

# Explanation Toolkit



Y1/2:

Y3/4: as in Y1/2 & ...

Y5/6: as in Y3/4 & ...

## To explain something:

The following tools may be used to fuel discussion around key topics explored by the class. Whilst explanation may not have a transcriptional focus in Y1, it is important that children are building confidence in some key phrasing for explanation.

- Introduce the reader to the subject using a simple **Why** sentence: *There are many reasons why dragons are afraid of mice.*
- Use descriptive detail to make the explanation clear (single or multiple adjectives): *Mice have a strong, disgusting smell.*
- Tell the reader why using causal conjunctions: *because/so/this means that/etc.*
- Add more information by introducing your points with 'adding on' openers (fronted adverbials): *Also, ... As well as ...*
- Present and sequence the explanation in small chunks so that the reader can process each point using time openers (fronted adverbials): *Firstly, ... Secondly, ...*

- Introduce the reader to the subject using a simple **why** or **how** sentence: *This explanation will clearly show how the prince to frog potion works.*
- Show cause and effect through a wider variety of causal conjunctions: *If... then..., As a result, ... Consequently, ... Therefore, ... this means that, ... this will lead to/result in ...*
- Make your explanation link the ideas through causal conjunctions: *Pressing the red button on the top of the machine will result in the engine igniting.*
- Add more information by introducing your points with more sophisticated 'adding on' openers (fronted adverbials): *Additionally, ... Moreover, ... Furthermore, In addition, ...*
- Explain the sequence through time openers (fronted adverbials): *Later on, ..., Months afterwards, ..., Subsequently, ...*
- Engage the reader by asking them rhetorical questions: *Do you wonder how the Prince to frog potion works?*

- Consider your audience and vary your tone and formality for a desired effect:
  - Formal: *The purpose of this experiment is to discover ...*
  - Informal: *Let's find out why ...*
- Explain hypothetical outcomes using degrees of possibility (modal verbs): *could, should, might, may, etc.*
- Explain the impact on different stakeholders, varying the reasons accordingly: *The closing of zoos will clearly impact conservation since ...*

## Explanation – structure



Y1/2:	Y3/4: as in Y1/2 & ...	Y5/6: as in Y3/4 & ...
<b>To structure explanation writing:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a title to tell the reader what you are explaining: <i>Why dragons are afraid of mice.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce what will be explained to the reader.</li> </ul> <p><b>Main body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a series of key points that explain why something happens: <i>Firstly, mice can hypnotise dragons.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a statement to round it off: <i>So that is why you never see photographs of dragons and mice together.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a title that captures the nature of the text: <i>How the Prince to frog potion works</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure your opening introduces the subject and grabs the reader's attention: <i>All princes ooze arrogance and revel in their own beauty. The Prince Transformation Potion destroys these dislikeable attributes. When this happens, they turn into an everyday frog.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Main body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use sub-headings or topic sentences to organise and introduce key points to be explained: <i>As the potion is digested, it is pumped around the bloodstream until the skin begins to take on a greenish hue.</i></li> <li>Help your reader understand by organising information into paragraphs.</li> <li>Use fact boxes, diagrams, flowcharts, images or <u>underlining</u> to illustrate what is being explained or make it stand out.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a conclusion that sums up the explanation: <i>The final part of the process strips away the dislikeable attributes: self-adoration, smarminess and good looks, resulting in a wart-covered amphibian.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manipulate the organisation of your writing to suit the audience: an experiment write up, a manual, a guide, a letter, a historical document, etc.</li> <li>Consider how you may feature other non-fiction purposes, such as elements of persuasion: <i>Do you suffer from a grumpy teacher? If so, then use the 'Teacher-Pleaser' machine and soon your teacher will become the jolliest person in school.</i></li> <li>Relate the explanation to the reader: <i>If <u>you</u> treat the 'Tidy Your Bedroom' machine with care, it will last for years. Make sure that the spring is not over-used as it runs the risk of breaking. This will mean that you will have to tidy <u>your</u> own mess!</i></li> <li>Help the reader understand technical terms by including a glossary.</li> </ul>