it was sent home and spaces for responses to the work from the helper, the child and the teacher. The homework diary is intended to encourage home-school links, so that parents and carers know what is being taught and can make informed comments about their child's progress. It is also worth writing to parents and helpers, or holding a meeting, to discuss their role. This could include an explanation of how they can support their children's homework, for example, by:

- providing a space where the child can concentrate and has the necessary resources to hand;
- becoming actively involved by interpreting instructions, helping with problems, sharing reading and participating in the paired activities where required.

Discuss with them how much time you expect the child to spend on the homework. If, after that time, a child is stuck, or has not finished, then suggest to the parent/helper that they should not force the child to continue. Ask them to write an explanation and the teacher will give extra help the next day. However, if children are succeeding at the task and need more time, this can be allowed – but bear in mind that children need a varied and balanced home life!

It is worth discussing with parents what is meant by 'help' as they should be careful that they do not go as far as doing the homework for the child. Legitimate help will include sharing the reading of texts, helping to clarify problems, discussing possible answers, etc, but it is important that the child is at some stage left to do his or her best. The teacher can then form an accurate assessment of the child's strengths and weaknesses and provide suitable follow-up work.

Using the activities with the All New 100 Literacy Hours series

A cross-referenced grid has been provided (on pages 5, 6 and 7) for those who wish to use these homework activities with the corresponding *All New 100 Literacy Hours* book. The grid suggests if and where a homework task might fit within the context of the appropriate *All New 100 Literacy Hours* unit and there may be more than one appropriate activity. Sometimes, the homework page could be used for a skills session in class and one of the resources from *All New 100 Literacy Hours* can be used for homework.