

Guidance for the Publishing of English Teaching Resources

Introduction

This document is written for authors and publishers of English teaching resources for school-age pupils. It will also be useful for teachers and other interested parties. It outlines the features which are associated with high-quality resources, in line with domestic and international research.

The term 'teaching resources' covers anything that is published to support the teaching of English. This includes textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guides and other materials in print or digital form.

Types of English resources

English resources encompass a wide range of materials from traditional text books covering the four language modes, reading, writing, speaking and listening, to resources focusing specifically on, for example, one genre of literature, e.g. poetry, a particular level of achievement, e.g. Grade 5 GCSE or an aspect of writing e.g. spelling. This variety reflects the multifaceted nature of the subject and the different ways it is taught and learnt at different stages in schools.

While some textbooks may provide a core scheme of work linked to a particular qualification, many resources are designed to be used alongside other, high-quality, whole texts selected by the teacher.

It should be noted that 'textbook' may not always be the most useful and appropriate term for an English resource. A description of well-written resources is set out below under the following headings:

1. General principles
2. English content
3. Tasks and exercises
4. Representation and design
5. Supporting teachers
6. Assessment and review
7. Primary resources
8. Authors and editors

Teaching resources have most impact when supported by high quality teacher professional development

1. General principles

A high-quality English resource:

- 1.1 Promotes enjoyment of and engagement with English language and literature through reading and writing, along with speaking and listening activities both within and beyond English lessons.
- 1.2 Should aim to broaden pupils' English knowledge and understanding beyond minimum examination requirements. While textbooks may take a particular approach to English and should take note of examination needs, they should not be narrowly targeted on particular specifications as this may lead to a focus purely on passing the test.

- 1.3 Is clear about its purpose and intended audience (e.g. pupil, parent, teaching assistant) and explicit about how it can be adapted and used flexibly alongside a range of other material.
- 1.4 Has a well-defined, clearly articulated and, where possible, evidence-based view of reading, writing, speaking and listening, or of a more specific aspect of the subject, for example, phonics, literature, linguistics, media, drama, grammar or punctuation.
- 1.5 Reflects an inclusive approach, expecting all pupils, where appropriate, to access the same material and activities, with guidance for teachers on how to support pupils who are struggling and those who need more challenge.
- 1.6 Incorporates high-quality texts, from different cultures and by male and female authors, representing a range of genres, styles and viewpoints.
- 1.7 Has internal coherence and progression, enabling pupils to build on what has been learned and revisit content, concepts, skills and tasks, balancing consolidation and mastery with increasing challenge.
- 1.8 Encourages teachers and pupils to look beyond the content presented, for example by referring to other material, ideas, activities and resources.
- 1.9 Supports teacher development by including, for example, clear, accurate explanations of content, relevant background information and a range of sound pedagogical approaches.

2. English content

The content of a high-quality English resource:

- 2.1 Focuses on developing enthusiastic, expert, inquiring and creative readers, writers, speakers and listeners, recognising the importance of securing pupil engagement.
- 2.2 Supports both an integrated approach to developing the four language modes as well as standalone study of specific aspects.
- 2.3 Reflects a well-grounded understanding of the development of language skills, supported, where possible, by a coherent interpretation of research evidence.
- 2.4 Includes, where appropriate, clear learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter or unit, summaries at the end and opportunities for reflection and self-assessment.
- 2.5 Emphasises the importance of comprehension and communication skills as central to developing increasing sophistication and expertise in English.
- 2.6 Is accurate and appropriately nuanced in its explanation of textual features or grammatical points, balancing clarity with an acknowledgement of the complexities and contradictions inherent in the English language.
- 2.7 Uses, and defines where necessary, correct and precise terminology to describe features of language and literature, speaking and listening, in a way that is helpful and meaningful for pupils.
- 2.8 Acknowledges what pupils have learnt/already know, and looks forward to what they will learn next, promoting linkage and continuity between key stages.
- 2.9 Is designed to expose pupils to a range of engaging content, including wide reading of canonical texts.
- 2.10 Encourages a balance of close and wide reading enabling pupils to develop confidence with extended texts, including argument and complex language.
- 2.11 Exposes pupils to a wide range of vocabulary and expression to help them master language acquisition.
- 2.12 Should support pupils in the memorisation of texts or elements from texts such as quotations, parts of, or full poems, plot précis; etc.
- 2.13 Aligns with appropriate national guidelines, the National Curriculum, National Curriculum tests, GCSE and A level subject content/criteria.

- 2.14 Aims to give all pupils a broad, rich experience of the subject, rather than a narrow focus on those aspects that can/will be assessed.
- 2.15 Is written in clear, precise, accurate Standard English.

