

## Getting Success Criteria Right for Independent Writing

Due to a request from CPH, some guidance around the use of success criteria and the teacher assessment of writing has been put together.

Information below is taken directly from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) documents 'Key stage 1 teacher assessment guidance' (Section 6 Assessing Writing – 6.2 Independent Writing, pages 12 and 13 ) and 'Key stage 2 teacher assessment guidance' (Section 6 Assessing Writing – 6.2 Independent Writing, pages 12 and 13)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1109956/Key\\_stage\\_1\\_teacher\\_assessment\\_guidance\\_2022-23.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1109956/Key_stage_1_teacher_assessment_guidance_2022-23.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1132442/KS2\\_teacher\\_assessment\\_guidance\\_2022-23.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1132442/KS2_teacher_assessment_guidance_2022-23.pdf)

*A piece of writing may provide evidence of a pupil demonstrating some 'pupil can' statements independently, but not others. For example, a pupil may produce an independent piece of writing that meets many of the statements relating to composition and the use of grammar but does not demonstrate independent spelling. **This could be because the teacher has provided the pupil with some domain-specific words or corrected their spelling.***

*Teachers may choose to use success criteria in lessons to help pupils understand what they have learnt and to help them judge whether a pupil has met the objectives for a piece of writing. Using success criteria does not mean that a pupil's writing is not independent, **the teacher would simply need to avoid modelling or over-scaffolding the expected outcome.** Furthermore, using detailed success criteria as a teaching tool for one aspect of writing could still provide independent evidence of other 'pupil can' statements which have not been mentioned.*

Writing is likely to be independent if it:

- emerges from a text, topic, visit or curriculum experience in which pupils have opportunities to **discuss and rehearse** what is to be written about
- enables pupils to use their **own ideas** and provides them with an **element of choice** – for example, writing from the perspective of a character they have chosen themselves
- has been **edited**, if required, by the pupil without the support of the teacher, although this may be **in response to self, peer, or group evaluation**
- is produced by pupils who have **sought out classroom resources**, such as a dictionary or thesaurus, without being prompted to do so by the teacher

Writing is not independent if it has been:

- **modelled or heavily scaffolded** – as part of external moderation, LA moderators can discuss where modelled or scaffolded writing is found and may ask for further examples of pupil work to support the standard and judgement
- **copied or paraphrased**
- **edited or re-written** because of **direct intervention by a teacher or other adult** – for example, when the pupil has been directed to change specific words for greater impact, when incorrect or omitted punctuation has been indicated, or when incorrectly spelt words have been identified by an adult for the pupil to correct
- produced with the support of **electronic aids** that automatically provide correct spelling, synonyms, punctuation, or predictive text
- supported by detailed success criteria that **specifically direct pupils what to include, or where to include it, in their writing** – such as directing them to include specific vocabulary, grammatical features or punctuation

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Writing is not independent if it has been supported by detailed success criteria that specifically directs children about **what to include, or where to include it**. However, in order to teach children about writing, teachers may start the year with more specific success criteria which does direct children about what they need to do to create successful and meaningful pieces of writing and, importantly, how to do it.

By the end the year, hopefully the children’s knowledge and skills will have been developed to allow them to work more independently. So, teachers should be able to provide much more general success criteria, or even allow the children to create their own success criteria.

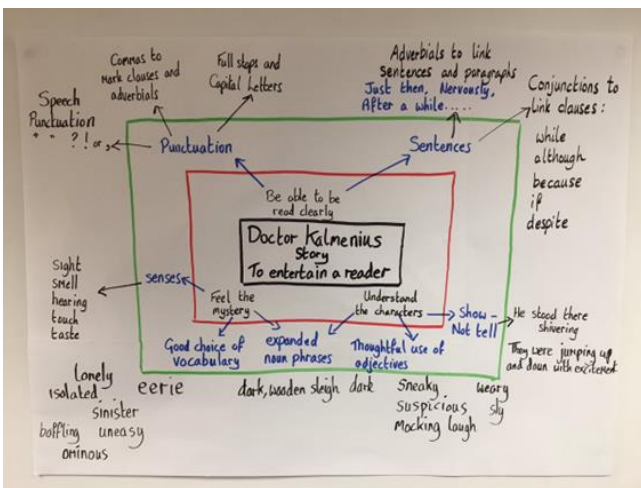
The format used for success criteria will vary from school to school (and possibly from year group to year group). However, the general principles outlined above should be considered whatever format is used.

We have provided some examples of success criteria below **for illustrative purposes only**. These examples should not be taken as the definitive format which must be used. Instead, schools should reflect on their use of success criteria and ensure their approach is in line with the guidance outlined above.

### Example success criteria suitable for use in autumn term:

Recount Writing Diary Entry		L.O. To write a character description	
		Self	Teacher
I have:	My best bits are:		
described the place where the events happened			
written in the past tense			
used personal pronouns: I, we, my, me			
talked about important events			
Talked about feelings	I could have...		
used time conjunctions: first, then, next, after			
		I can include:	
		Adjectives to describe his personality	
		Conjunctions - and, so, but	
		Different sentence openers	
		What he does	
		Jack's personality	
		I can check each sentence to see if it makes sense	

### Example success criteria suitable for use in spring/summer term:



Text-Type:	
Audience:	
Purpose:	
I will include:	

The spring/summer term example shown above is taken from a blog by James Durran, who talks about using ‘success criteria’ for writing but presenting it in a slightly different way (i.e. ‘boxed’ or ‘expanding success criteria’) to support teachers and children to focus on what writing is actually about: communication and effect, not just the performance of skills. This could be developed with the children throughout the teaching sequence and displayed on the working wall for independent use. Children could then select what to use and record this in the blank success criteria grid shown in the second image above.

[Re-thinking ‘success criteria’: a simple device to support pupils’ writing – James Durran](#)

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### Top Tips

- As the year progresses, provide pupils with opportunities to generate their own success criteria (either independently or through peer discussion).
- Avoid including specific examples on success criteria provided for the children, from spring onwards (these are too directive).
- Teachers may work with children to collaboratively construct success criteria, and these ideas may be recorded on the working wall. Children may choose to use this to inform their own writing but should not be directed to do so. Teachers must be confident that the expected outcome is not modelled or over-scaffolded.
- Success criteria may be stuck into pupils' books **after** the writing has been completed to support self/peer evaluation and feedback.