NOTE:

- It would be helpful to have an agreed glossary of grammatical / linguistic terms that replicates those used in the English programmes of study, to ensure that explanations across key stages 1 to 5 are consistent and coherent across all publishers, assessment agencies and awarding organisations.

3. Tasks and exercises

High-quality English tasks and exercises:

- 3.1 Challenge pupils to review, practice, apply and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of interesting, and engaging contexts.
- 3.2 Integrate, where appropriate, speaking and listening, reading and writing in a coherent way.
- 3.3 Embed the development of spelling competence and grammatical understanding so that it is part of language in use, e.g. recognition of sentence structures used for specific purposes in reading texts and correct spelling in pupils' own writing.
- 3.4 Help to develop and maintain clarity in handwriting.
- 3.5 Are linked and build towards coherent development and consolidation of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- 3.6 Demand active engagement with and reflection on texts, ideas and language.
- 3.7 Expect all pupils to tackle all tasks but offer support, guidance, additional activities etc as required where specific pupils require additional support in order to continue to progress and develop.

4. Representation and design

A high-quality English resource:

- 4.1. Has a layout that draws the learner in and supports the reading and thinking processes and the sequence of activities on a page or within a unit.
- 4.2. Uses a font style and size appropriate to the intended audience, to ensure accessibility for all.
- 4.3 Where texts include include attractive, high resolution photographs and other illustrations, that support the texts and tasks (e.g. as a stimulus) or as texts worthy of study in themselves, but do not distract from, or overwhelm, the text.
- 4.4 Includes diagrams and charts that support pupils with activities such as planning, making notes, developing their ideas and making comparisons and identifying contrasts.
- 4.5 Where there are both print textbooks and digital materials as part of a single course, they adopt a coherent and consistent approach. Different ways of presenting ideas reinforce one another by exploiting the advantages of each medium.

5. Supporting teachers

A high-quality English resource supports teachers:

- 5.1 Includes an authoritative account of subject matter, including, for example, background information and a comprehensive reference section.
- 5.2 Guidance on planning, including ways of using the resource, suggestions for different pedagogical approaches, strategies for supporting or extending pupils, as necessary, and alternative tasks and activities.

- 5.3 Suggestions for finding and using additional relevant materials linked to topics, themes or texts in the resource.
- 5.4 Consideration of common errors, misconceptions and barriers to progression, and advice on how to address them.
- 5.5 Appropriate guidance on both formative and summative assessment (see next section).

6. Assessment and review

A high-quality English resource supports good assessment practice by providing:

- 6.1 A variety of activities including, rich, open, extended tasks, incorporated into the body of the text book, that yield evidence to enable teachers to make valid judgements about attainment and progress and offer opportunities for formative assessment.
- 6.2 Guidance on standards and making assessment judgements, including clear, well-developed mark schemes and criteria that support teachers in using assessments to track progress and inform their planning.
- 6.3 Support with developing effective, formative assessment practices, including questioning, setting challenging tasks, using peer and self-assessment and the deployment of feedback.
- 6.4 Tests that reflect national assessment models, e.g. National Curriculum tests or GCSEs, for pupil practice and, if appropriate, enable teachers to make informed predictions of attainment.
- 6.5 Materials should help pupils familiarise themselves with the types of items which they will encounter in formal assessment, but without these dominating materials. They should also support teachers in the appropriate use of, and interpretation of the results of statutory, optional and commercial tests – such as national test, the phonics check and reading age tests.

7. Notes for Primary Education

A high-quality English resource:

- 7.1 Shows awareness of the particular needs of the age group, the primary curriculum and the range of ways in which primary schools organise teaching and learning, including both discrete and integrated approaches to teaching different aspects of English.
- 7.2 Recognises that many teachers are not subject specialists and need additional support with technical features such as grammar and assessment
- 7.3 Appreciates the role of parents in supporting pupils and provides appropriate material to facilitate this.
- 7.4 Builds growing understanding and use of 'language about language'. Uses definition and terminology about language accurately. Avoids offering misleading guidance or 'quick fix' tips about what makes good writing, foregrounding the importance of selecting features of style and language appropriate for purpose, audience and effect.

8. Authors and editors

A high-quality English resource is:

- 8.1 Authored and edited by one or more of the following: academic subject experts, experienced teachers, those with experience of writing content for young people, and those with assessment expertise.
- 8.2 Subject, where possible, to stringent and independent quality assurance measures.
- 8.3 Based on accrued professional experience, with reference to high-quality research evidence
- 8.4 Trialled with teachers and pupils in schools, where possible and relevant, and revised in the light of feedback.